



*The Kikuchi Music Institute Library*

# **Learning Music (Primer A)**

A basic reader for the young music student, that builds vocabulary and explains how to practice through a progressive series of instructional and motivational readings.

By Lee W. Kikuchi

***Learning Music*** is a systematic vocabulary builder and instructional system for young music students in yearly graded levels: Primer (A & B), Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4. It was developed at the Kikuchi Music Institute to accompany basic music instruction. This system can be used for all beginning music students on any instrument to help establish the foundation of working vocabulary and good practice habits. **A corresponding supplemental book is required for each specific instrument: Piano, Violin & Viola, Cello & Bass, Flute, Clarinet & Oboe, Bassoon, Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, Guitar, Electric Bass, Banjo, Voice and Percussion.** Following completion of Level 4, the intermediate student should proceed to *Understanding Music*, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4, after which the student would proceed to *Understanding Musicology*, a comprehensive text book for the pre-college high school student.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	v
Introduction .....	ix
Directions .....	1
Practice .....	2
Basketball.....	3
Step-by-Step .....	4
Practice Saying (List 1) .....	5
Review Questions 1 .....	6
Quarter Note and Half Note.....	7
Measures .....	8
Rhythm.....	9
Bar Lines .....	10
Practice Saying (List 2) .....	11
Review Questions 2 .....	12
Matching Game (Synonyms) 1.....	13
Repeat Sign .....	14
No Gaps.....	15
Duet.....	16
Time Signature.....	17
Practice Saying (List 3) .....	18
Review Questions 3 .....	19
The Musical Alphabet.....	20
Going Up or Down.....	21
Saying Letters Backward.....	22
Know Which Letter .....	23
Practice Saying (List 4) .....	24
Review Questions 4 .....	25
Matching Game (Synonyms) 2.....	26
Metronome .....	27
M.M. Marking .....	28
Three Speeds.....	29
Increasing Speed .....	30
Practice Saying (List 5) .....	31
Review Questions 5 .....	32
Legato .....	33
Correct Finger Motion.....	34
Hand Coordination .....	35
Precision .....	36
Practice Saying (List 6) .....	37
Review Questions 6 .....	38
Matching Game (Synonyms) 3.....	39
Two Ways of Counting .....	40
Even Notes.....	41
Three Rhythms.....	42
Following With Your Eyes .....	43
Practice Saying (List 7) .....	44
Review Questions 7 .....	45
Memory .....	46

To Memorize .....	47
Memory Errors .....	48
Memory Check List .....	49
Practice Saying (List 8) .....	50
Review Questions 8 .....	51
Matching Game (Synonyms) 4 .....	52
Staff .....	53
Clef .....	54
Lines and Spaces .....	55
Step, Skip, Repeat .....	56
Practice Saying (List 9) .....	57
Review Questions 9 .....	58
Lesson .....	59
Technique .....	60
Theory .....	61
Performance .....	62
Practice Saying (List 10) .....	63
Review Questions 10 .....	64
Matching Game (Synonyms) 5 .....	65
Review Matching Game 1 .....	66
Review Matching Game 2 .....	67
Recitation Drills .....	68

# Preface

The many method books for teaching music, especially the newer ones, are excellent for teaching musical concepts and developing the essential technique. However, I have found that they can be somewhat lacking in building a useful musical vocabulary and in explaining how to practice. I suspect the former is due to the varying ages of beginning students and their relative levels of reading ability. After all, it is not really the music teacher's job to teach reading. The latter is probably due to the fact that so many teachers have very different approaches to practice, and the writers of these method books prefer not to advocate any specific method because it might limit the appeal for their method system and hence reduce sales.

Regarding the first area of building vocabulary, I believe that the most important foundation needed for a successful student-teacher relationship is a working vocabulary. This vocabulary obviously includes the basic musical terms (which are explained well within the method systems), and it includes other basic English words which the student must know in order to understand the teacher's instructions. For example, the simple expression "Practice Directions" which appears in virtually all the books, actually has two words which are both difficult to read and to pronounce for most young beginning students. But beyond the reading, the student probably also has only a limited grasp of their meaning. It is incumbent upon the teacher to explain to the student exactly what "practice" means, and exactly what it means to follow "directions".

