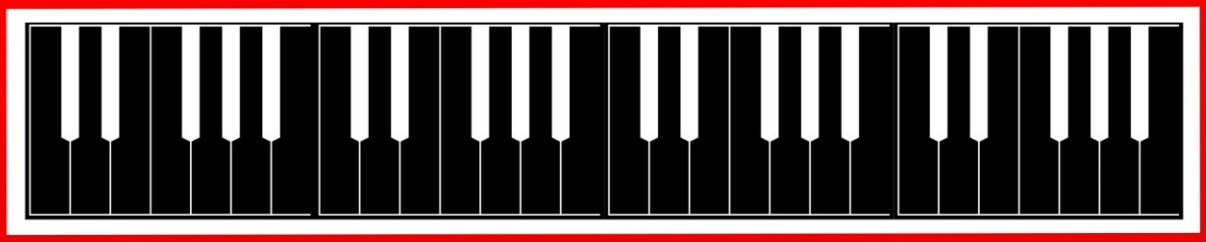
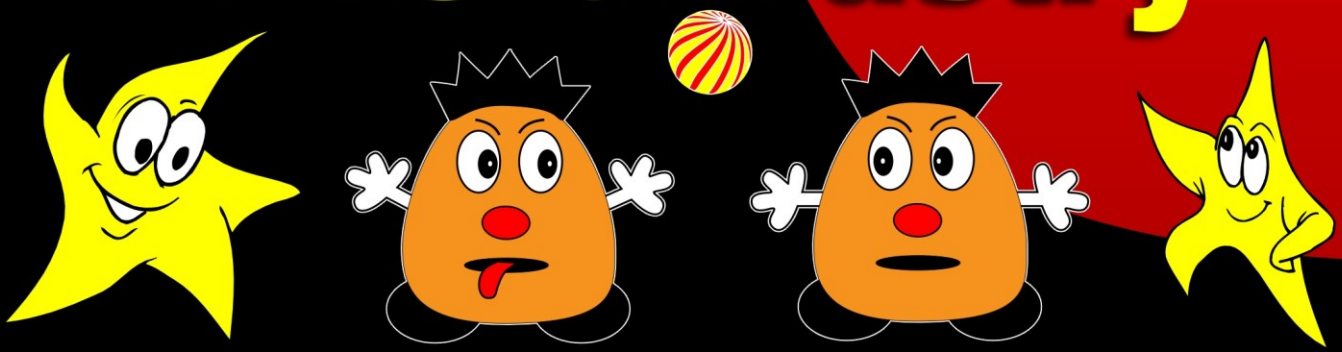


Learn to Play Piano / Keyboard With Filo & Pastry



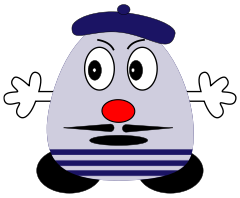
A Tuition Book for Children & Very Silly Adult Complete Beginners!

Martin Woodward

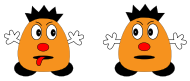
THIS PREVIEW SHOWS RANDOM PAGES

THE PAGE NUMBERS DO NOT COMPUTE TO THE ACTUAL BOOK

Keyboard Notes



Now Gonklings, the first thing that we're going to do is go on a hunting trip.

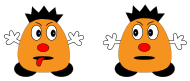
 *"Whoopee doo can I bring my fishing net?" - asks Pastry.*

No, it's not that sort of hunting trip. We're going to go hunting for the most important note on the keyboard which is **'middle C'**.

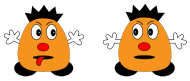
Now keyboards and pianos come in all different shapes and sizes. Some have got lots of keys and some not so many, but all have the same basic arrangement of black and white keys. For our purposes here, it makes no difference whether you have a big one or a little one!

If you look closely you will see that the black notes are in groups of two then three.

This enables us to find every single note easily. And the first one that you must learn is **'C'** which can be found just to the left of two black keys.

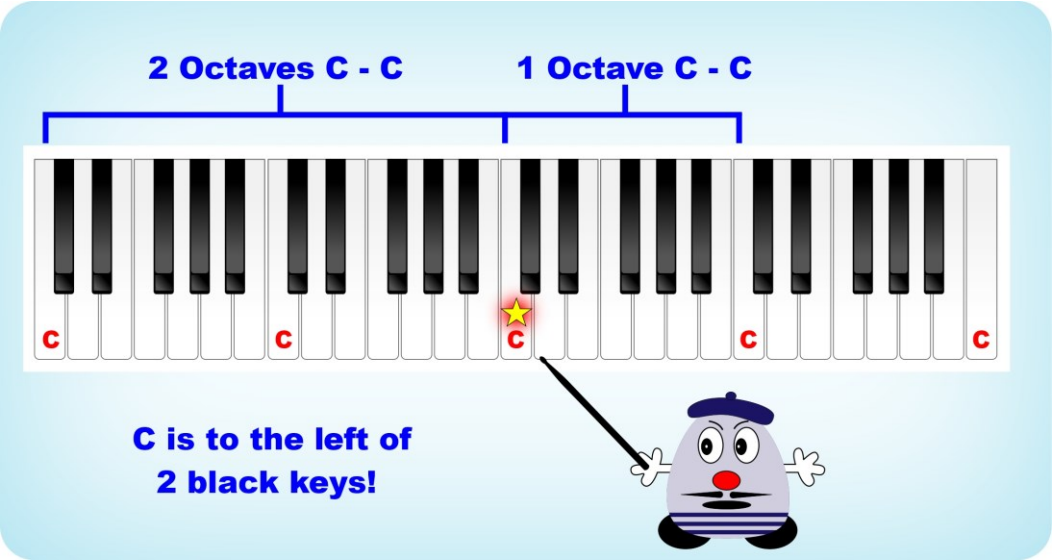
 *"I can find lots of them", says Filo, "so which one is **'C'**?"*

That's very observant of you Gonkling, and the answer is that they are all **'C'**, but each one is an octave apart. And if you count up from one **C** to the next, you'll find that they're eight white notes apart. That's why it's called an octave, just like an *'octopus'* is called that because it has eight legs, and an octagon because it has eight sides and an octet being a group of eight.

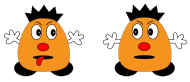
 *"And like October is the tenth month", says Filo with a cheeky smirk.*

Very clever Gonkling! - But in the original Roman Gonk calendar October *was* the *'eighth'* month.

But **'middle C'** is the **'C'** that is more or less in the middle of the keyboard and because it is so important, we are going to put a star on ours as shown.

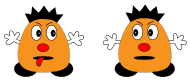


Now all the notes to the left of **'middle C'** get gradually lower in pitch and all the notes to the right gradually get higher. And usually you will use your right hand for the higher notes and your left hand for the lower notes. That is unless you are standing on your head in which case it's the other way around!



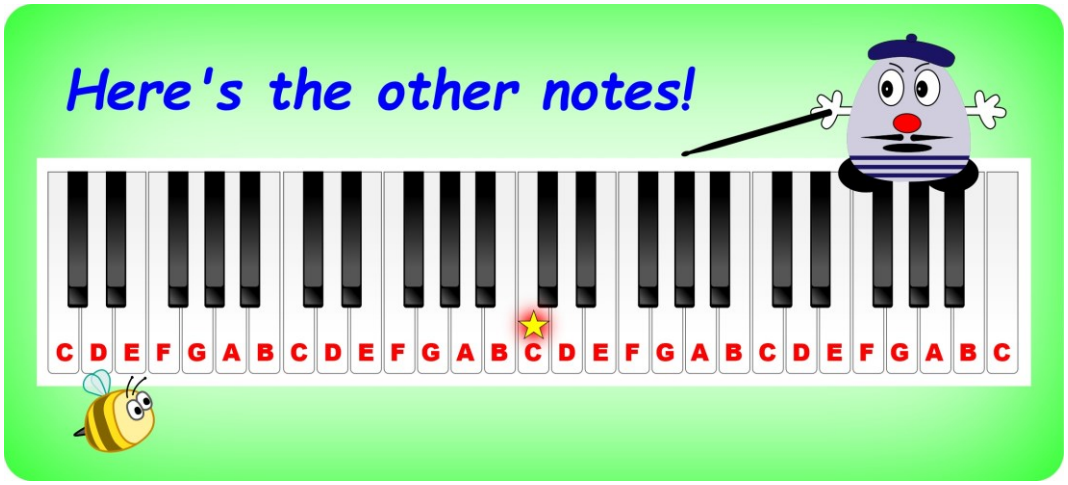
*"So which hand plays **middle C**?"*

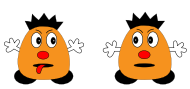
That's a good question Gonkling and the answer is that it could be either, but I will explain more shortly.



"And what about all the other notes?"

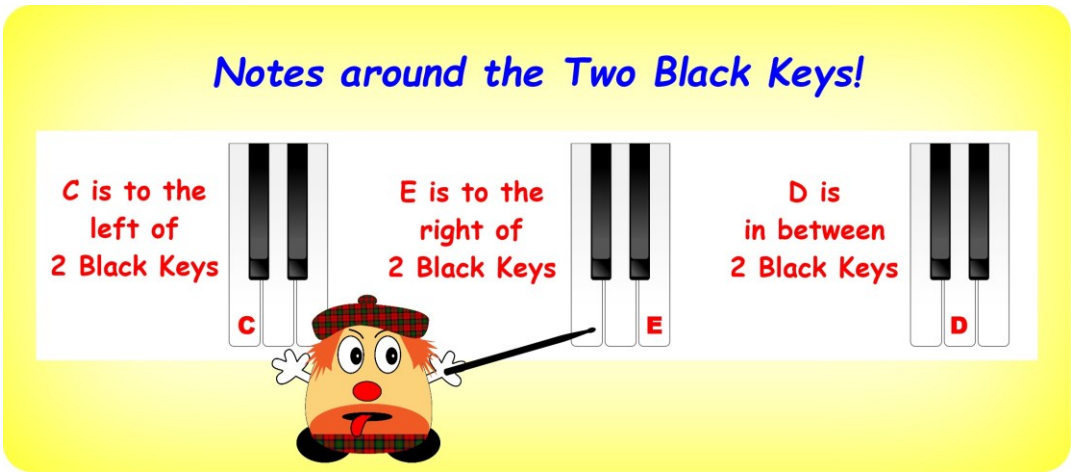
Ok Gonklings, now I'll show you what all the other notes are called, but I don't want you to get too confused about all this at the moment. We will be taking it all step by step.

