

# Tutorials

## ***Main Page***

It will have a description of the different types of tutorials the site offers i.e. written tutorials that have additional materials such as diagrams and/or flash animations, or video tutorials which actually show me playing so that you can follow along and see for yourself.

Mention that although the tutorials will help, but it's all about practice and it'd be advisable to have a keyboard or piano to learn on. If you can't put the hours in then you'll not be able to progress.

Also mention that the tutorials and diagrams will require the flash player plug-in and that the latest version can be downloaded from the following address (Flash Player 9).

The very first tutorial should be an introduction to the piano as an instrument. It should explain each key component of a piano, such as the pedals, the seat, the keyboard and the hammers inside. While on the subject of the seat it would also be a good idea to talk about proper posture and how important it is to sit straight, as it's very easy to slouch when the seat or stool doesn't have a back rest.

Now that the piano has been looked at and investigated, it should be time to look at the actual keyboard part of the piano in more depth. It should explain that each key has a corresponding note, and that as you go higher up the piano, the pitch of the notes gets higher, and vice versa as you get lower, so does the pitch of the notes. A grouping of keys can be known as an octave, and this refers to 7 white keys and 5 black keys.

## ***MUSICAL THEORY SECTION***

**For these tutorials, flash movies would be good examples. Maybe it would be worthwhile having a few sentences about something then showing it as an image or flash movie which loops and repeats itself.**

**Staff & Clefs** - The staff is the area where music can be written and it is made up of five lines and four spaces. A clef is a symbol seen at the start of a staff, and tells us what the lines and spaces refer to in terms of notes. Without a clef, the staff is quite meaningless as you won't be able to tell which notes to play. There are two types of clef; treble clef and bass clef. Treble is generally your right hand and Bass is usually your left. They have two different notation systems. They are as follows. Middle C is here. As notes get higher up the stave, they go higher in pitch and vice versa if they go lower. Notes are always positioned straight in the middle of the line or the space.

**Ledger line** - When you use pitches of notes that are higher or lower than the top or bottom staff lines, you use ledger lines to show if the note is on a line or in a space. The line is drawn straight through the middle of the note if that note appears on a line.

**Grand Staff** - The grand staff is made of eleven lines, with the middle line being Middle C. When you take this line away, you're left with two staves; one for the treble and one for the bass. They are then joined by a bracket or brace, and this is what is known as the grand staff. This is actually how the term of Middle C came around, because it is directly in-between the two staves.

At the start and end of a full piece of music, you will find double bars, thicker than other measures, and these denote the start and end of the musical piece.

**Measures** - Measures are separated by vertical lines set out on the staff. They take the piece of music and separate it into small sequences, called measures. By doing this it structures the music making it much easier to read. Notes and rests are placed inside these measures, and how many you can fit into a single measure is determined by the time signature (explained later).

**Notes & Note lengths** - Notes dictate which keys to play on the keyboard and come in different types. There are five different types of note:

Full Note - This is the longest note in duration that you are able to use.

Half Note - This note is half the duration of a full note.

Quarter Note - The quarter note is half the duration of a half note.

Eighth Note - The eighth note is half the duration of a quarter note. Any note that is smaller than a quarter note has flags attached to its stem. One flag means it is an eighth.

Sixteenth note - This is half the duration of an eighth note. This also has two flags to signify that it is a sixteenth.

The notes descend in a sequence where they half themselves each time. Stems on notes above the middle line hang down from the note. Stems on notes below the middle line stick up from the note. A note that is directly on the middle line tends to mostly point downward.

Notes within the musical world start at the letter 'A' and work their way up the alphabet to the letter 'G'. As they progress through the alphabet, they get higher in pitch, A being the lowest pitch and G being the highest.

**Rests & Rest durations** - Just like there are five different types of notes, there are five different types of rests that correspond with the timing of the notes. Rests are silent meaning you do not play anything for the duration of the rest. There is the full rest, half rest, quarter rest, eighth rest and sixteenth rest.

**Time Signatures** - A time signature is a set of large numbers at the left hand side of a staff. These numbers declare what type of notes each measure will contain (the bottom number), and how many of those notes each measure will have (the top number). For example, if you see a time signature of 6/8 this means that there will be six eighth notes. If you see a time signature of 4/4 this means there will be four quarter notes.

**Tied Notes** - Tied notes are two notes that are joined together and sustained for the duration of their combined lengths. So if you were to tie two half notes together, you

would hold and play that note was as if it were a whole note. The reason we have tied notes is let's say for example, you want to sustain the note at the end of one measure, with the note at the start of another measure. The solution is to tie them together with this small curved line which appears at the bottom of the notes.

