

Piano Guide's
Introduction to
Piano for Adult
Beginners

Lesson Two

Pages 15-23 from
The Piano Guide Book One
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CHAPTER TWO: READING THE MUSICAL STAFF

In this chapter we will learn about:

- The Elements of the Staff
- The Notes on the Staff and Keys
- How To Memorize the Notes on the Staff
- The C Major Five Finger Position On The Staff
- The C Major Scale
- The C Chord
- The C Chord Inversions
- The Primary Triads In C: I, IV & V
- Dotted Half Note, Tied Notes and the Repeat Sign
- Rests

THE ELEMENTS OF THE STAFF

Piano music is represented on two musical staves joined by a **brace**.

Each staff is a set of **five lines** and **four spaces**.

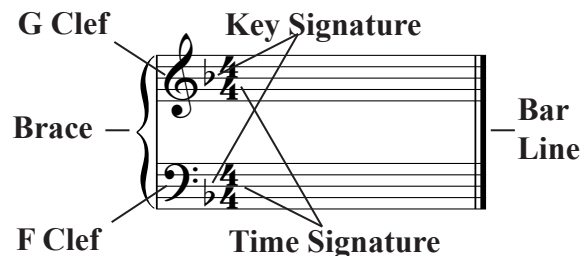
The upper staff represents music played by the right hand and is indicated by the **treble clef**, also known as the “**G**” clef.

The lower staff represents music played by the left hand and is indicated by the **bass clef**, also known as the “**F**” clef.

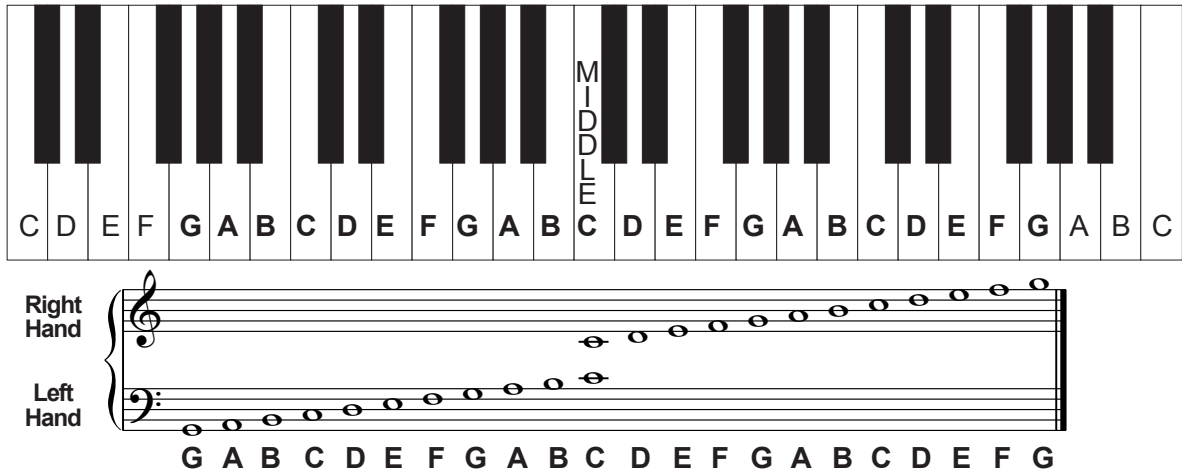
The **key signature** is written to the right of the clef sign. The sharps or flats tell us what scale or “key” the music is written in. No sharps or flats represents the key of “C”.

The **time signature** is written to the right of the key signature. The top number tells us how many beats or counts per measure, and the bottom number tells us what kind of note receives one beat.

The **bar line** is a vertical line that divides the music on the staff into measures, groups of beats or counts. Shown here is the double bar line which denotes the end of a piece of music.



THE NOTES ON THE STAFF AND KEYS



The above chart shows the notes on the keyboard, and where they are represented on the piano staff. Notice how middle C is on both staves, and is shown as a note outside of the five lines and spaces of the staff. Notes that are beyond the range of the five lines and spaces are shown by using **ledger lines**, which are added above or below the staff as needed.

Also notice how the staff has the letters of the musical alphabet in consecutive order, going from line to space to line, etc.

HOW TO MEMORIZE THE NOTES ON THE STAFF:

Memorize the sayings below to help you learn the notes on the staff.

Right Hand Line Notes

Memorize:
"Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge"

Right Hand Space Notes

Memorize:
"FACE" rhymes with "space"

Left Hand Line Notes

Memorize:
"Good Boys Deserve Fudge Always"

Left Hand Space Notes

Memorize:
"All Cows Eat Grass"

THE C MAJOR FIVE FINGER POSITION ON THE STAFF

LH: 5 4 3 2 1 RH: 1 2 3 4 5

Right: 1 2 3 4 5

Left: 5 4 3 2 1

Place your right hand #1 finger on middle C, and your left hand #1 on the G to the immediate left of middle C. Place your other fingers on the consecutive keys.

Practice Tip: Practice by *counting out loud as you play*, then *naming the notes as you play*. Remember to keep steady time, and don't try to go too fast! Notice that this sounds the same as the example on page 12.

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1-2 3-4

Right Hand:

Left Hand:

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1-2 3-4

Finger numbers are given at the beginning of each piece. Go slowly and count out loud!