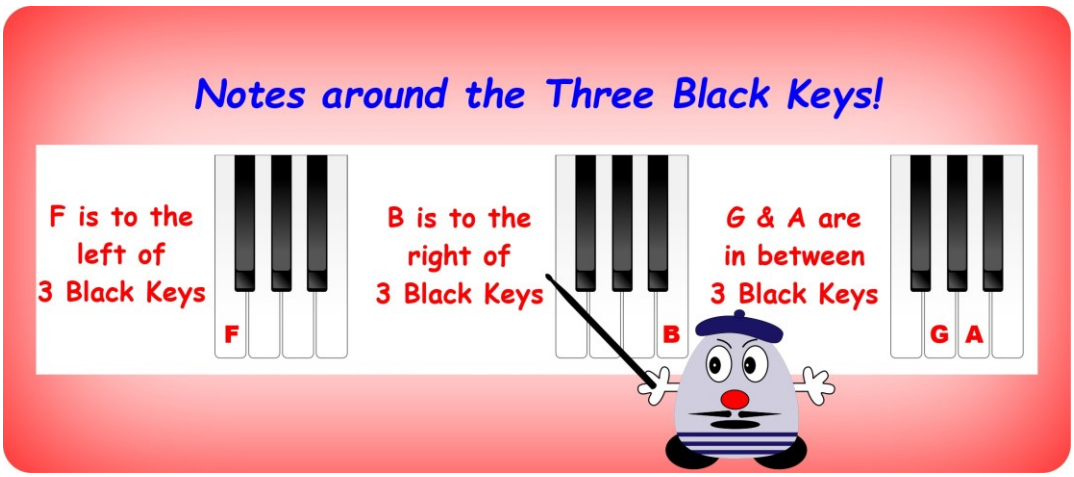




"Oh this is mind boggling M. Duvet. How are Gonklings like us going to remember all this?"

Easy, if you split them up into two main groups according to the number of black notes as Angus and I have shown below:



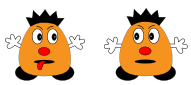


And if you can't remember which comes first **G** or **A,** you're probably going Gaga - get it? - GA - GA!!

 *"I guess that makes it a lot easier, but what about the black ones, what are they called?"*

We'll deal with those a little later as we need to, but you have plenty to learn for the time being.

And next you need to learn a little bit about *'rhythm'* from Leeroy the drummer Gonk.

 *"Thank you M. Duvet."*

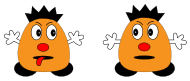
Rhythm Part 1

Hello Gonklings, my name is Leeroy and I'm going to teach you a little about note values and rhythm.

There are quite a few different note values, but the three that we are going to learn today are:

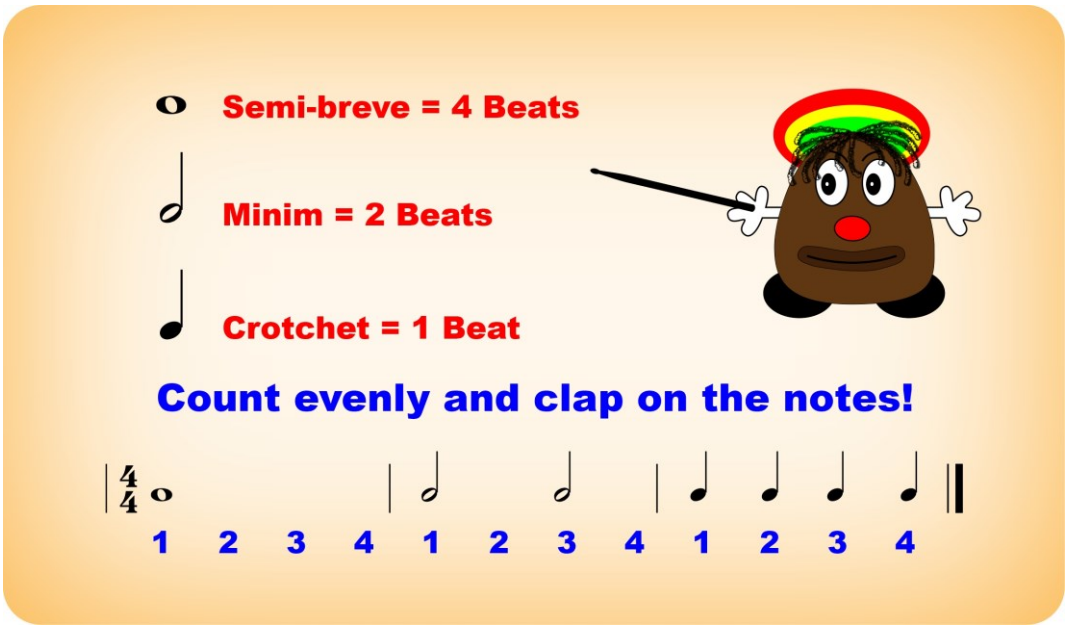
- The Semibreve which = 4 beats (often referred to as a whole note)
- The Minim which = 2 beats (often referred to as a half note) and
- The Crotchet which = 1 beat (often referred to as a quarter note)

Now Gonklings, can you count to four?



"Of course I can, I can count up to ten!" - says Filo proudly.

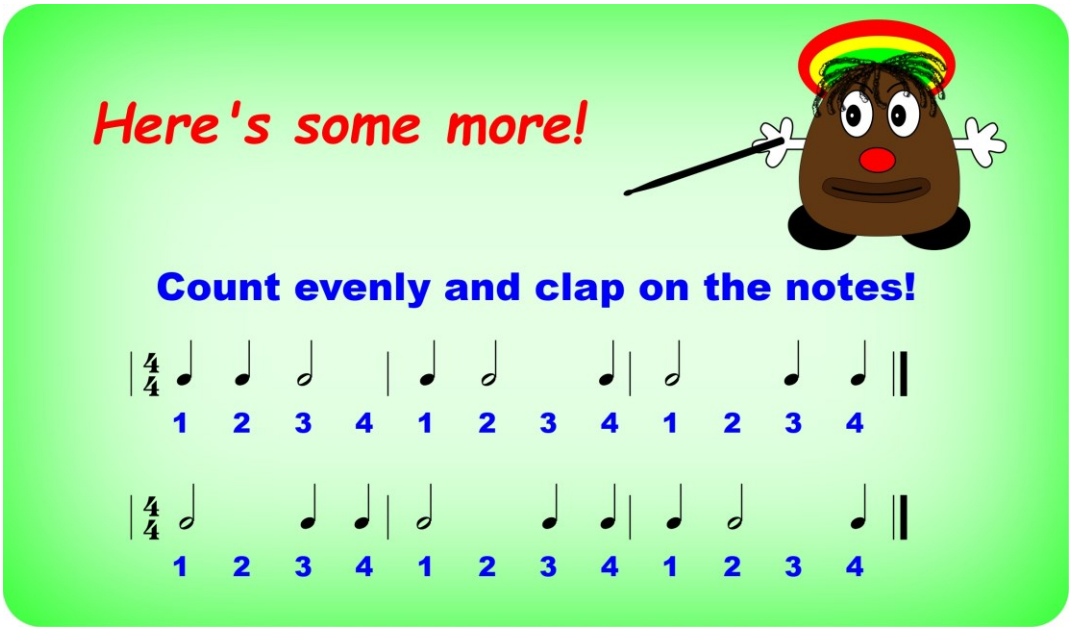
Well that's great because in music you will rarely need to count more than eight.



Now I want you to count out loud or in your head: **1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 -1 - 2 - 3 - 4** and clap your hands on the beats with the notes. Then you'll be clapping the rhythm.

Notice the **4/4** symbol at the beginning. This means that there are 4 beats to each *'bar'*, or *'measure'* which is why you are counting to 4. You can see the *'bar lines'* in the diagrams between each 4 beats.

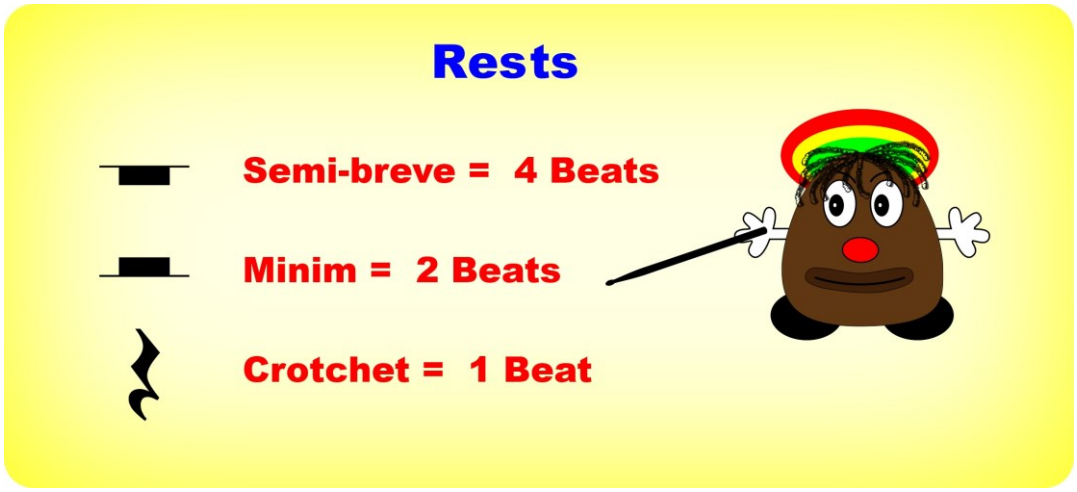
Here's a couple more to try before we move on.



Now every **4/4** bar must always add up to four beats, that is either 4 crotchets, or 2 minims, or 2 crotchets and a minim etc. There can't be any *'leftovers'*.

So, if we need a gap between notes, that is a brief moment of *'silence'*, we have to add a *'rest'* to make up the correct value.

So, there are *'rests'* to the same value of every *'note'*.

