

Mrvacupanda's Amazing 10-Week Piano Adventure

A Note for the Parent/Teacher: This lesson plan is a guide. The most important thing is to have fun and go at Mrvacupanda's pace. Feel free to spend more than one week on a concept if needed. Celebrate every small success!

Week 1: The Piano Explorer

Materials Needed:

- A piano or keyboard
- A bench of the correct height (feet should be able to touch the floor or a footstool)
- Washable markers (optional, for labeling finger numbers)
- A small, fun sticker for completing the lesson

Lesson Plan:

1. Welcome to the Piano! (5 mins)

- **Posture Power:** Sit like a king or queen! Sit tall on the front half of the bench, with a straight back and curved "spider" fingers. Let your arms hang loose and relaxed.
- **Piano Geography:** Explore the keyboard. Are there more white keys or black keys? Notice how the black keys are in groups of two and three. Find all the groups of two. Find all the groups of three.
- **High and Low:** Play keys on the far right. These are high sounds, like a little bird. Play keys on the far left. These are low sounds, like a big bear. Play "High/Low Detective" where you close your eyes and Mrvacupanda plays a note, and you guess if it's high or low.

2. Finger Friends (5 mins)

- Introduce finger numbers: Thumbs are 1, Pointers are 2, Middles are 3, Rings are 4, and Pinkies are 5.
- Trace Mrvacupanda's hands on a piece of paper and label the finger numbers. You can even give them fun names (e.g., "Tommy Thumb," "Peter Pointer").
- **Finger Taps:** With hands on your lap, call out a number and tap that finger. "Tap all your 2s!" "Now your 5s!"

3. Creative Corner: The Sound Story (5 mins)

- Let's create a story using only piano sounds. A tiny mouse scurries up high (play high notes quickly). A giant stomps by (play low notes slowly and loudly). A raindrop falls (play one middle key softly). Let Mrvacupanda create their own sound story.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Find all the groups of 2 and 3 black keys every day.
- Practice tapping your "Finger Friends" by number.
- Create one new "Sound Story."

5. Additional Resource:

- [Video: Hoffman Academy - Getting Started at the Piano](#)
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Week 2: Black Key Bonanza

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
 - Pencil and paper
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- Flashcards with Quarter Notes (a filled-in note head with a stem)

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Rhythm Claps (5 mins)

- Introduce the **Quarter Note**. It gets one beat. We can say "Ta" for it.
- Clap and say patterns of "Ta Ta Ta Ta." You clap a pattern, and Mrvacupanda claps it back.

2. Technique Focus: Playing on Black Keys (10 mins)

- Using finger 2 in the right hand, play the two black keys in a group, saying "Ta, Ta." Then do it with finger 3.
- Using fingers 2, 3, and 4 in the left hand, play the three black keys in a group, saying "Ta, Ta, Ta."
- **Song: "Dog House."** The group of two black keys is the "Dog House." The group of three is the "Big Dog House." Play a little song using only the black keys while making up a story about the dogs.

3. Theory Fun: Rhythm Drawing (5 mins)

- Practice drawing quarter notes. Draw four quarter notes in a row. This is a "measure." Clap the rhythm you just drew.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Play the "Dog House" song on all the black key groups.
- Be a "Rhythm Detective" and clap the beat to a favorite song. Is it fast or slow?
- Draw four measures of quarter notes.

5. Additional Resource:

- [Online Game: Musicca Rhythm Game](#)

Week 3: The Magical White Keys

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Small colored sticky tabs or removable stickers
- Flashcard with Half Notes (an empty note head with a stem)

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Meet the Half Note (5 mins)

- Introduce the **Half Note**. It gets two beats. We can say "Ta-a" while clapping and holding our hands together for two beats.
- Clap patterns using quarter notes and half notes. Ex: "Ta, Ta, Ta-a."

2. Repertoire: Finding C-D-E (10 mins)

- The white key to the left of the two-black-key group is always **C**. Find all the Cs on the piano! Place a red sticker on the C in the middle of the piano ("Middle C").
- The next white keys are **D** and **E**. They are the "bunk beds" inside the "Dog House."
- **Song: "Hot Cross Buns."** Using fingers 3, 2, and 1 of the right hand on E, D, and C.
E(3), D(2), C(1) --- (Ta, Ta, Ta-a)
E(3), D(2), C(1) --- (Ta, Ta, Ta-a)
C(1), C(1), C(1), C(1) --- (Ta, Ta, Ta, Ta)
D(2), D(2), D(2), D(2) --- (Ta, Ta, Ta, Ta)
E(3), D(2), C(1) --- (Ta, Ta, Ta-a)

3. Creative Corner: C-D-E Improvisation (5 mins)

- Improvise! Tell Mrvacupanda they can only play using the notes C, D, and E, but they can make up any rhythm they want. You can play a simple beat on the low notes of the piano while they create a melody.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Find all the Cs on the piano every day.
- Practice "Hot Cross Buns" until it's smooth.
- Create one new C-D-E improvisation.