Au Clair De La Lune

5

1

5

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for 'Au Clair De La Lune'. It features a piano introduction in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a melodic line starting on middle C, marked with a '1' above the first note. The left hand (bass clef) provides a simple accompaniment. A blue circular icon with the number '5' and a piano symbol is positioned to the left of the first staff. The score consists of two systems of staves, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

Frere Jacques

6

1

5

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for 'Frere Jacques'. It features a piano introduction in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a melodic line starting on middle C, marked with a '1' above the first note. The left hand (bass clef) provides a simple accompaniment. A blue circular icon with the number '6' and a piano symbol is positioned to the left of the first staff. The score consists of two systems of staves, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

Skipping Fingers

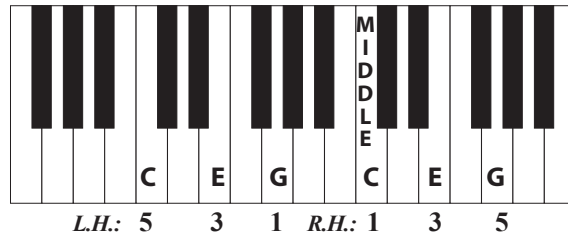
7

1

1

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for 'Skipping Fingers'. It features a piano introduction in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a melodic line starting on middle C, marked with a '1' above the first note. The left hand (bass clef) provides a simple accompaniment. A blue circular icon with the number '7' and a piano symbol is positioned to the left of the first staff. The score consists of two systems of staves, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

THE C CHORD



The C chord is a “triad,” a three note chord. The C chords shown here are in “root” position, meaning the note “C” is the lowest note of the triad. Root position triads are easy to see because they are placed on the staff in a “space-space-space,” or “line-line-line” configuration. Root position triads are usually played with the fingering shown above.

The C chord is built on the first note of the C scale, so it is called the “I” (one) chord of the key of C. The chords built on the notes of the major scale are numbered with Roman numerals.

The note that the chord is named for (C) is called the “root.” The middle note (E) is the third note of the scale starting on the root, and is called the “third.” The top note of the triad (G) is the fifth note of the scale starting on the root, and is called the “fifth.” The individual notes of the chords are identified with Greek numerals (1, 3, 5).

C Chord Etude



C CHORD INVERSIONS

The diagram illustrates three C chord inversions:

- Root Position:** Keyboard diagram shows C, E, G. Fingerings: RH: 1 3 5, LH: 5 3 1. Musical staff shows C on the bottom line, E on the first space, and G on the second line.
- First Inversion:** Keyboard diagram shows E, G, C. Fingerings: RH: 1 2 5, LH: 5 3 1. Musical staff shows E on the first space, G on the second line, and C on the third space.
- Second Inversion:** Keyboard diagram shows G, C, E. Fingerings: RH: 1 3 5, LH: 5 2 1. Musical staff shows G on the second line, C on the third space, and E on the first space.

Chords aren't always played in root position. The order of the notes may change, but the chord is still the same chord. The notes of a C chord are c-e-g, but any combination of those three notes will still constitute a C chord.

The C chord in **root position** is c-e-g from bottom to top. Root position triads are written “line-line-line,” or “space-space-space” on the staff.

The C chord in **first inversion** is e-g-c from bottom to top. The root is now at the top of the triad. First inversion triads are written “line-line-space” or “space-space-line” from bottom to top.

The C chord in **second inversion** is g-c-e from bottom to top. The root is now in the middle of the triad. Second inversion triads are written “line-space-space” or “space-line-line” from bottom to top.

C Chord Inversion Etude

fingers: 1 3 5 3 1 2 5 2 1 3 5 3 1 2 5 2

The first system of the etude consists of four measures in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, E4, G4, E4, C4, E4, G4, E4. The left hand plays chords in the bass clef: C2-E2-G2, E2-G2-C3, G2-C3-E3, and C3-E3-G3. A blue circular icon with the number 9 is located to the left of the first measure.

fingers: 5 3 1 3 5 3 1 3 5 2 1 2 1 3 5

The second system of the etude consists of four measures in 4/4 time. The right hand plays chords in the treble clef: C4-E4-G4, E4-G4-C5, G4-C5-E5, and C5-E5-G5. The left hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, E4, G4, E4, C4, E4, G4, E4. A blue circular icon with the number 5 is located to the left of the first measure.

THE PRIMARY TRIADS IN C: I, IV & V

C F G C
I ii iii IV V vi vii I

The primary triads are the triads built on the first, fourth and fifth notes of the scale. In the key of C, the C chord (c-e-g) is the “I” chord, the F (f-a-c) chord is the “IV” chord and the G chord (g-b-d) is the “V” chord. This chord combination (I-IV-V) is the most common chord progression used in music.

Play this etude many times to get comfortable with the chords. The right hand plays the primary triads in root position and the left hand plays the root note of the chords.

Root Position Primary Triads Etude

C F G C

5 3 1 5 3 1 5 3 1 5 3 1

5 2 1

The next etude has the C chord in root position, the F chord in second inversion, and the G chord in first inversion. Practice each hand individually, then together. Follow the fingering.

Primary Triad Inversions Etude

C F G C

5 3 1 5 3 1 5 2 1 5 3 1

8 1 8 1 8 1 8 1

3 5 2 5 3 5 3 5

The songs on the next page use the triad inversions in the left hand and the C major 5 finger position in the right hand.

C Blues

12

C 1 F C

5 F C

9 G C

Folk Song

13

C 3 F C G

5 C F G C