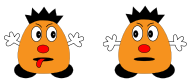


The semibreve and minim rests look very similar but actually are rarely confused as the semibreve will take up a whole bar. And also remember that a minim *'rests'* on the line and the semibreve *'hangs'!*

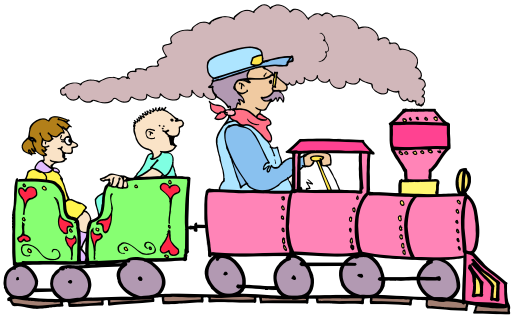
Now let's have a look at how the rests fit in with the notes and do some more clapping.

Notice that the very last bar contains a semibreve rest so is totally silent.

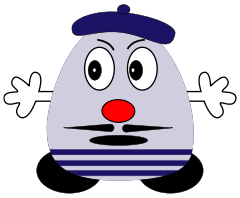
Ok Gonklings, that's it for rhythm for the time being, but there will be much more later.



"Thank you Leeroy!"

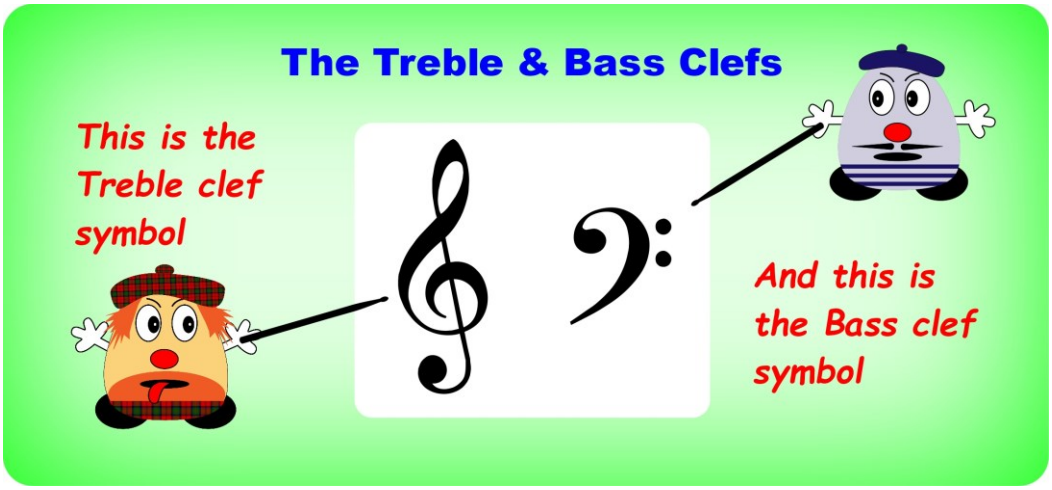


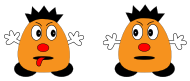
The Grand Staff



Thank you, Leeroy. Now Gonklings, in order to see the notes of the keyboard in music notation, we need to look at the Grand Staff.

The *'Grand staff'* is made up of two *'staves'* or *'staffs'* of five lines each, the top one being the *'treble clef'* which is mainly used for the higher notes by the right hand and the *'bass clef'* mainly used for the lower notes by the left hand.

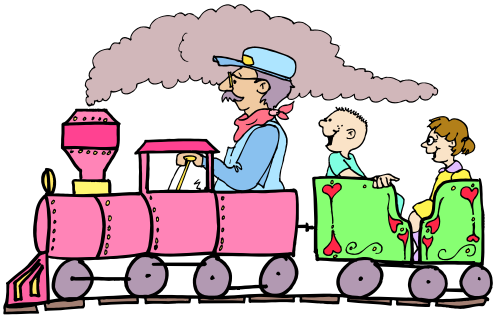


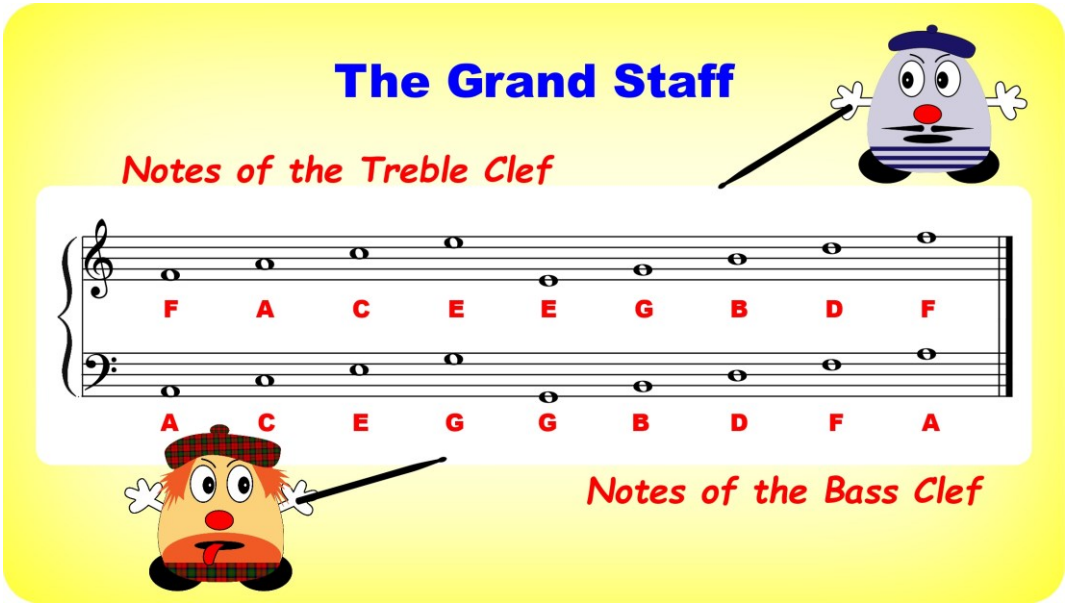


"What's the difference between a staff and a stave?"

No-one seems to know for sure, but a *'staff'* is a *'stave'* - it's just a word, well two words actually, but don't worry about it!

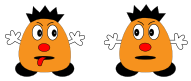
The important thing that you need to learn is that the *'staves'* or *'staffs'* are split into the two *'clefs'* - these are what you need to learn and remember.





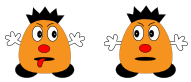
An easy way to remember the notes is to think of them in sections like:

- Treble Clef *space* notes **F A C E** - the word *FACE!*
- Treble Clef *line* notes **E G B D F** - *Every Good Boy Deserves Favours!*
- Bass Clef *space* notes **A C E G** - *All Cows Eat Grass!*
- Bass Clef *line* notes **G B D F A** - *Giant Bears Don't Fly Aeroplanes!*



"Yes, but mummy whales are called cows and they don't eat grass!"

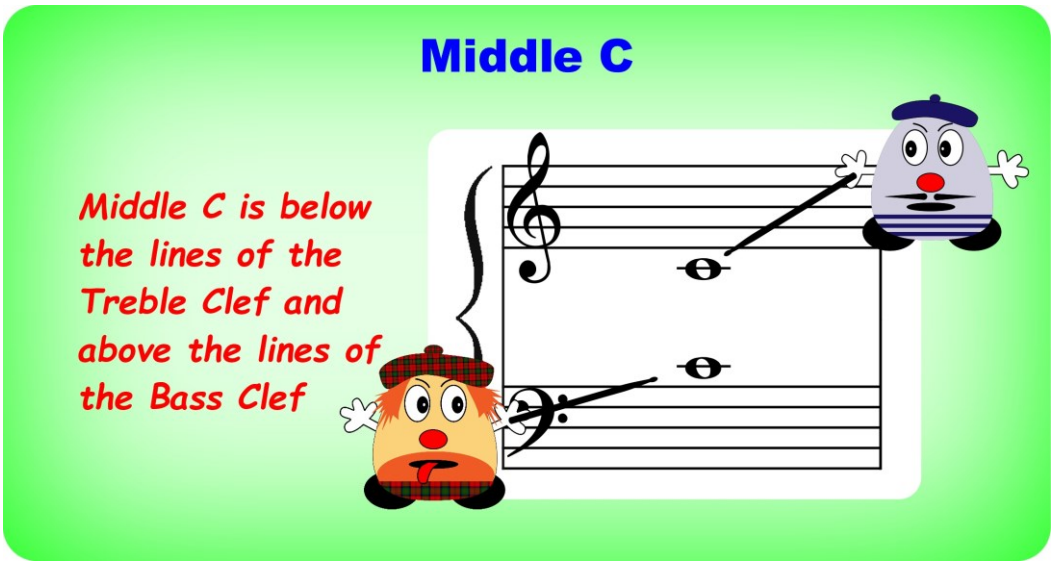
Very true Gonkling, but let's just say that *nearly* all cows eat grass!



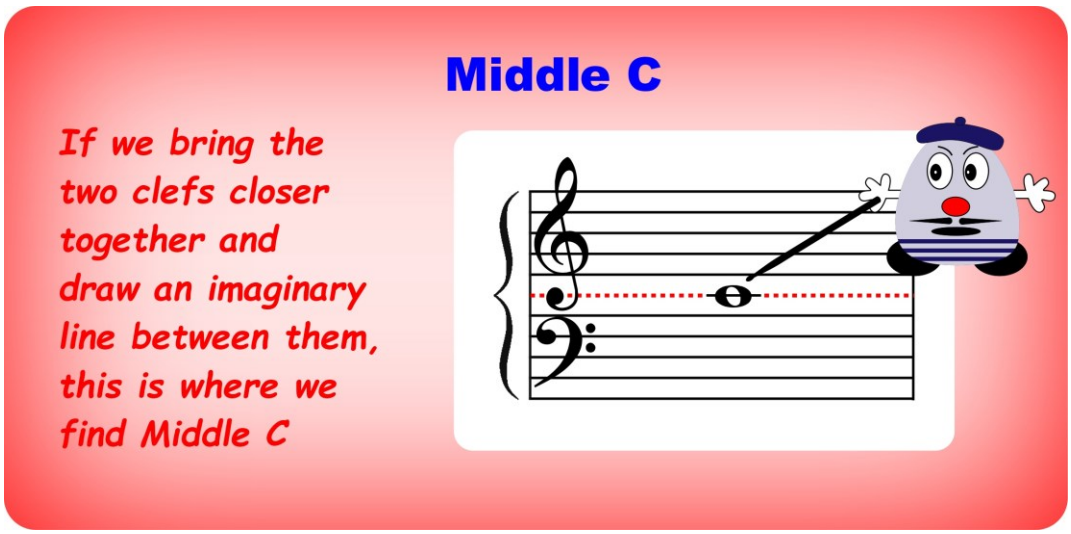
*"So which one is **'middle C'**?"*

Well actually **'middle C'** is not in the above illustration, because it falls below the lines of the treble clef and above the lines of the bass clef. In fact, it's exactly mid-way between both clefs.