**Dotted Notes** - In some pieces, you will find a small dot to the right hand side of the note. What this does is it takes the original length value of the note, and increments it by one half of that value. So a dotted quarter note then becomes a dotted quarter note with an added eighth note. A dotted quarter note could also be stated as three eighth notes.

**Steps** - The term steps can further be broken down into steps and half-steps. A half step is moving from one key to the closest next key. This doesn't necessarily mean white to white, it could mean from C to C Sharp, but in the case of E who doesn't have a sharp, it would still be a half step from E to F. A full step or whole step is equal to two half steps and it could mean from C to D, or G to A.

**Accidentals and Naturals** - An accidental is a symbol that is used to raise or lower the pitch of a note. By using an accidental, the pitch changes by a half-step either backwards or forwards depending on which symbol you use. There are two different accidental symbols; a sharp and a flat.

An example of a sharp would be to place the sharp accidental beside the 'C' note, which would then raise the pitch by a half-step, and from earlier lessons we know that the new note will be a 'C Sharp'.

An example of a flat would be to place the flat accidental beside the 'A' note, which would lower the pitch by a half-step, and result in the new note being 'A Flat', otherwise known as 'G Sharp'.

Sometimes you will see a sharp accidental placed on 'E', which has no immediate black key for it to change pitch to. In this case you move a half-step as normal, and end up at 'F'. The same can be said for putting a flat accidental on 'F', and using the space process, we move a half-step backward and end up on 'E'.

It's important not to think of accidentals as 'just' a step from white to black, because really an accidental is only a half-step either forwards or backwards and that can be in rare cases white to white.

You can also have a double flat or a double sharp which is a whole step upwards or downwards.

An 'A double sharp' will take a whole step forwards and end up on 'B'.

A 'G double flat' will take you a whole step backwards and is the same as an 'F'.

There is one other symbol known as a natural, which cancel out any accidental effects on a note, and brings its pitch back to its normal state as a white key. When you see this symbol, you ignore any instructions previously given to you from earlier accidentals.

## Intermediate Stuff

**Scales** - A scale is a collection/series of notes that continue through its octave, starting and ending on the same note. There are two scales you need to know about, and they both have different formulas to work out their notes. These two scales are major and minor, and you will find that the major scale has a much livelier and upbeat feeling, where the minor scale is a bit more mellowed. The formulas are quite simple when you put them to practice a few times, and they simply move to different notes via steps and half-steps. It should also be noted that in the formula, your starting note is not counted as the first note of the formula.

### Major Scale

The formula used for major scales is: W W h W W W h.

These capital letters and normal case letters are referring to Whole steps, and half steps, which we've already learnt about. Another way of writing the above formula would be like this: Step, Step, Half-Step, Step, Step, Step, Half-Step.

Now that the formula has been discussed, it will make more sense if we put it to practice. Each note has its own scale, so let's take the C Major scale. Take C as your starting note and follow along:

W) A whole step from 'C' takes us to 'D'.

W) A whole step from 'D' takes us to 'E'.

h) A half-step from 'E' takes us to 'F'.

W) A whole step from 'F' takes us to 'G'.

W) A whole step from 'G' takes us to 'A'.

W) A whole step from 'A' takes us to 'B'.

h) A half-step from 'B' takes us to 'C'.

Now that we've worked out all the notes, combine them together and you get the following: C major scale is: C D E F G A B C.

One other example would be the A Major Scale:

W) A whole step from 'A' takes us to 'B'.

W) A whole step from 'B' takes us to 'C#'.

h) A half-step from 'C#' takes us to 'D'.

W) A whole step from 'D' takes us to 'E'.

W) A whole step from 'E' takes us to 'F#'.

W) A whole step from 'F#' takes us to 'G#'.

h) A half-step from 'G#' takes us to 'A'.

Now that we've worked out all the notes, combine them together and you get the following: A major scale is: A B (C#) D E (F#) (G#) A.

### Minor Scale

The formula for a minor scale uses the same stepping principle as a major scale but is slightly different in its construction. The formula is as follows: W h W W h W W. You can think of it like: Step, Half-Step, Step, Step, Half-Step, Step, Step.

Let's take the C Minor scale, and try to work it out with the formula, by firstly taking C as our starting note:

- W) A whole step from 'C' takes us to 'D'.
- h) A half-step from 'D' takes us to 'Eb'.
- W) A whole step from 'Eb' takes us to 'F'.
- W) A whole step from 'F' takes us to 'G'.
- h) A half-step from 'G' takes us to 'Ab'.
- W) A whole step from 'Ab' takes us to 'Bb'.
- W) A whole step from 'Bb' takes us to 'C'.

The C minor scale is: C D Eb F G Ab Bb C.

The point of figuring out scales of notes is because from these scales, we can then figure out chords, which form the basis of many songs.

