

The Musical Staircase: Singing with Tonic Sol-fa

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Identify and sing the first three notes of the major scale: **Do**, **Re**, and **Mi**.
- Perform the corresponding Curwen hand signs for these three notes.
- Create and sing a simple three-note melody using "Musical Building Blocks."

Materials Needed

- A piano, keyboard, or a free "virtual piano" app.
- Three colorful cards or pieces of paper labeled: **DO** (Red), **RE** (Yellow), **MI** (Blue).
- A small toy (like a LEGO figure or a small doll).
- Optional: A staircase (real or a drawing on paper).

1. Introduction: The Secret Names of Music (The Hook)

The Hook: "Robin, did you know that sounds have secret names? Imagine if every time you climbed a step on a ladder, the ladder sang a different name to you. Today, we are going to learn the first three secret names of music so you can turn your voice into a musical instrument!"

The Goal: Today we are going to learn *Do*, *Re*, and *Mi*. We will learn how they sound, how to move our hands to show them, and how to make our very own song using just those three notes.

2. Content and Practice (The Body)

Step 1: I Do (Demonstration)

The teacher (or parent) introduces the "Musical Staircase."

- **Do:** (The Floor) Place your hand in a fist, flat like a floor, near your belly button. Sing a low, solid note: "Dooooo."
- **Re:** (The Ramp) Tilt your hand upward like a ramp. Sing a slightly higher note: "Reeeee."
- **Mi:** (The Ceiling) Keep your hand flat like a shelf, higher up near your chest. Sing the highest note of the three: "Miiiiii."
- *Teacher Demo:* Sing "Do-Re-Mi" while moving the toy up three steps of a staircase (or three cards on the table).

Step 2: We Do (Guided Practice)

Let's try it together! Use the "Echo Game."

- **Echo Sing:** I sing "Do," you sing "Do" and copy my hand sign. (Repeat for Re and Mi).
- **The Elevator:** We will sing all three going up: "Do - Re - Mi!" and then all three going down: "Mi - Re - Do!"
- **Hand Sign Detective:** I will make a hand sign without singing. Can you guess which note it is and sing it for me?

Step 3: You Do (Independent Practice)

Now it is your turn to be the composer!

- **Musical Building Blocks:** Lay your three colored cards (Do, Re, Mi) on the floor in any order you like (e.g., Do - Mi - Re - Do).
- **The Performance:** Walk along the cards. When you step on a card, sing the note and do the hand sign.
- **Challenge:** Try to sing your "song" fast, then try to sing it very slowly like a sleepy turtle.

3. Conclusion: Recap and Showtime

- **Summary:** "You just learned the first three notes of the musical alphabet! Remember: **Do** is the floor, **Re** is the ramp, and **Mi** is the ceiling."
- **Learner Recap:** Ask Robin: "Which hand sign looks like a flat shelf? Which one looks like a ramp?"
- **The Grand Finale:** Sing "Do-Re-Mi" together one last time with the biggest hand signs possible!

Success Criteria

Robin is successful if they can:

1. Match the pitch of the teacher for Do, Re, and Mi.
2. Perform the correct hand sign when prompted by the note name.
3. Sing a sequence of three notes in the correct order (Low-Middle-High).

Assessment

- **Formative (During the lesson):** Check if Robin's voice goes "up" when moving from Do to Mi. If the voice stays flat, use the toy on the staircase to visually show the "climb."
- **Summative (End of lesson):** "The Mystery Note Game." The teacher sings a note (Do, Re, or Mi) on a neutral syllable like "La." Robin must identify if it was the floor (Do), the ramp (Re), or the ceiling (Mi) and show the correct hand sign.

Differentiation (Ways to Adapt)

- **For the Advanced Learner:** Introduce the note "Fa" (thumbs down sign) and "Sol" (flat palm facing the chest) to expand the range.
- **For the Struggling Learner:** Focus only on **Do** and **Mi** (the "High/Low" contrast) before adding the middle note **Re**.
- **Kinesthetic Variation:** Instead of hand signs, use "Body Sol-fa": Touch knees for Do, waist for

Re, and shoulders for Mi.