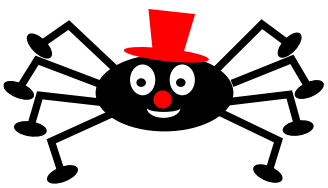
The next diagram will show you where it is!



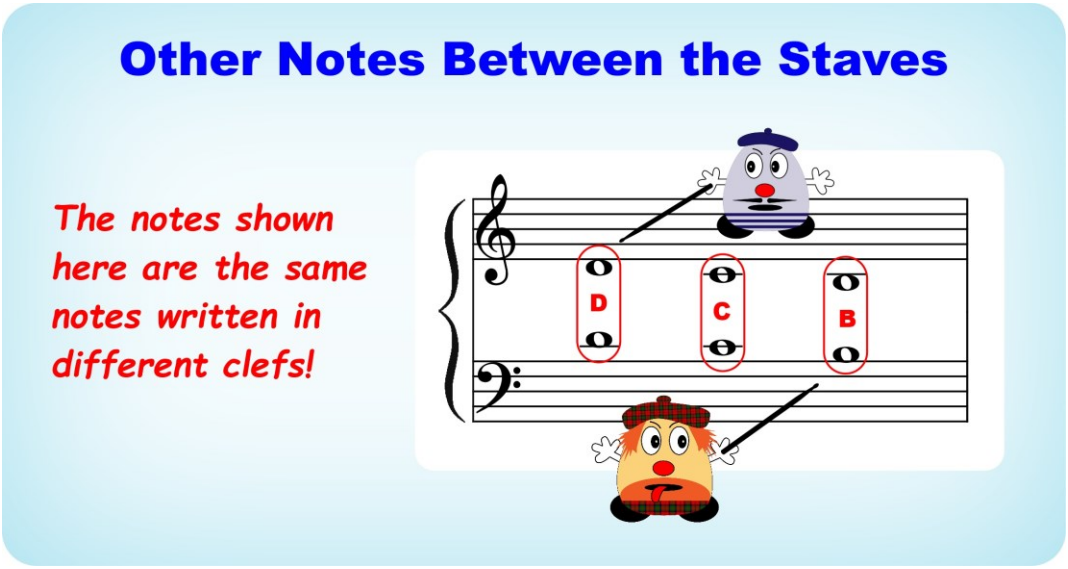
If we bring the two clefs closer together, you will see that there is an *imaginary* line exactly midway between the two clefs and this is where **'middle C'** lives.



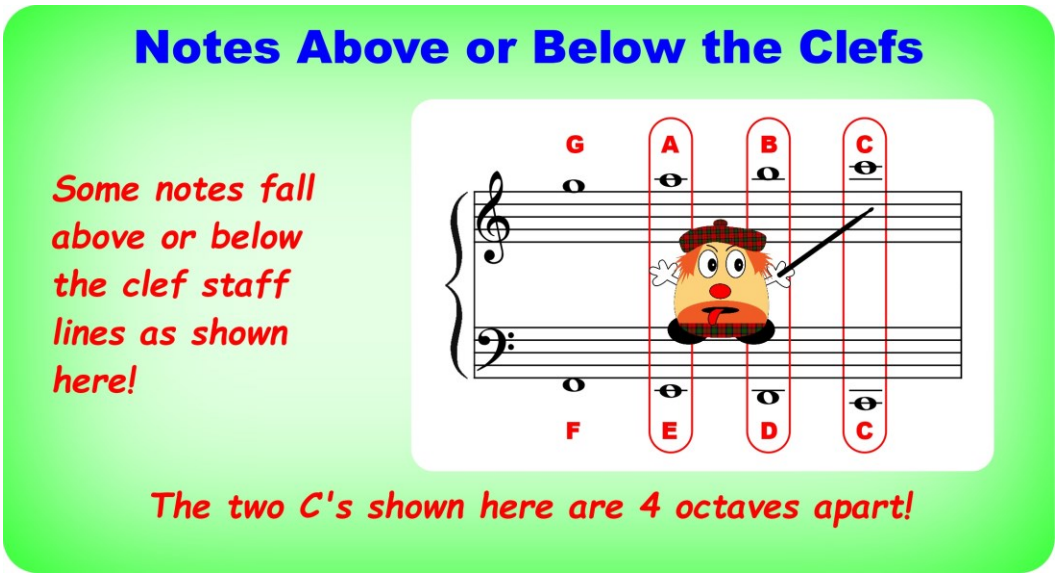
And this is why **'middle C'** has a line drawn through the middle of it. This is called a *'ledger line'* and happens with some other notes as well, in fact any time a note goes above or below the clef lines.



Now the notes both sides of middle **C** (**B** and **D**) also fall either above or below the staff lines which can be seen next.



Now there are also notes that are both *above* the treble clef and below the bass clef as shown below.



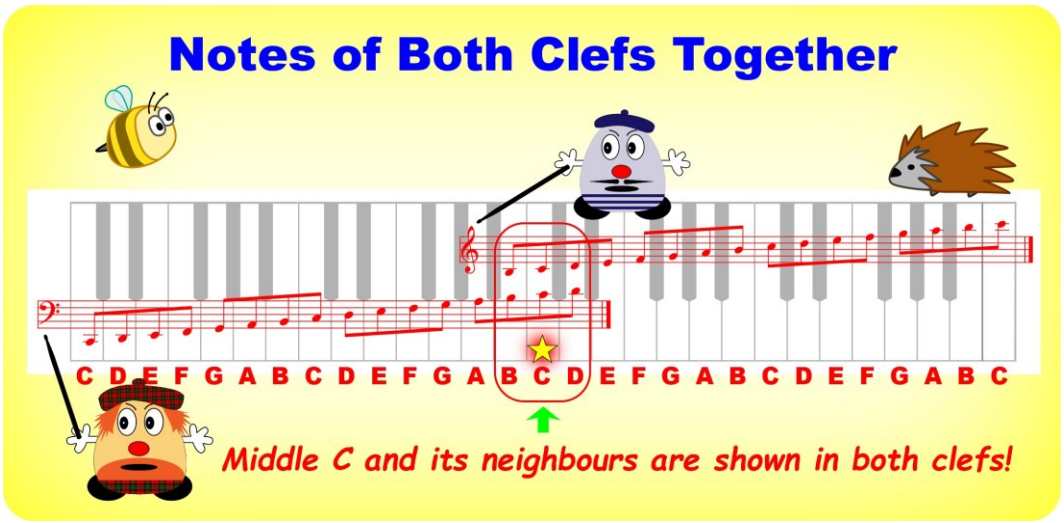
"Oh this is too confusing for a little Gonkling like me M. Duvet, I don't think I'll ever understand all this!" - says Pastry.

Please don't distress yourself Gonklings, we will be dealing with the notes one step at a time and it will all become clear as we progress.

How the Notes Relate to the Keyboard

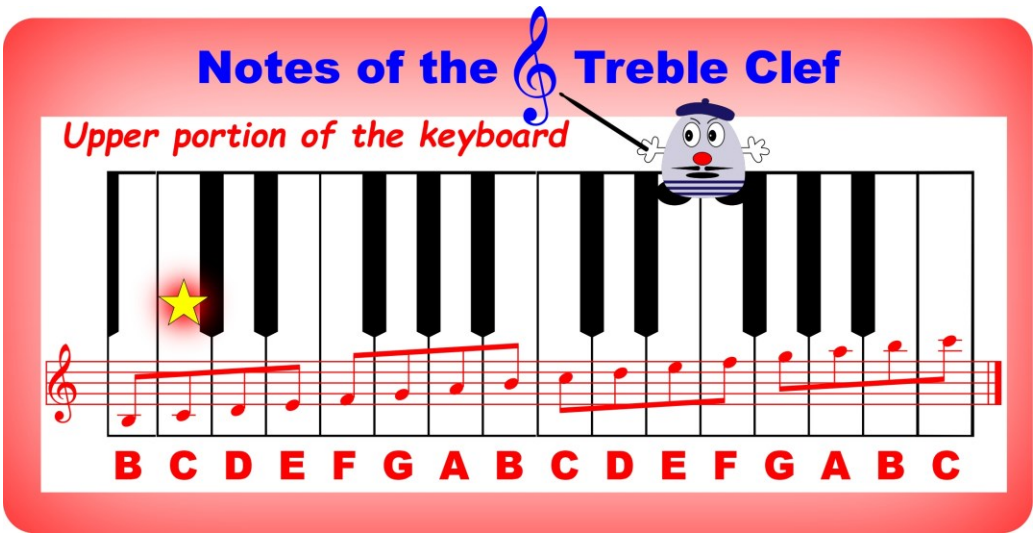
Now we'll look at how the musical notes relate to the keyboard.

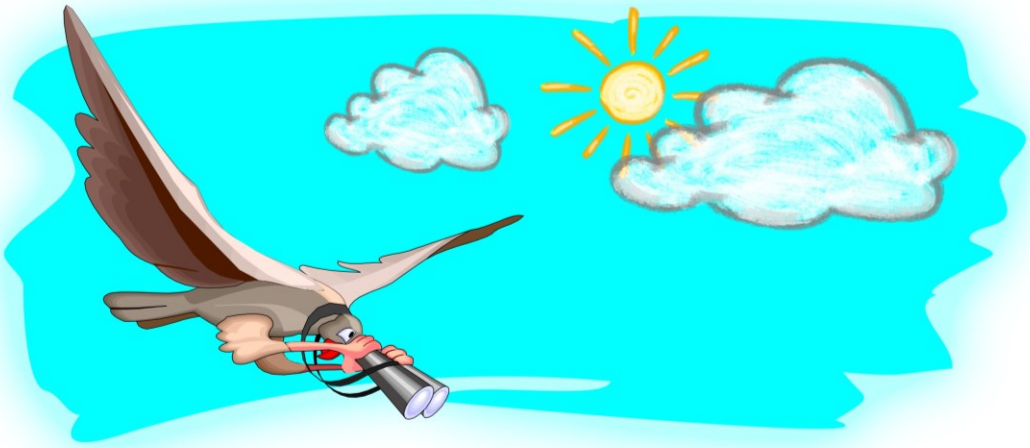
This next diagram may look a little confusing and difficult to read, and if you are reading this on a tablet, it may not be clear.