Yet, beyond even these simple words, there is another area of vocabulary that encompasses the many other English words that are used in music, which have either slightly or significantly different meanings from their more common non-musical usage. Words like "high", "low", "keys", "phrase", "slur", "value", "beat", "balance", "steady", "signature", "measure", "dynamics", "smooth", "short", "even", and "control" all have very crucial and specific meanings when used to describe music, which differ from how they are used outside of music.

Then, to progress more deeply into the area of vocabulary, it is necessary to establish a set of working concepts that help the student practice and learn. These concepts are abstract. They are not easy to describe and it takes weeks, months or even years for a student to embrace them sufficiently for meaningful application. Concepts like "focus", "drill", "form", "structure", "analysis", "making perfect", "progression", "shape", "direction", "climax", "intensity", "expression", "attention to details", "care", "diligence", "relax", "peak", "anxiety", "character", "criticism", "performance", "self-criticism" and "style" all reflect very large areas of cognitive and emotional development which the young student is only beginning to understand and in some cases the student will only truly grasp at adolescence. It is this latter, far more difficult area of vocabulary which the method books would never attempt to include, but yet form the primary areas of instruction for all music teachers. How one teaches these difficult concepts is what distinguishes the good teachers from the mediocre ones.

In fact, one might even say that the student's development in these more abstract areas is the primary reason parents encourage or require their children to study music. Years of training with a good music teacher will develop a student's abilities so strongly in these areas, that the student reaps countless benefits in many other of life's pursuits – especially academic study. Few parents

of music students expect their children to become famous and lucrative musicians, but almost all understand how music develops the young mind in the these important areas.

Then, finally there is the issue of “how to practice”. Above I was probably being slightly generous to the authors of the method books by asserting that their omission of meaningful practice instruction was due to a desire for allowing the many teachers to use their own approach. However, my personal observation and assessment based on what I have witnessed from students transferring from other teachers and numerous discussions with many musicians over the past 20 years is that very few teachers actually teach a student *how to practice*. The most common instruction is basically “repeat until it’s right”. Some good teachers may explain formal analysis and may even have simple devices for learning certain favorite techniques. However, the tradition in music is to give assignments, identify mistakes and ask the student to fix them. Usually the teacher demonstrates the correct way to do it, and asks the student to try to imitate it. Within these limited confines, those students who manage to figure it out will succeed and those who never do, will fail and quit.

The fact that so many teachers are content to take such an approach is probably the saddest part of the state of music education in America. Instead of inspiring appreciation of music across the broadest spectrum of our society, music teachers are instead simply weeding out the less talented in favor of the ones they hope will become the next generation of musicians. When we recognize this fact, there is no wonder that the arts are suffering from so little support. After all, if schools only kept the brightest students and expelled those who had difficulties learning to read, would there be any demand for libraries, books and journals? If only 10% of our society ever received a meaningful education in literature, clearly such literary establishments would dwindle to a rarefied bastion within the social culture. Instead, our schools devote 2 hours daily for 6 years and then about an hour daily for another 6 years to ensure that all Americans have a basic proficiency in reading. In addition, the greatest majority of America’s youth get 9 years of sports education (4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades), but get almost no real music education. If everyone graduated High School with a basic understanding of music and the arts, just as they learn how to read and play basketball, the face of society would be greatly transformed. Since the schools have failed us so completely in this area, it is the responsibility of every music teacher to embrace every student and impart to that student a meaningful exposure to music regardless of her or his abilities.

However, before I continue this line of reasoning, let me point out that there is one group of musicians I must exclude from this criticism. This is the group of musicians who specifically study music education, and devote themselves to improving how music is taught, especially to young people and to those without inherent talent. They study and research the process. They understand issues of cognitive development and methods of learning. They forever try to broaden their sphere of influence to include the many other music teachers who have not specifically studied music education, which happens to be most music teachers because most music teachers have spent their educational years becoming fine musicians, and not taking education courses.

