

# Basic Music Theory For Younger Vocal Students

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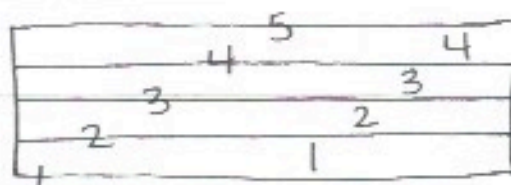
# Basic Music Theory for Younger Vocal Students

## Table of Contents

Unit 1: Staff	page 1
A. Lines & Spaces	
B. Moving up & down	
C. Treble Clef	
D. Ledger Lines	
Unit 2: Rhythm & Note Values	page 3
A. Basic Notes & Rests	
B. Time Signatures	
C. Slurs, Ties, & Note Stems	
Unit 3: Dynamics & Tempos	page 6
A. Dynamics	
B. Tempos	
Unit 4: More Rhythm	page 7
A. Dotted Quarter & Eighth Notes	
Unit 5: Bass Clef Staff	page 8
A. Bass Clef Letters	
B. Bass Clef Ledger Lines	
Unit 6: Musical Directions and Other Symbols	page 9
A. Symbols	
B. Musical Directions	
Unit 7: 6/8 Time Signature	page 11
Unit 8: Solfege & Scales	page 12
A. Solfege & Scales	
B. Sight-singing & Ear Training	
Unit 9: Piano Keys	page 13

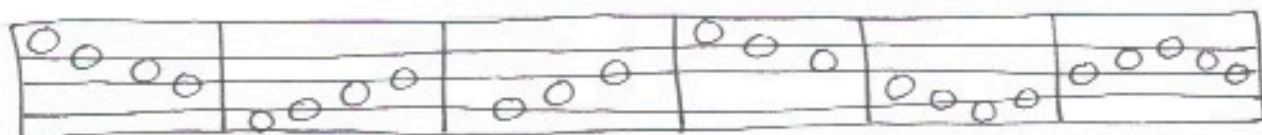
# Unit 1: Staff

A. The staff is where the notes go. It has 5 lines & 4 spaces.



B. Notes on the staff can move up, down, or up & down. The closer to the top of the staff the note is, the higher the sound. The closer to the bottom of the staff the note is, the lower the sound.

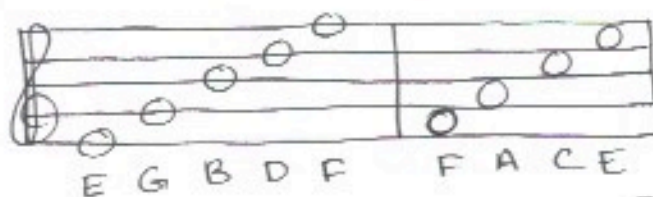
Here are some examples of notes on the staff. Can you tell whether they are moving up, down, or both?



C. Treble Clef (G-clef): The treble clef is used for higher sounding instruments (flute), higher voices (women's), and Right Hand (RH) on the piano.

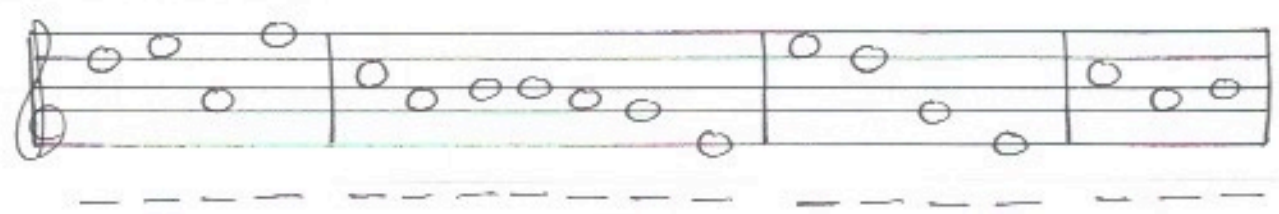
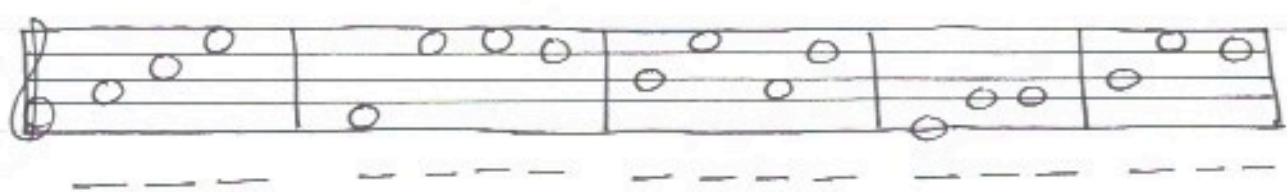
The music alphabet has 7 letters: A B C D E F G. Each of those letters has a special place on the staff. Here are the letters on the Treble Staff.