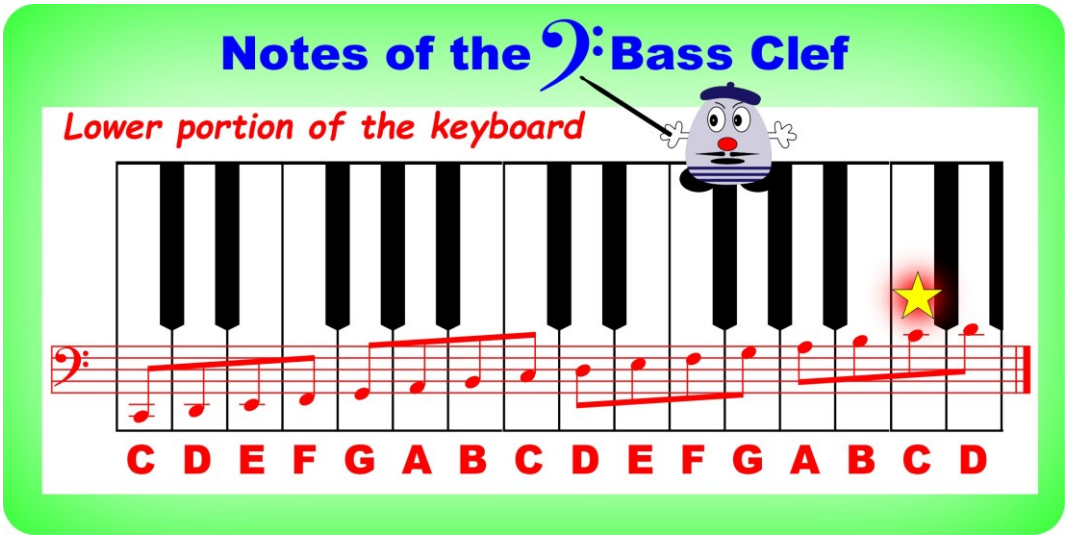


To make this easier to see, in the following diagrams I have split the keyboard into two 2 octave sections, one for each clef, but remember that we have put a star on **'middle C'** so that you can always find it!

So, notice that the next two diagrams are actually the same as the above diagram split into two.

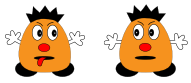






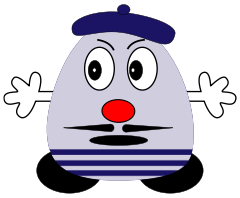
It may be useful for you to print out these three diagrams and look at them in detail, particularly if you are reading the digital edition.

"Ay and don't forget that poor old Angus McDangle has been up all night making these diagrams! ..... And that's why I didn't even have time to shave this morning!"

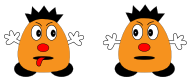


"Oh, thank you Angus, we really appreciate it!"

Let's Begin

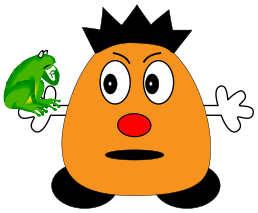


Right Gonklings now we're ready to actually start working on the keyboard, but first let me check your grubby little hands!

 *"We've just washed them M. Duvet - honest!"*

Was that before or after I saw you gonk-handling that slimy frog?

Let me have a look, hmmm, I don't want marmalade or decomposing frogs spawn all over my keyboard! ..... Ok, that'll do for now, but rest assured I'll keep checking!



 *"I've still got him in my pocket," - whispers Pastry to Filo.*

 *"Well don't let M. Duvet see him, remember he's French and they eat frog's legs there!"*

What are you two Gonklings whispering about?

 *"Nothing M. Duvet!"*

Did I hear one of you croak?

 *"It must have been the creaky chair M. Duvet!"*

Hmmm.....!

Right Gonklings, next you need to understand your finger numbering in relation to the piano / keyboard.

Back and Forth 1

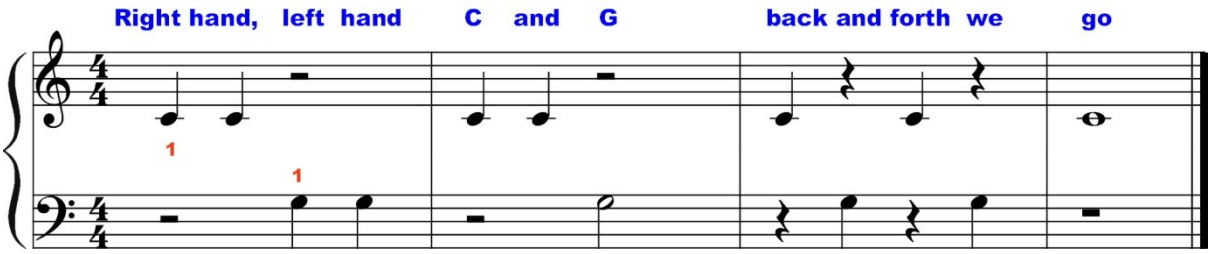
Ok, our first piece is very simple and only requires the thumb on each hand.

But just because it's simple doesn't mean that you should rush it. You must pay attention to correct timing. And each note should be played evenly with equal pressure and held / released at the correct time.

Before you begin, count **1 - 2 - 3 – 4, - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4** etc. evenly, then when you feel ready begin playing on the next **'1'** beat. When you get to the last note, don't release it until you have counted to **'4'**.

It may help you to sing along with the song as you play.

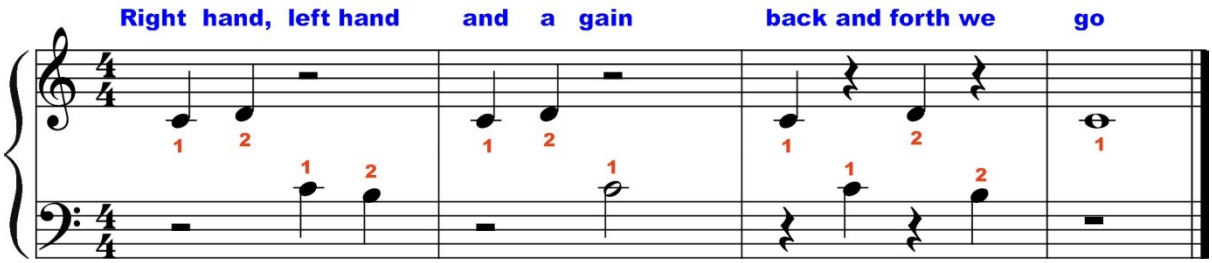
You can hear all the songs and exercises in order via the website link which I'll give you later. Or go now to - http://gonkmusic.com/back_forth.html



Back and Forth 2

This next short piece is unsurprisingly slightly more difficult as you will need two fingers on each hand and also two more notes.

Take note of the correct hand positioning as shown above and begin to press the second key *as* you are releasing the first which will create a smooth transition which is known as *'legato'*.



Note that in this case **'middle C'** is played by both hands (alternately) and the rhythm and rests are exactly the same as the last piece. Most importantly do not play any faster than you can manage. Speed is not important, but accuracy and steady timing is. ♫ http://gonkmusic.com/back_forth.html

Stepping Stones 1

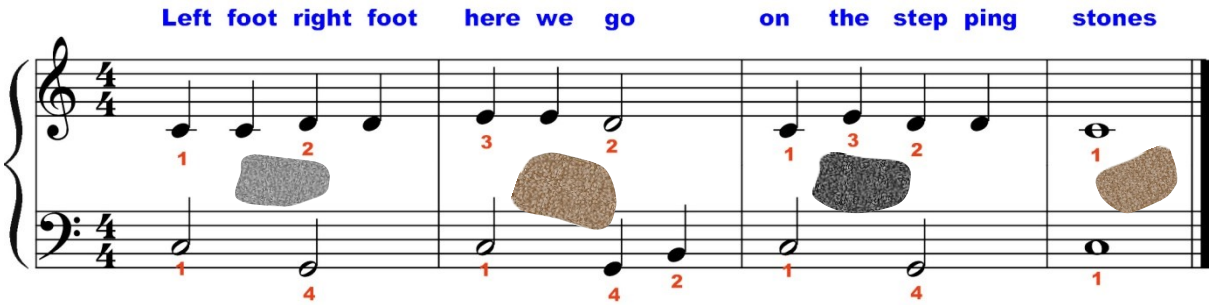
This next little piece introduces another note **'E'** in the treble clef and the third finger of the right hand and fourth of the left hand.

And the **C**, **B** and **G** in the left hand are an octave lower than we used previously.

There are no rests in this piece, so each hand is a little more active.

You may need to practice each hand separately at first, which is fine on this piece as well as all the pieces to follow.

♫ http://gonkmusic.com/stepping_stones.html

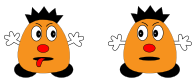


5 Finger Exercise 2

This next exercise is the without doubt the most difficult so far, but also the most important as it will help to give your fingers flexibility and independence.

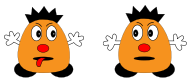
Again, you will need all your fingers and we have added just a couple more notes as shown - the top **'D's'** and bottom **'B's'**.

Look at the fingering carefully as at first it forms a pattern, but then alters slightly so that the new notes - the lower **'B's'** and top **'D's'** fit in.