Therefore, with the exception of the trained educators, music teachers are primarily individuals who have studied their instrument for 15 or more years, with diligence and devotion, and to an extremely high level of proficiency. They are the ones who had talent, who figured out how to practice on their own, and had minimal difficulties. They were not the average music students who never intended to pursue music as a career – and who now fill their music studios!

How can such naturals be good teachers? How can they instruct young students who have difficulties? Most cannot, unless they have studied education or have within their bag of talents

also the talent for teaching (which does happen). Instead, it is the history of music teaching that the less accomplished but better teachers teach the less talented and the more accomplished teach only the more talented. These high-level teachers either reject the students who fail to meet their expectations, or intimidate them until they quit and leave them for another teacher. Or yet worse, they take their money for years despite the fact that the student is not progressing, and then blame the student for not learning (rather than accepting responsibility for not teaching).

As a result, in my commitment to being a very good teacher of **all** students, I have written this series of books. I believe I was a very talented young musician, whose biggest talent was figuring out how to practice where my teachers were not giving me much guidance. I progressed and advanced to a high level not by chance, nor by sheer force of will, but because I figured out the processes needed to acquire the skills that I lacked. I was bright and succeeded in many areas academically, and I did not have time to waste on processes that did not yield results.

In my teaching, I work to give all my students the skills needed for studying music. At the end of every lesson, I want my student to know not only what to practice, but **how** to practice it. My job as a teacher is to develop each student's ability for self-criticism and self-correction. Each student must learn to judge his/her own playing and **must** also know what to do to fix the things that must be fixed. After 5 to 10 years of study (depending on the starting age), every student should be fully equipped with the tools needed for continuing music development – which includes advanced study at a conservatory or the personal pursuit of music at home.

*Learning Music* establishes the foundation for my teaching approach. In the 1000s of lessons I have given, there are 1000s of stories and motivational talks I have made to my students, most of them specifically aimed at the student. However, many of these instructional talks are universal in their application to all students and tend to get repeated over and over. In this series of books I have developed these talks into a systematic instructional method. With each reading example, the student not only learns new musical words, but also learns new concepts about how to learn. Step-by-step the student learns how to practice and how to become a better musician.

Of course *Learning Music* does not replace private teaching instruction, not by a long shot! Instead, it is intended to ensure that **all** students get equal exposure to the learning process. Remember that at any given time, a music teacher has students at 10 different levels (that is, 10 different years of study), and even within a given level the students are at different places. Therefore, it is easy for the students not to get the same exposure (which can also vary based on the teacher's moods or current areas of focus). Sometimes students with specific problems will get the same lecture week after week, whereas a student who seemingly lacks a problem never hears that lecture, which still might have been beneficial. *Learning Music* collects all these important lessons together so that every student benefits from each one. Even the most talented student benefits from understanding what she or he is doing right!

Some students learn by doing, some students by listening/watching and some students learn by *reading*. The private lesson is primarily a listening/watching/doing modality, and *Learning Music* gives the reader types a better chance at learning too. Likewise, even the best listeners cannot possibly remember everything they hear. *Learning Music* puts it in writing so that they can go home and read it to refresh their memory and fill in the gaps. If necessary the teacher can reference a past reading assignment to be re-read because the student has forgotten the words or concepts explained. Finally, lots of time is saved at the lesson by minimizing the talking and allowing more time for demonstration and doing. The time needed to discuss and redirect a

reading assignment after the student has read it is much less than what would be needed to present and drill the material verbally at the lesson.

Each level of *Learning Music* is coordinated with the student's musical development within a method book series. Although I use Bastien Piano Basics, my books work well with any similarly graded series. Therefore, they are graded as Primer (A & B), Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4. The primer level is divided into two parts, A & B, only because there was too much material than could be fitted into one book. Upon completion of the Level 4, the student would then proceed to the intermediate course, *Understanding Music*, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4. Past the Intermediate Levels, my soon to be written *Understanding Musicology* text book the junior or senior high-school musician for study at the conservatory, with music history, music analysis and collected writing by other authors.