5. Additional Resource:

- [Online Game: Note Name Game \(set to C, D, E\)](#)
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Week 4: The Rest of the Gang & Musical Feelings

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Flashcard with Whole Notes (an empty note head, no stem)
- Paper and crayons

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: The Whole Note (5 mins)

- Introduce the **Whole Note**. It gets four beats! We say "Ta-a-a-a." Clap on 1 and hold hands together for beats 2, 3, 4.
- Practice clapping rhythms with all three note types: Quarter, Half, and Whole.

2. Repertoire: Finding F-G-A-B (10 mins)

- Find the group of three black keys. The white keys around it are F, G, A, B. "**F**ront door, **G**randma, **A**untie, **B**ack door."
- **Finger Workout:** Place your right hand thumb (1) on Middle C. Now your fingers should naturally fall on C-D-E-F-G. This is the "C Position." Play each note up and down, saying the letter name and holding each for a whole note.

3. Theory Fun: Dynamics! (5 mins)

- Introduce **dynamics** - how loud or soft the music is.
f (forte) means LOUD (like a lion's roar).
p (piano) means QUIET (like a whisper).
- Play the C Position finger workout again, first *forte*, then *piano*. Ask Mrvacupanda to draw a picture of something loud and something quiet.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Name all the white keys (C-D-E-F-G-A-B).
- Play the C Position finger workout (Right Hand) *forte* and *piano*.
- Try playing "Hot Cross Buns" quietly, then loudly.

5. Additional Resource:

- [Video: Dynamics in Music for Kids](#)
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Week 5: Reading Music - The Treble Clef

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Music manuscript paper (paper with blank staves)
- Pencil

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Note Value Review (5 mins)

- Play a note-value guessing game. You clap a rhythm ("Ta-a" or "Ta Ta Ta Ta") and
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Mrvacupanda draws the notes (half notes or quarter notes).

2. Theory Fun: The Grand Staff and Treble Clef (10 mins)

- Introduce the **Staff** (5 lines, 4 spaces). Introduce the **Grand Staff** (two staves joined together for piano).
- Introduce the **Treble Clef** (the curly one!). This is for the HIGH notes, usually played by the **Right Hand**. It's also called the G-clef because it curls around the G line.
- Let's draw some Treble Clefs! It can be tricky, so just have fun with it.
- Find **Middle C** on the staff. It's special—it has its own little line (a ledger line) below the treble staff. Draw it.

3. Repertoire: Reading on the Staff (5 mins)

- Let's write out "Hot Cross Buns" (just the C-D-E part) on the treble staff.
 - **Middle C** has a ledger line.
 - **D** sits just under the staff, touching line 1.
 - **E** is on the very first line.
- Try to play the song while looking at the music you wrote!

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Practice drawing Treble Clefs and Middle C.
- Find Middle C on the piano without the sticker.
- Play "Hot Cross Buns" while following your own written music.

5. Additional Resource:

- [Online Game: Musicca Note Trainer \(Set to Treble Clef, C4-E4\)](#)

Week 6: The Bass Clef and Stepping Up

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Music manuscript paper
- Pencil

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Left Hand Finger Taps (5 mins)

- Focus on the Left Hand (LH). Do the "Finger Friends" tapping game from Week 1, but only with the left hand.
- Place your LH thumb (1) on Middle C. Your other fingers fall on C-B-A-G. This is the LH C Position. Play them down and up.

2. Theory Fun: The Bass Clef (10 mins)

- Introduce the **Bass Clef**. This is for LOW notes, usually played by the **Left Hand**. It's also called the F-clef because its two dots surround the F line.
- Practice drawing Bass Clefs. They look like a backward C with two dots.
- Find **Middle C** on the bass staff. It sits on a ledger line ABOVE the bass staff. Notice it's the same exact piano key as the Treble Clef Middle C!

3. Repertoire: Steps vs. Skips (5 mins)

- On the staff, when notes go from a line to the very next space, it's a **step**. (Like C to D).
- Play a simple stepping song: Right hand on C-D-E. Play C, D, E, D, C. This is called "Stepping Up and Down." Notice how the notes on the page move step-by-step.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Practice drawing Bass Clefs.
- Play the Left Hand C Position finger workout (C-B-A-G).
- Play "Stepping Up and Down" with your right hand while watching the notes on the staff.

5. Additional Resource:

- [Video: Hoffman Academy - Bass Clef](#)

Week 7: Leaping Like a Frog!

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Music manuscript paper
- A small toy frog (optional, for fun)

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Legato Touch (5 mins)

- Introduce **legato** - playing smoothly and connected. Imagine your fingers are walking through sticky mud; one finger can't lift until the next one is down.
- Play the C Position scale (C-D-E-F-G) with a beautiful, connected legato touch.