We remember where these letters go by using certain phrases:



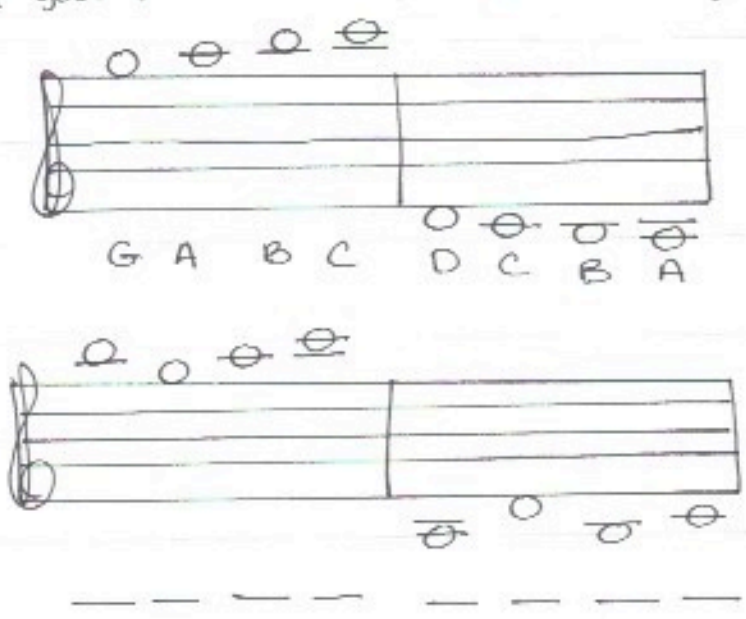
Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge      FACE 😊

Here are some examples of notes on the treble staff.  
Each section will spell a word.




D. Ledger Lines: Ledger lines are small lines that allow for notes off the staff. It is a way to continue the lines & spaces of the staff without extending it all the way across the page, but rather just for the individual notes that need it.

Here are some examples of notes using ledger lines. See if you can write the correct letter for each ledger line note.






# Unit 2: Rhythm & Note Values

## A. Basic Notes & Rests


 Quarter note = 1 Beat


 Half note = 2 Beats


 Eighth notes = 1 Beat (1 Beat But 2 sounds = faster than )

 Dotted Half note = 3 Beats

 Whole note = 4 Beats









 Quarter rest = 1 Beat

 Half rest = 2 Beats

 Whole rest = 4 Beats (or whole measure)









(Rests are moments of silence in the music.)

Match each note with correct name.

- 1.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.  \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Half note
- B. Whole rest
- C. Dotted Half note
- D. Quarter note
- E. Half rest
- F. Quarter rest
- G. Eighth notes
- H. Whole note

Match the note or rest to correct number of beats.

- 1.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.  \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.  \_\_\_\_\_

- A. 1 Beat
- B. 2 Beats
- C. 3 Beats
- D. 4 Beats

B. Time Signatures : A Time Signature tells us how to count.  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , &  $\frac{4}{4}$  are all examples of time signatures.

Time Signature →  $\frac{4}{4}$

measure measure measure measure → Double bar line

Bar line

Bar lines divide the notes into smaller sections called measures. A Double Bar Line comes at the end to show us when to stop.