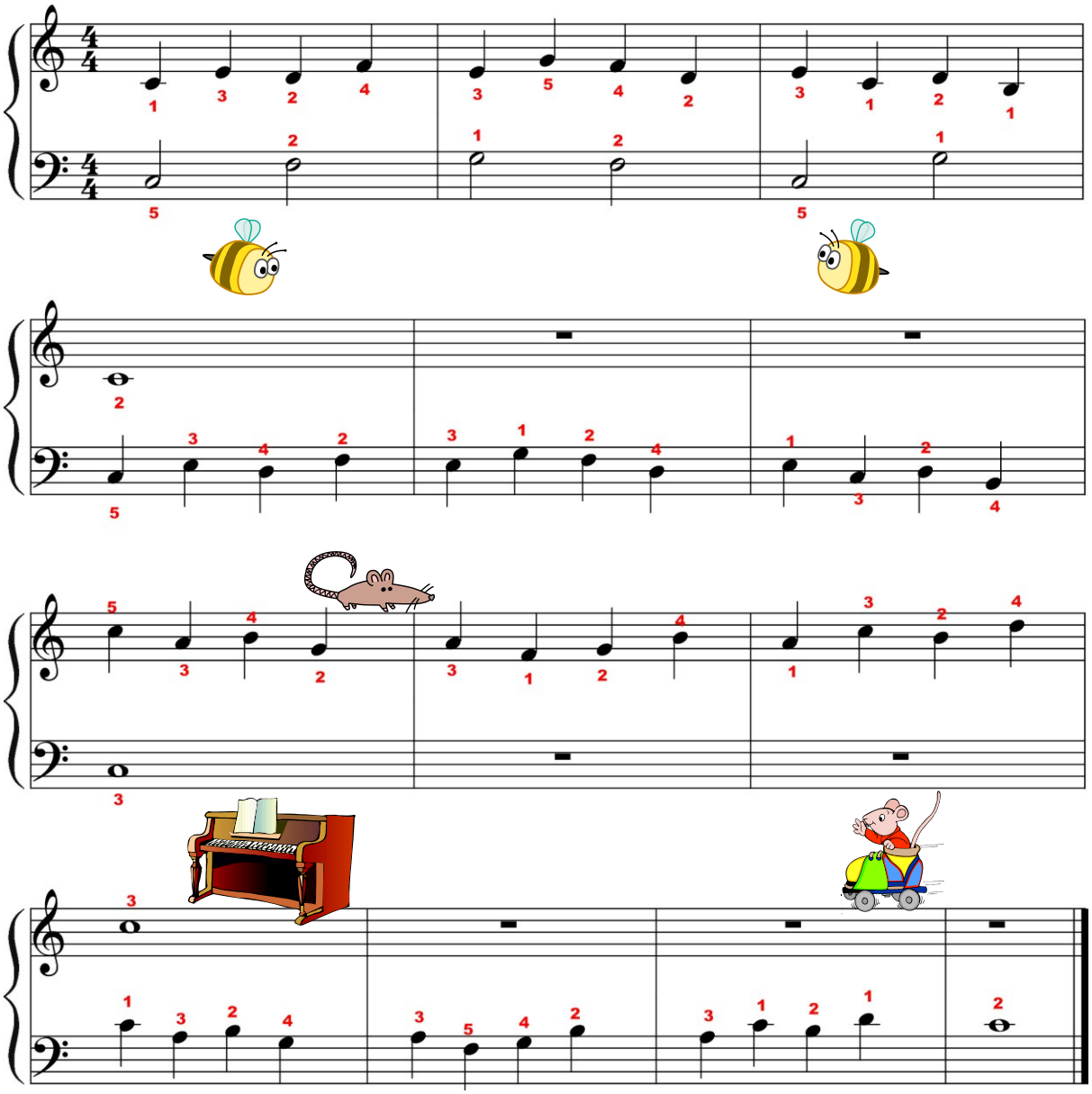


"Oh, we can see the pattern. You play a note, then miss a note then go back to the one that you missed!"

Yes, more or less Gonklings. The idea of this exercise is to *'separate'* your fingers and not to just use them *'in order'*. It's a very good exercise and well worth the effort, as you will see after only a few attempts.

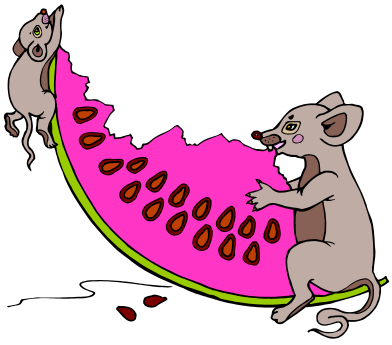


"Yes, my fingers are working better already!" - says Filo.



♫ http://gonkmusic.com/5_finger.html

Big Gonk Tip! - If you feel you need to, you can print out any or all of the exercises / tunes and write on the note names above or below each note.



His name is really spelt *'Phuket'* - just like the Island of Phuket in Thailand, but for fear of mispronunciation we'll spell his name as it sounds - *'Pookette'*.

Pookette actually comes from Bangkok in Thailand, so he is not really Chinese, but near enough!

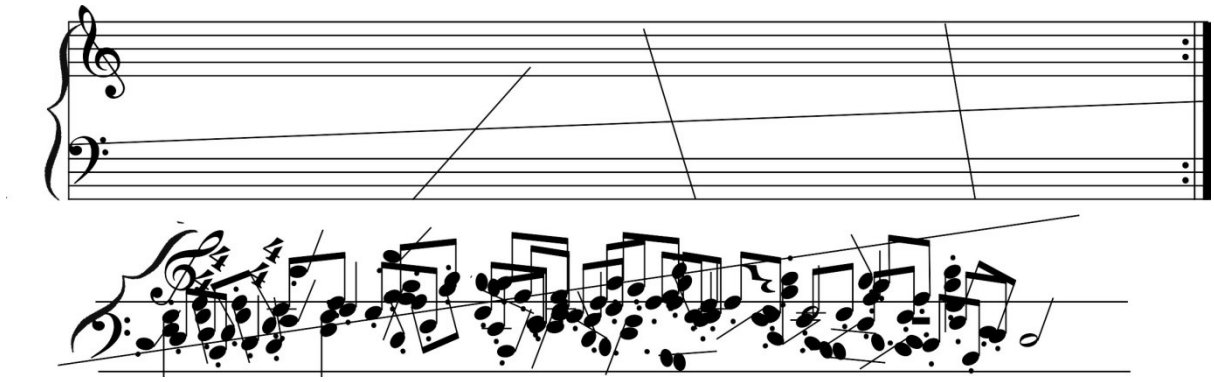
I've spent a full day training him and trying to get him to communicate in English, but my goodness it is hard going. And I have to say that my patience has been stretched to the limit and beyond!

So as Angus McDangle is no longer here and the note cupboard is locked, I am unable to show you anymore of his *'note charts'*, although fortunately I do have enough notes for our needs. I have to say that I am really embarrassed about this. I know it's so unprofessional, but what can I do? - it is beyond my control!

But by now, you should know most of the notes and on just about all of the pieces to follow, you will need all of your fingers on both hands.

Anyway, hopefully we'll now move on to our next little piece which is the ***'Jolly Farmer'***. I've left Pookette to stick all the notes in place, so let's see how he has got on.

The Jolly Farmer



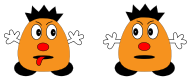
 What the ..... for goodness sake - POOKETTE! Where are you?

 *"Sorry, sorry Mr Alan - don't worry I fix it, I fix it! It not me, it fripping plitstick, it not sticking!"*

 Oh for ff goodness sake, did you try taking the *'fripping'* lid off?

 *"Sorry, sorry Mr Alan - please no hit me, I go to Bangkok!"*

 Yes that's right Pookette, you go off to Bangkok and just leave me to sort your mess out!

 *"Now's a good time to let the frog loose!" - says Filo in hysterics!"*

 *"Calm down, calm down - Peace be upon you Gonklings!"*

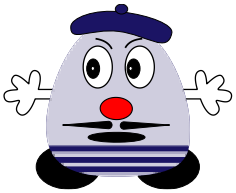
 Who the heck are you?

 *"I'm Angelico the Gonk Guardian Angel, and I've come to calm things down! ..... Take deep breaths and think happy thoughts!"*

 Happy thoughts, happy thoughts? ....Well I suppose it was his first day!