**Chords** - Chords are made up of three or more notes being played together at the same time so that we think of them as one, as a whole. To find a chord, you take the first, third and fifth notes of the scale in question, and play them together. For example, the C major scale of C D E F G A B C has a C major chord which is C (1<sup>st</sup>) E (3<sup>rd</sup>) G (5<sup>th</sup>). The 2<sup>nd</sup> note in the scale is D, and it is D minor which is D (1<sup>st</sup>) F (3<sup>rd</sup>) A (5<sup>th</sup>). The Next is e minor which is E (1<sup>st</sup>) G (3<sup>rd</sup>) B (5<sup>th</sup>). And so on

To find a minor chord, you use the exact same sequence of selecting the first, third and fifth note of the scale. So in the example of C minor, the C minor chord would be made from C Eb G.

Now there is a sequence when it comes to knowing which chord is a major and which chord is a minor. It's another easy sequence to learn which will always keep you in the right: Major, Minor, Minor, Major, Major, Minor, Diminished. This wont effect the notes you play, so don't let it worry you. For example, the 'D' chord in the C Major scale, is a D minor chord according to that little sequence, and the notes are worked out using the same rule as above: 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> notes from the scale, therefore it is D, F, and A.

Take a good half hour just switching from chord to chord till you can just do it without stumbling.

**Key Signatures** - This is a collection of all accidents that you will encounter in a scale. In C minor there are three flats, and instead of writing a next to E A and B, you can put a key signature at the start of the measure. There are two different key signatures for flats and sharps. The key signature order of sharps is: Father Charles Goes Down And Ends Battle". The key signature order of flats is: "Battle Ends And Down Goes Charles' Father".

For beginners you will probably not encounter this yet but it's always good to have it explained so don't worry about lingering here.

**Words** - Try and get a piece of sheet music that has them all, or just little gifs and make it sort of the same layout as a table. Word - Meaning - Looks Like  
 Allegro - Fast or Lively.  
 a tempo - Return to normal tempo.  
 Crescendo - Gradually getting louder and louder.

Decrescendo - Gradually getting quieter.  
Fortissimo - VERY Loudly  
Forte - Loudly  
Mezzo Forte - Moderately Loud  
Pianissimo - VERY softly  
Piano - Softly  
Mezzo Piano - Moderately Softly  
Staccato - Playing notes in a very short manner, where they stop as quick as they started.  
Tempo - The speed of the music.

## ***Videos Section***

**Keys** - These are the keys of the keyboard, and they are made up of black and white keys.

The keys follow the musical alphabet which is A to G, and then repeat themselves so this is A (show them). Go through each white note and say what is what.

The black keys can be either sharps or flats which are called accidentals. This is basically just a change in pitch. Each black key is both a flat and a sharp to one key or another, take this black key for example, This is a G sharp, but it's also an A flat. Or this key is...

**Notes & Rests** - go through each note, note name and type. Then explain rests again and show a rest in an octave c d ..... e f g a b c. (let people hear what an eighth sounds like, and a sixteenth, and a quarter etc.)

**Steps** - As talked about in the theory, here's a few examples of those steps. Half step, whole step, lots of examples. Explain E to F is still a half step.

**Octaves** - Keys can be broken down into different 'octaves', and an octave is a collection of eight notes either going higher or lower. An octave always starts and ends on the same note, so if we take middle C here, this is its octave (show it). You'll often hear musicians say "go an octave higher" like this (show). See how we started on a C and ended on a C? The only difference is the pitch is getting higher, or if we went the other way, it gets lower, like so (show). Show how you progress an octave or scale finger wise. Explain that for the finger exercises and generally all the tutorials the fingers are numbered like so 1,2,3,4,5.

**Scales** - Explain the half step and whole step we talked about in the theory part, and show some examples. Work some out right there, C major and such.

**Finger Exercises** - Three different finger exercise videos would be good and then increase the speed each time so that they progress through them. Tell them to keep practising because it helps their co-ordination and timing.

**Chords** - Take the C Major scale and go through all of it's chords, chords make up most songs in modern music so they're a definite to learn, take coldplays the scientist for example, it's all chords like so.

Time to practice!

The Entertainer

Damien Rice - 9 Crimes

Killers - Jenny Was A Friend Of Mine

Fur Elise (Bit more intermediate, no chord but it's both hands)

Celine Dion - My Heart Will Go On (Intermediate, Uses chords and both hands)

POTC - Davy Jones Theme

Coldplay - The Scientist

Coldplay - Clocks

Scrubs - Sad Theme

Radio Head - Karma Police

Best way to put all the training and learning together is to play actual songs. Put complete beginners up, then songs that use more than just white notes, then white notes and black notes, then both hands, omgz!

Don't forget the Chord Chart!