- 4 → The top number tells us how many beats in each measure.
- 4 → The bottom number reminds us that  $\text{♩} = 1 \text{ Beat}$

Here's an example of how we count in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time.

$\frac{4}{4}$   $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} ||$

1+ 2+ 3+ 4+ | 1 + 2+ 3+ 4+ | 1+2+ 3+ 4+ | 1+2+ 3+4+ ||

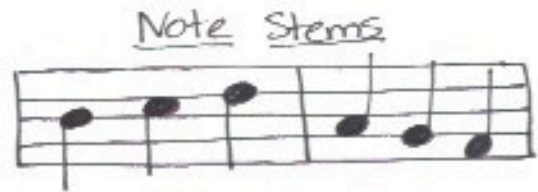
Write in the counts for the exercises below.

$\frac{4}{4}$   $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} ||$

$\frac{2}{4}$   $\text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} ||$

$\frac{3}{4}$   $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} ||$

## C. Slurs &amp; Ties &amp; Note Stems



A slur is a curved line over or under the notes of different letters. It means to play the notes legato or smoothly. For singers, it also indicates that one syllable or word is getting more than one note.

When the notes are on the 3rd line of the staff or above, the stems go down on the left side.

When the notes are below the 3rd line of the staff, the stems go up on the right.

This helps keep our notes more organized and neat!

A tie is a curved line over or under notes of the same letter. It means we add the notes together & hold them as if they are one note.

Write either slur or tie on each blank.



Draw note stems on each note. Watch if the stem goes up or down.



## Unit 3: Dynamics & Tempos

A. Dynamics tell us how loud or soft to sing.

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>English</u>
ppp	pianissimo	very soft
p	piano	soft
mp	mezzo piano	medium soft
mf	mezzo forte	medium loud
f	forte	loud
ff	fortissimo	very loud
	crescendo (cresc.)	gradually get louder
	decrescendo (decrease) OR diminuendo (dim)	gradually get softer

Put these dynamics in order from loudest to softest.

[f p mf pp mp ff]

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think "ppp" might mean?

---

B. Tempos tell us how fast or slow to sing

Italian

English

adagio  
andante  
moderato  
allegretto  
allegro  
ritardando (rit.)

Slow  
slow but moving (walking speed)  
moderate or medium speed  
Somewhat fast  
fast, cheerful  
gradually slow down

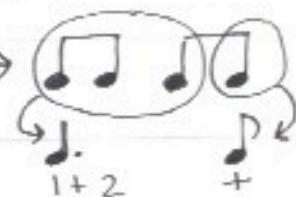
Put these tempos in order from fastest to slowest  
[allegro, moderato, andante, allegretto, adagio]

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Unit 4: More Rhythm

♪ Dotted Quarter Note =  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Beats  
♪ Single Eighth Note =  $\frac{1}{2}$  Beat

These 2 notes are almost always seen together.  
Here's an example of how we count them.

Barking a po-ta-to → Baked po-ta-to → 

♪ Eighth Rest =  $\frac{1}{2}$  Beat  
This is sometimes also seen with ♪



## Unit 6: Other Symbols & Musical Directions

A.	Symbol	Italian/Term	English
		Staccato	short, detached, bouncy
		Fermata	hold note longer than normal, as long as you want
		Accent	play louder, stronger emphasis
		Repeat	sing it again from beginning
		Sharp	makes note sound higher
		Flat	makes note sound lower
		Natural	Cancels a # or b

Match the symbol to the correct name

- |    |       |             |
|----|-------|-------------|
| 1. | _____ | A. Fermata  |
| 2. | _____ | B. Accent   |
| 3. | _____ | C. Flat     |
| 4. | _____ | D. Repeat   |
| 5. | _____ | E. Natural  |
| 6. | _____ | F. Sharp    |
| 7. | _____ | G. Staccato |

### B. Musical Directions

Double Repeat → only repeat the section between the two repeat signs

1st & 2nd Endings → The 1st time play through the 1st ending, repeat, then skip the 1st ending & play 2nd ending instead

