



Piano I, Unit 1

Piano Key Names, Finger Numbers & First Song

For the Homeschool Educator

This lesson builds on the movement activity of the last lesson, adding middle pitches to the mix. By now your child has been introduced to their piano key, D. Within the playlist are some interactive activities that will help solidify your child’s connection between the piano key and the music notes for middle C & D.

Signs of Readiness

This lesson was designed for children ages 4-8 who have little to no prior music learning experience.

Common Misconceptions

Many people believe in the myth of “musical talent.” There is an old African proverb, “if you can walk you can dance, if you can talk, you can sing.” Music is something everyone needs to work at and talent is only perhaps useful in the very beginning stages of “showing promise.” It’s important for your child to know that a desire to play their instrument is all they need at this stage.

Key Vocabulary

Use these definitions to explain key terms that are used in the activities below.

Word or Phrase	Definition
music note	“the representation of a musical sound”
keyboard instrument	“a musical instrument using a row of levers that are pressed by the fingers to trigger sounds”

Lesson Options:

Use the lesson elements below to create a single-day or multiday lesson.

Digital Playlist: Generally, your child will complete the Digital Playlist first, then follow up with some or all of the activities described below. As you select and do these activities with your child, you may wish to reassign some or all of the digital activities for additional practice.

Explore Activity: This follow-up is designed to be used closely with the Digital Playlist to help your child understand the topic.

Dig Deeper Activity: This offline activity provides an additional learning experience with the same topic.

Extend Activity: This offline activity extends your child’s understanding and application of the same topic.



Explore Activity: First Song

Steps

1. Have your child practice playing their new song *If You're Happy and You Know It* along with the videos.
2. Check that your child is using right hand finger 1, their thumb, to play middle C.

Materials

- *If You're Happy and You Know It* videos played at different speeds
- Piano/keyboard

Modifications

- **Beginning learners** will benefit from more help finding the correct keys and using the correct fingerings.
- More **advanced learners** may enjoy doing their own improvisation using only C and D.

Dig Deeper Activity: Pitch Game Extended

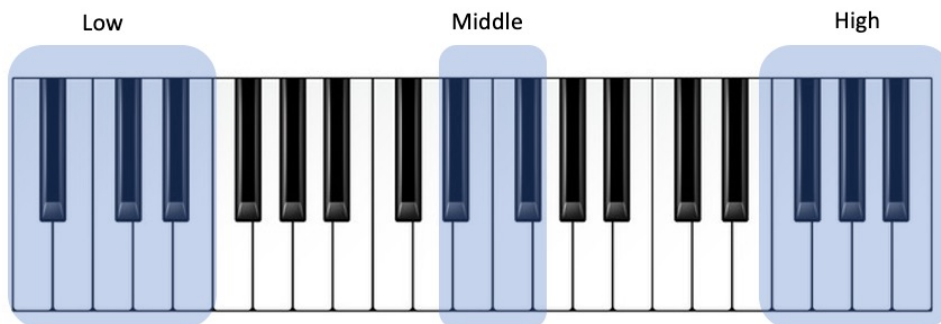
NOTE: This game is an extension of the previous game. It adds middle pitches to the previous high and low pitches.

Steps

1. Watch the *Piano Lesson 1* video with a focus on the “pitch” sections.
2. Define *pitch* as the highness or lowness of a sound.
3. Ask your child to identify the direction to move on the keys to produce higher or lower pitches on the piano. Discuss the difference between vertical (up and down) and horizontal (left and right) directions for pitch. Use a smaller selection of middle keys to avoid confusion.
4. Select groups of high, middle, and low keys from each end of the keyboard, as shown in the image.

Materials

- Piano/keyboard
- Two people, one to play the piano and one to respond with movements. These roles can alternate.














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- Play a game where one person plays the keys, and the other responds with a movement that corresponds to the pitch. Vary the order of high, middle, and low keys to increase the listening challenge. To make it more challenging, have your child face away from the piano. Stress the importance for all musicians of training the ear to listen to changes in pitch.
- Take turns playing the keys and responding with movement. Involve other family members if desired.

To keep the game fresh and to accommodate a range of physical abilities, you can change the movements used to indicate high, middle, and low pitches. See the table below for some choices of movements. Choose one row for as many rounds of the activity as desired.

Type of movement	Indicating high pitches	Indicating middle pitches	Indicating low pitches
Crouching to stretching tall	Standing, stretching arms above head 	Standing, arms at side 	Crouching down low 
Seated	Arms above head 	Hands on head or shoulders 	Hands on lap 
Facial expression	Eyebrows raised, as though surprised 	Neutral 	Eyebrows down, as though angry 



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Modifications

- **Beginning learners** will benefit from playing notes at the very ends of the piano keyboard, those that are very high and very low, to practice hearing the difference between these pitches.
- More **advanced learners** may enjoy responding to a wider choice of pitches from each end of the piano keyboard.

Extend Activity

Steps

1. Watch the Pop In with the Pop Ups video about **keyboard instruments**.
2. Remind your child that these instruments use the same key layout as the piano, so if they can play piano, they can play many of the instruments shown.
3. Have your child view or print the **keyboard instrument** page.
4. Let your child choose one or more **keyboard instruments** that they find interesting. Options include accordion, clavichord, harmonium, harpsichord, pipe organ, melodica, Fender Rhodes electric piano, Hohner clavinet, and minimoog.
5. Listen to recordings featuring these instruments and discuss how the sounds make them feel or what they imagine.
6. Research the chosen instruments to learn more about their history, famous pieces of music played on them, where they come from, and what genres of music they are featured in.

Materials

- Access to music reference books, recorded music, or the internet
- *Pop In with the Pop Ups: Keyboard Instruments* video
- Keyboard Instruments page (included at the end of this lesson)

Modifications

- **Beginning learners** will benefit from focusing on only one or two instruments.
- More **advanced learners** may enjoy exploring all of the instruments and ranking them from favorite to least liked.



Keyboard Instruments

Accordion	Clavichord	Clavinet
		

Electric Piano	Harmonium	Harpichord
		

Melodica	Minimoog	Pipe Organ
		