 *"Thank you Mr Alan, thank you. I make you velly nice wok up for tea!"*

The Jolly Farmer - Attempt 2

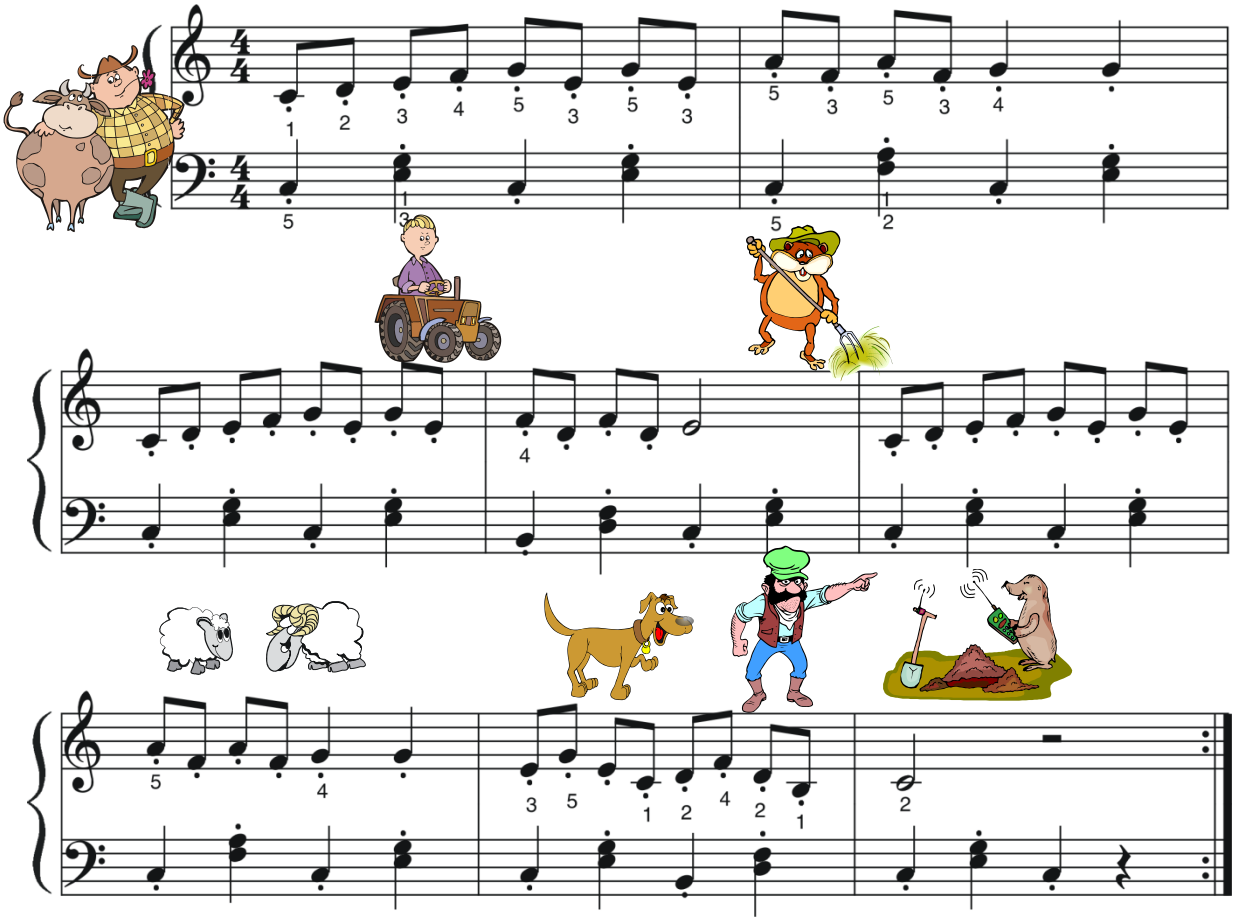


Well what a day we've had eh? But anyway, it all ended ok, we got the *'fripping plitstick'* working right and everything is fixed, and then we a had a wonderful wok up with oodles of noodles!

Anyway, this next little *'staccato'* piece is quite simple, especially if you have been practicing the 5 finger exercises from earlier.

The only new thing is that you'll notice that the left hand plays a couple of notes together. This is nowhere as difficult as it looks, as it is mostly repeats.

But you may find it necessary to practice each hand separately at first, which is fine. And of course, don't go any faster than you can manage.

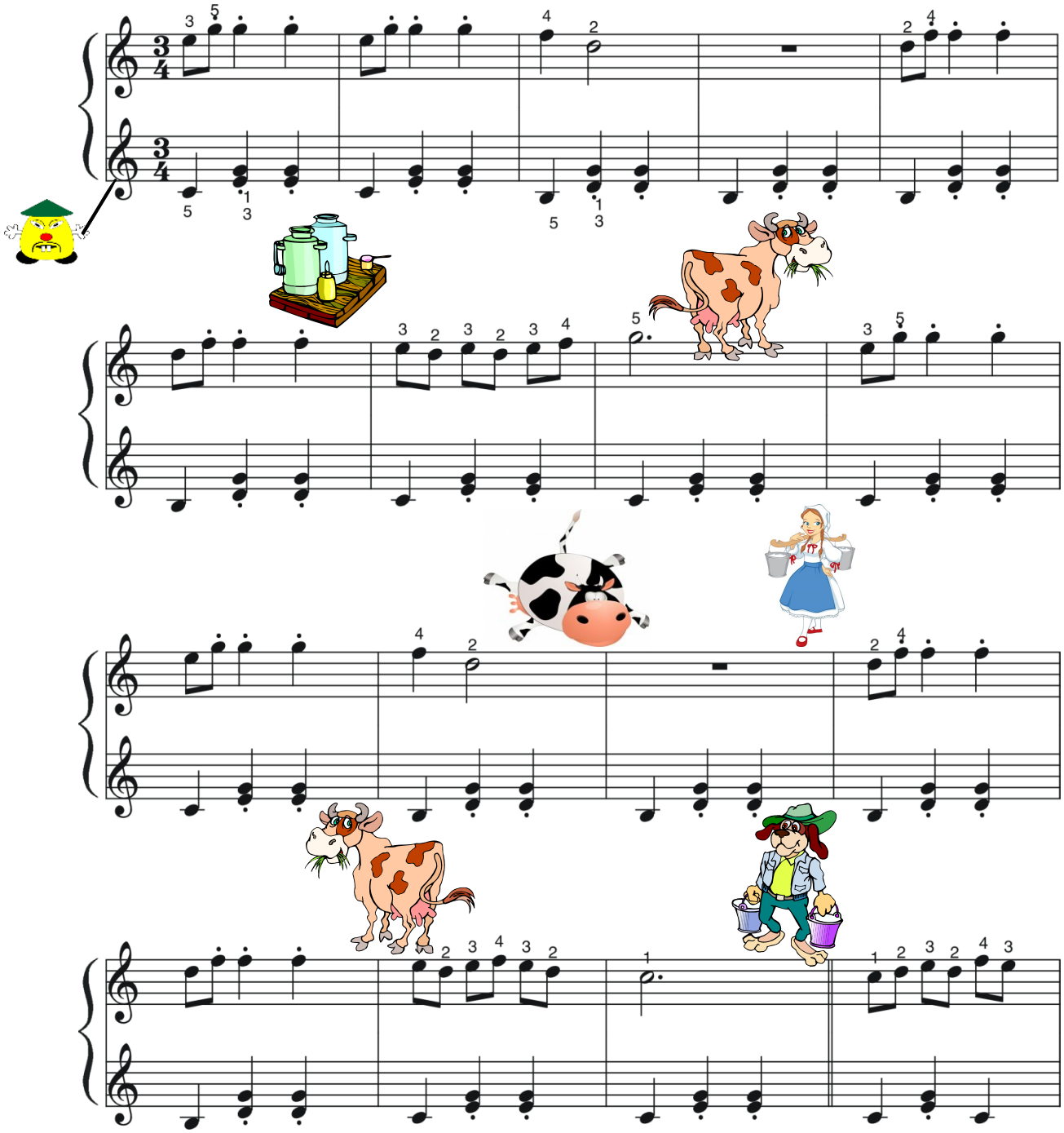


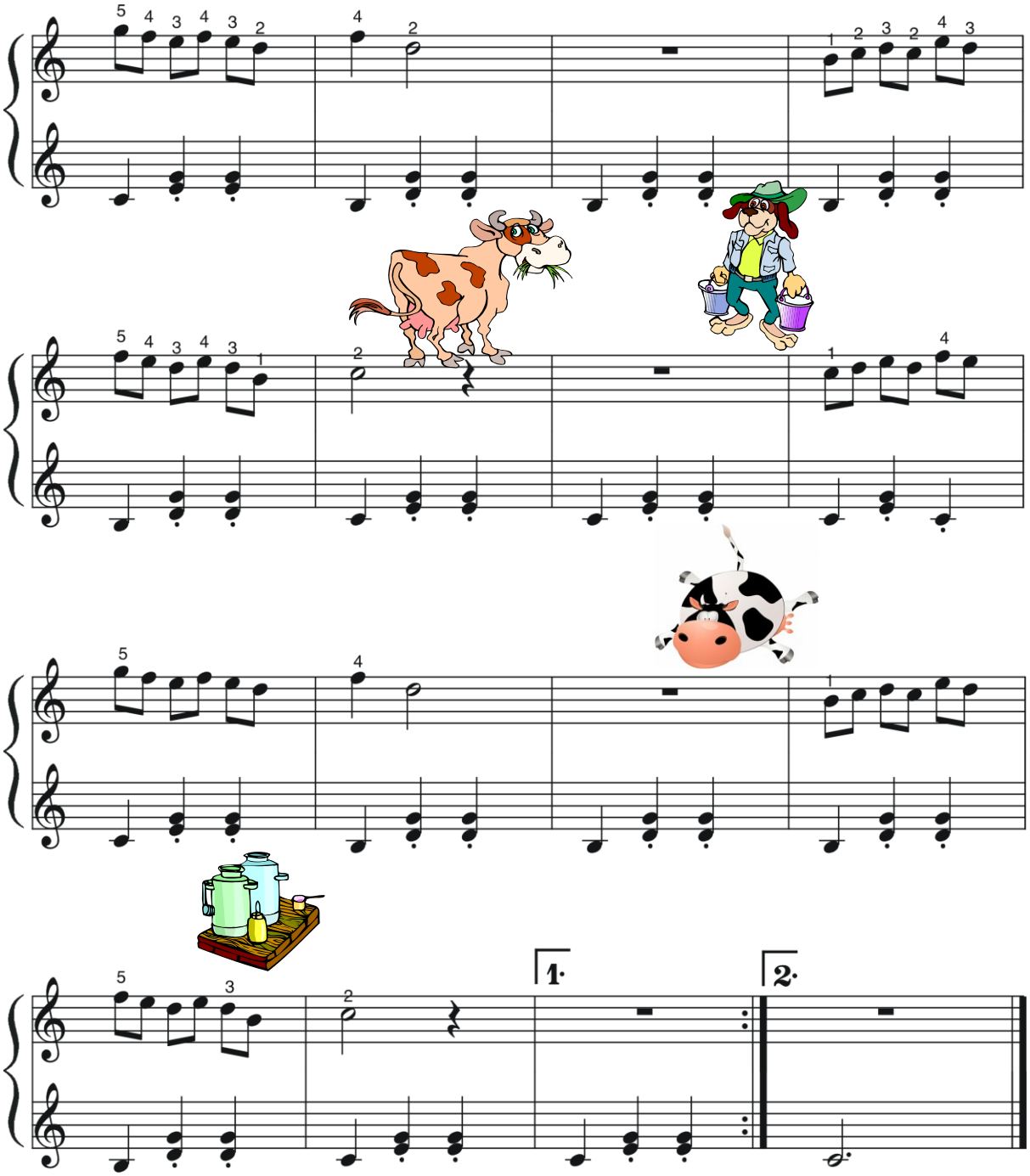
♫ http://gonkmusic.com/jolly_farmer_2.html

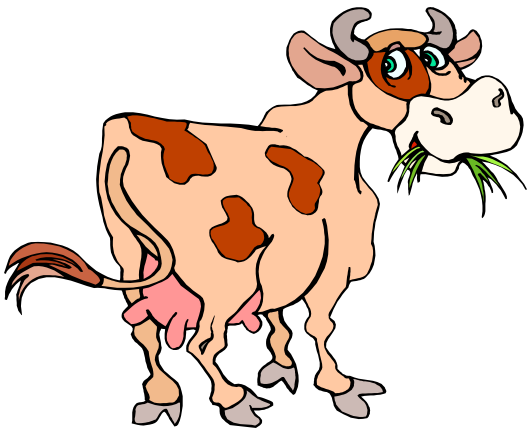
Jolly Milkmaid

This little piece is in **3/4** timing and should be played *'teasingly'* and *'joyfully'* and mostly *'staccato'*. But steady at first, one hand at a time if necessary.