I also intend to develop a special book, *Learning Music Pre-Primer* to help the young student who is not yet reading. This book will include reading and writing exercises that help the student learn to read the basic music words, and introduced vocabulary at a very slow pace. The *Pre-Primer* book should be used in conjunction with the special books designed for the very young (students ages 4, 5 & 6). The *Pre-Primer* book can also be used for students age 7 and 8 who read below their age level. When the student has completed the *Pre-Primer* book, he/she should be ready for *Learning Music Primer Level*.

I am very excited about this series, as I hope you will be too. There are many very good teachers who never contribute to the body of educational literature and no doubt that is a sad loss for all of us who could have benefited from their talent and expertise. However, when one decides to make a mark by actually writing something, one really must consider whether such an attempt actually adds to the existing published literature. Not only do I believe that *Learning Music* adds to what exists but I also believe it fills a much needed void. Only 30 years ago, when I was a student, the old method books lacked a meaningful approach to technique and theory, and now all the newer method books are excellent in both these areas. The next logical step is to develop a meaningful way to teaching vocabulary and how to practice. *Learning Music* provides both completely and in a wonderful systematic approach that works with the method systems teachers are using today. Maybe in a few years, the publishers will buy my series and incorporate it into theirs to create the next generation of music method systems.

Lee W. Kikuchi  
November, 2005

# Introduction

This series approaches musical vocabulary in a systematic way and can work with any graded method series. Further, this book is for **all** types of music students and there are special supplemental books for the different instruments: piano, violin & viola, cello & bass, flute, clarinet & oboe, bassoon, trumpet, horn, trombone, guitar, electric bass, banjo, voice & percussion. The page numbers in each supplement are coordinated with the page numbers in this book. **This book should not be used without its corresponding supplement(s).** The first page can be assigned with the first lesson providing that the student's reading level is adequate (around 3<sup>rd</sup> grade). The teacher should assign one-two pages with each lesson, in coordination with the method books. If the student's reading ability is fairly good, and the student is progressing quickly, assign three-four pages commensurate to the student's progress in the method books. Assigned pages should be graded and any areas of difficulty must be discussed with the student before proceeding.

Some pages cover musical topics, and some cover more general ideas – but all are related to music in some way. The lessons are grouped as follows: 4 readings with questions, a list of words to practice reading and review questions. There are also cumulative review questions and other exercises throughout.

The reading word lists are important for students whose reading ability is slightly behind the average and for retention of ideas. Just saying the words can often have the effect of reviewing the concepts covered in the readings, but in much less time. Have the parent work with the student on the reading assignments and the word lists. Resort to lesson time only if necessary and you deem it important. If a student does not read the words easily, that student probably needs to wait a few months to a year before using these books.

Do not skip any lessons, as the new concepts introduced often rely upon understanding ones learned in previous lessons. Repetition and review is built into the system, but the teacher is welcome to development supplemental exercises or tests to help ensure retention. If a student demonstrates lack of retention at a later date, re-assign applicable lessons and review them with the student verbally. **Footnotes alert the teacher to the corresponding pages in the supplemental books which should be assigned.**

The first lessons in each level beyond the Primers are cumulative review of the previous level, so it is possible to start a student at Level 1 or Level 2 commensurate to her/his ability. This is most likely to happen with transfer students. In addition, each book beyond the primer has a glossary at the back so that the student may read definitions of words he/she does not know or has forgotten. Musical and non-musical terms are included.



# Directions

Following *directions* is very important. They tell us how to do something. They tell us the right way to do something. When we do not follow directions, we are much more likely to make mistakes. Sometimes we might even break something, or have to start all over again because we made so many mistakes. If you do not follow directions when you put together a toy, it might break because it is not strong enough. If you do not follow directions when you make a cake, it might taste bad, or might look strange. When we follow the directions from the very beginning, we save time. We do not have to do things over again. We can have much more fun, because the things we are doing come out better. We can feel good about ourselves because we did it ourselves and because we did it the right way from the very beginning.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. Directions tell us how to make something, like a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. If you do not follow directions, the thing you are making might \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Following directions saves you time, because you do not have to do something \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If you do not follow directions you are \_\_\_\_\_ likely to make mistakes.
5. When you DO follow directions, you can feel \_\_\_\_\_ about yourself.