D.C. → Da Capo → the beginning

D.S. → Dal Segno → the sign ()

Fine → the end

→ Coda → separate ending section

1 Rewrite the following example using a repeat sign.

2 Rewrite the following example using a pair of repeat signs.

3 Rewrite the following example using 1st and 2nd endings.

Stephen Foster (1826-1864)

Camptown Races

- D.C. al Fine → Repeat from beginning & sing to the end (Fine)
- D.S. al Fine → Repeat from the sign & sing to the end (Fine)
- D.C. al Coda → Repeat from beginning & sing to the  $\Phi$ , then skip to the Coda (ending section)
- D.S. al Coda → Repeat from the sign & sing to the  $\Phi$ , then skip to the Coda (ending section)

SIGN	ENGLISH
D.C. al Fine	Repeat from the beginning and play to the end (Fine).

1. Play through to the end
2. Return to the beginning
3. Play to Fine



Write in the counts for the rhythms below



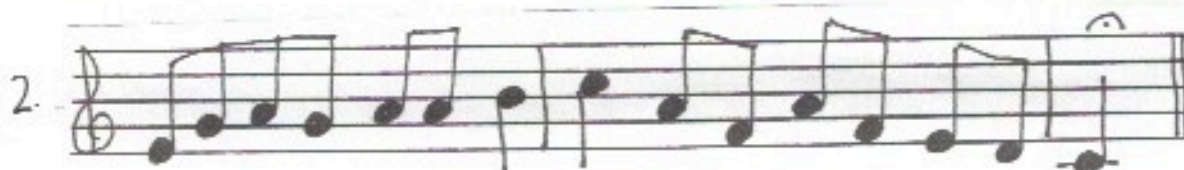
## Unit 8: Solfege & Scales

- A. A scale is a series of 8 notes in alphabetical order. For example, C to C or G to G. Here is an example of a C scale.



Under the letters of the C scale, are Solfege syllables. The Solfege syllables are used when singing scales & for use in ear training.

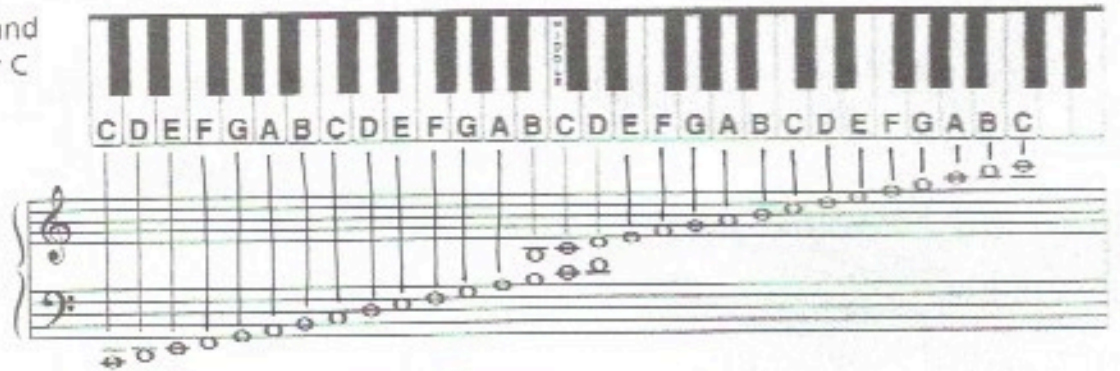
- B. For each example below, write the solfege syllable for each note (using the C scale = C is Do). Then sing each one using the solfege.



## Unit 9: Piano Keys

A full size piano has 88 keys of black & white. The black keys come in groups of 2 & 3. The white key before a set of 2 black keys is always letter C. Here are the notes on the grand staff & their corresponding key on the piano.

All the notes on the grand staff from bass clef Low C to treble clef High C:



Write the correct letter on each marked key.



Find and play these notes on the piano.



## References

Essentials of Music Theory  
Complete Lesson Book  
Alfred's Publishing Co., Inc.

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