2. Theory Fun: Skips (10 mins)

- On the staff, when a note "leaps" from a line to the next line, or a space to the next space, it's a **skip**. (Like C to E).
- Use the toy frog to "hop" over notes on a hand-drawn staff to show skips.
- Let's draw some skips. Draw a C on the staff. Now skip D and draw an E. That's a skip!

3. Repertoire: "Ode to Joy" (Simple Version) (5 mins)

- This famous melody uses steps. Right Hand in C Position.
E, E, F, G, G, F, E, D, C, C, D, E, E, D, D
- Circle all the "steps" in the music. Are there any skips? (Not in this part!) Try to play it legato.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Practice playing the C scale legato.
- Learn the first part of "Ode to Joy."
- Be a "Skip Detective": Find a skip on a piece of sheet music (e.g., C to E, or D to F).

5. Additional Resource:

- [Listen: Beethoven's Full "Ode to Joy"](#)

Week 8: The Sound of Silence

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Flashcard with a Quarter Rest symbol
- A small bouncy ball (optional)

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Staccato Touch (5 mins)

- Introduce **staccato** - playing short and detached. Imagine the keys are hot! Your fingers touch them quickly and bounce off. Use the bouncy ball to demonstrate the feeling.
- Play the C Position scale (C-D-E-F-G) staccato.

2. Theory Fun: Rests (10 mins)

- Music isn't just about sound; it's also about silence! Introduce the **Quarter Rest**. It looks like a little lightning bolt and means "1 beat of silence." When you see it, you can whisper "shh" or "rest."
- **Rhythm Clap-backs with Rests:** Clap patterns like "Ta, Ta, Rest, Ta" (Clap, Clap, Open hands, Clap).

3. Creative Corner: Staccato Story (5 mins)

- Create a story using only staccato notes. Maybe it's about popcorn popping, a bunny hopping, or rain tapping on the window. Let Mrvacupanda choose the notes and tell the story through music.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Practice the C scale both legato and staccato. What's the difference?
- Practice clapping rhythms with quarter rests.
- Play "Ode to Joy" and add one quarter rest at the very end.

5. Additional Resource:

- [Explore: Classics for Kids website for fun music games and composer info.](#)

Week 9: Two Hands are Better Than One!

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Music manuscript paper
- Pencil and crayons

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-Up: Hand Coordination (5 mins)

- Place both hands in C Position (RH thumb on Middle C, LH thumb on Middle C).
- Play "Mirror Thumbs": Play both thumbs (C) at the same time. Then both 2nd fingers (D and B). Then 3rd fingers (E and A). Go out and back in. This is tricky! Be patient and go slow.

2. Repertoire: Simple Hands Together (10 mins)

- Let's try a simple song with both hands.
Right Hand plays: C, D, E, F, G (as whole notes, one at a time)
While the Left Hand plays: C (as a whole note) for the entire time.
- This teaches the hand to hold a note while the other one moves. It's a big step!

3. Creative Corner: My First Composition (5 mins)

- Let's compose a short, 4-measure song for the right hand using only the notes C, D, and E and any rhythm we've learned (quarter, half, whole).
- Help Mrvacupanda write it down on manuscript paper. Give it a fun title like "Mrvacupanda's Masterpiece." Decorate the page with crayons.

4. Practice Goals for the Week:

- Practice the "Mirror Thumbs" exercise.
- Practice holding the LH C while the RH plays the C scale.
- Practice playing your own composition!

5. Additional Resource:

- [Online Tool: Noteflight \(Free version for writing music online\)](#)

Week 10: Grand Recital and Celebration!

Materials Needed:

- Piano/Keyboard
- Any "concert clothes" Mrvacupanda wants to wear
- A printed "program" listing the songs
- A special treat or reward for completing the 10 weeks
- A camera or phone to record the performance

Lesson Plan:

1. Review and Polish (10 mins)

- Let's do a "greatest hits" run-through. Play:
 - "Hot Cross Buns"
 - "Ode to Joy" (simple version)
 - "Mrvacupanda's Masterpiece" (from Week 9)
- Practice bowing before and after a performance.

2. Grand Recital! (10 mins)

- Set up a small "stage" area. Invite family members or favorite stuffed animals to be the audience.
- Announce the performer: "And now, presenting the amazing Mrvacupanda!"
- Mrvacupanda performs the chosen pieces from the "greatest hits" list.
- Cheer loudly! Applaud! Give a big hug and the special reward.

3. Looking Ahead: Musical Goals (5 mins)

- Talk about what was the most fun part of the last 10 weeks. What was the hardest?
- What song would Mrvacupanda like to learn next? Is there a favorite movie or game with music they like? Set a new goal for the next phase of the piano adventure!

4. Practice Goals for the Future:

- Keep reviewing your pieces to keep them fresh.
- Listen to one new piece of piano music each week and decide if you like it.
- Most importantly: Have fun making music every day!

5. Additional Resource:

- [Explore: The Faber Piano Adventures method books are a great next step for structured learning.](#)