Most importantly notice that the left hand uses the *'treble clef'* the same as the right hand. There are also repeat marks at the end.

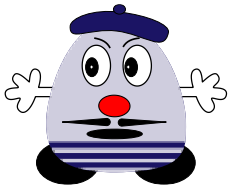






♫ http://gonkmusic.com/jolly_milkmaid.html

Your First Scales



Pre Scale Exercises

Up to now Gonklings, none of the exercises or tunes that we have covered require any *'finger crossovers'*.

But in order to play scales and more interesting pieces *'finger crossovers'* are essential.

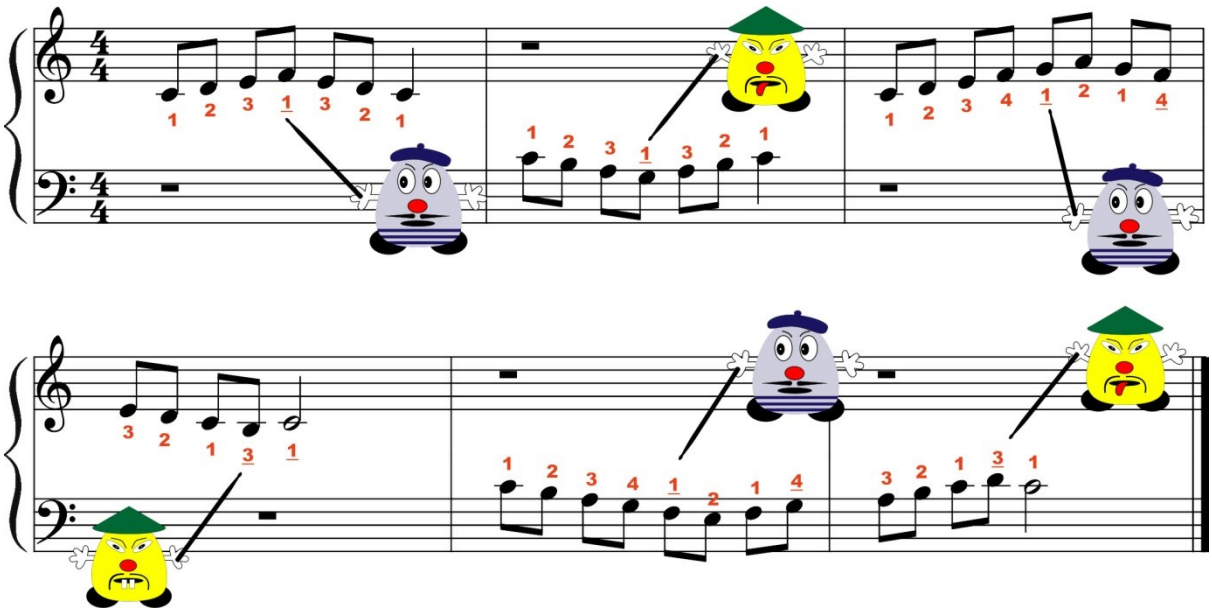
The most common crossovers are achieved by passing the thumb under the third or fourth fingers ascending and passing the third or fourth fingers over the thumb when descending, as shown in the following photos.

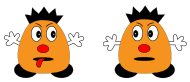
Passing the Thumb under (ascending)

Passing the 3rd Finger over (descending)

In order to help you learn this technique, I have included this next exercise, but **you must** follow the fingering as stated so that you can practice the finger crossovers.

Practice this slowly and evenly. ♫ http://gonkmusic.com/pre_scale.html





"Excuse me M. Duvet, but what exactly is a scale?"

A scale is a series of notes played in order usually ascending and then descending for one or more octaves.

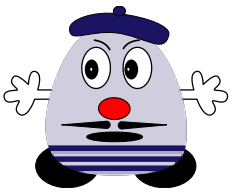
There are different types of scales including:

- Major
- Minor (harmonic, melodic and natural)
- Chromatic
- Blues
- Pentatonic (major and minor)
- Whole tone

What identifies the different types of scales is the intervals used in their makeup. However, we will only be dealing with a few major scales, harmonic minor scales and the chromatic scale in this book.

To explain further we'll firstly look at the **C major** scale.

The Major Scale



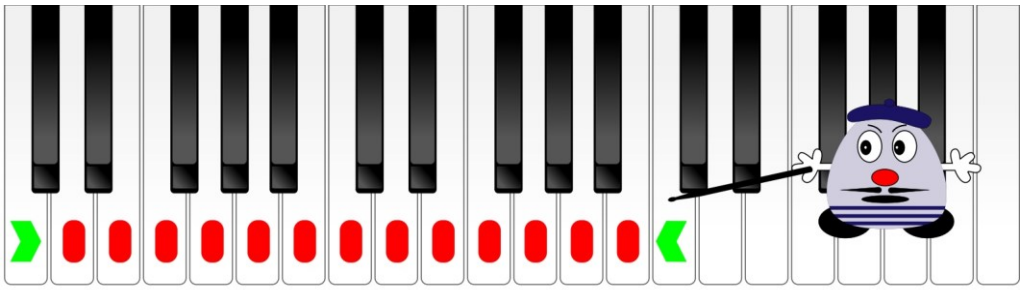
There are 12 major scales, one for each black and white note.

Every major scale has identical intervals. The only thing that makes them different is that they start on different notes and consequently are *'pitched'* differently.

For instance, **C major** in its root mode will start on **C** and **D major** on **D** etc.

If you remember what I said previously about intervals and look carefully at the following diagram of the **C major** scale, you'll see that the intervals are as follows:

1. **C - D** is a tone (2 semitones, or *'full step'* in USA);
2. **D - E** is a tone;
3. **E - F** is a semi-tone (*'half step'* in USA);
4. **F - G** is a tone;
5. **G - A** is a tone;
6. **A - B** is a tone;
7. **B - C** is a semi-tone.



C Major Scale (2 octaves)

Or to put it another way it's: **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1** for a one octave span, which is the interval sequence for *every* major scale - *2 being a tone and 1 being a semi-tone.*

So, with a bit of mathematical knowledge you could easily work out every major scale. But here I'll show you the first few that you should learn and as you progress, you'll no doubt learn all of them, which is a very good idea.

The major scales we'll be dealing with here are the first *sharp key* scale: **G**, the first *flat key* scale: **F** as well as **C major** which has no black notes and is therefore neither a *sharp key* nor a *flat key scale*.

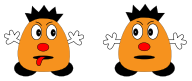
These are all shown both in keyboard and notation view in the next few pages - with audio links as usual.

In all cases I've included the *important* fingering in the notation. Where no fingering is included, it simply follows consecutively. But to help you further, I've included *all* the fingering in the keyboard views.

Ideally each of the scales should be practiced every day, a few times each for two or more octaves with each hand separately and then together at a comfortable speed.

But although speed is not important, accuracy and fluency *are*. Try to play each note with equal velocity in strict time - using a metronome is ideal!

You will notice that the fingering is the same for most of the scales, which is **123, 1234** in the right and **54321, 321** in the left hand. But the **F major** scale is different and is **1234, 123**, this is due to where the **B flat** falls.

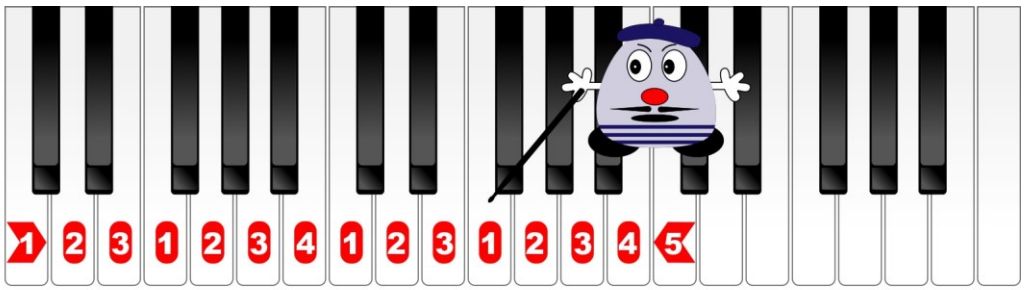


"Why do we need to learn scales M. Duvet?"

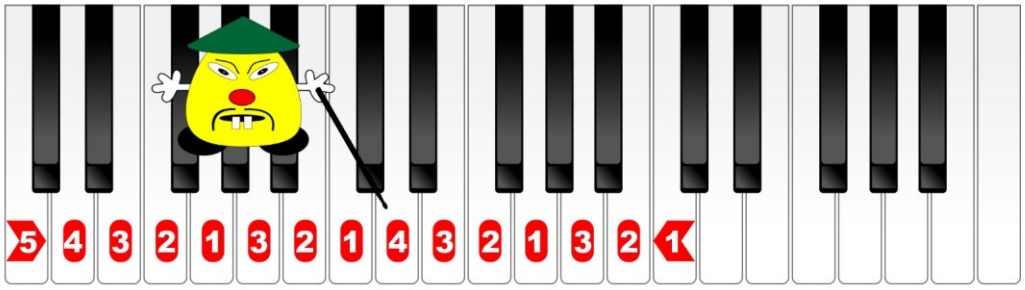
Scales are vitally important. If you practice them correctly and regularly, they will improve your finger technique enormously and as you get to know all the other scales, it will also improve your theoretical understanding. Please trust me Gonklings - *they are important!*

C Major Scale

Now Gonklings, the next diagram shows the **C major** scale for two octaves.



Right Hand



Left Hand

Here's the notation for the **C major** scale ascending and descending for two octaves. Notice that there are finger crossovers from **E - F** and **B - C** in the right hand and from **G - A** and **C - D** in the left hand.

Notice also that the left-hand changes clefs from bass to treble and back.