# Practice

“Practice Makes Perfect” is a very famous saying. It means that many things are hard to do, and only by doing those things many times can we learn to do them well. Sometimes, you may find something is very difficult. You may try many times, over and over again, but somehow you still cannot do it. This saying can help you keep trying. Whenever you want to quit, just say to yourself, “Practice Makes Perfect” as a reminder that some things are just very hard and may take many tries before you can do it right. Whenever you practice something, the goal is to do it perfectly. The first time you try you probably will make many mistakes. Each try after that, you should make fewer and fewer mistakes. Eventually, after many tries, you can do it perfectly – NO MISTAKES! Sometimes, when you try to do something over and over, you get to the point where it does **not** get any better. You seem to make the same mistakes each time, or what is worse, you make different ones and more of them! Whenever this happens, you need to take a break. You need to do something else to clear your mind. Then later that day, or maybe the next day you can try again and see if things go better with a fresh start.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. When do you need a fresh start in practicing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Practice means doing something \_\_\_\_\_ until it is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A famous saying about practice is “\_\_\_\_\_”.
4. This saying can help you \_\_\_\_\_ whenever you feel like \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The goal in practicing is to be able to do something with \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes, in other words to do it \_\_\_\_\_.

# Basketball

The game of basketball requires some very important skills. These are: 1) dribbling, 2) shooting baskets, 3) running, 4) throwing, and 5) catching. In addition, a basketball player must be able to do some of these things two at a time: 1) running and dribbling, and 2) running and catching. In order to be really good, a basketball player must practice these skills alone when not playing in a game. Every day, she or he must do some running. Every day, he or she must shoot some hoops. Every day, she or he must dribble the ball. Only by practicing each of these skills daily can he or she become a good team player, and help the team to win basketball games. The bottom line is, if a basketball player gets good at shooting hoops while at home, that player is more likely to make the baskets when playing the game on the court.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. Which skill does a basketball player have to do at the same time as dribbling?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Running, shooting baskets and dribbling are some of the \_\_\_\_\_ a basketball player needs to \_\_\_\_\_ daily at \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When a basketball player gets good at running, shooting baskets and dribbling by himself, he also becomes a good \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If you do not practice your \_\_\_\_\_, you will probably drop the ball when a team member throws it to you.
5. If you are not good at \_\_\_\_\_ you will probably never score any points for your team in the game.

# Step-by-Step

Most *directions* tell us to do things step-by-step. This means that you must do it in a certain order. There is a first step, which you must complete before you do the second step. You do each step until you are done. When you are making a toy, you cannot do things out of order. If you do, some parts may not fit together, or it just does not work right. When you practice your instrument, the step-by-step directions help make it easier for you to learn your songs. If you try to play them the first time, there is too much to see and too much to do for you to play it right. You have to see which notes are quarter notes and which notes are half notes. You have to see which fingers need to play. It is always much easier to pay attention to just one of these things at a time. This is why your teacher tells you to clap and say “quarter, quarter, half-note” first. Then he tells you to say the letters, the finger numbers, and so on. This step-by-step approach to learning your songs means you have to pay attention to only one thing each time. Once you are good at each thing by itself, you can try to play the song all the way through as it is written.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. When we try to play a song the first time, we often make mistakes because there is \_\_\_\_\_ to see and do.
2. Music practice directions use a \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ approach, just like the directions for putting together a toy.
3. A good first step for learning a song is to \_\_\_\_\_ and say \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ because this way you are paying attention only to what kinds of notes are in the song.
4. A good second step for learning a song is to \_\_\_\_\_ and say the \_\_\_\_\_ because now you are paying attention only to which fingers are to play.
5. After you have clapped a song both ways, you can now try to \_\_\_\_\_ it.

# Practice Saying (List 1)

Read and say these words aloud every day! Only by saying them aloud will you be able to remember them and use them when you talk about music.

- |                     |                   |                  |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. addition         | 23. enough        | 45. quit         |
| 2. alone            | 24. eventually    | 46. really       |
| 3. always           | 25. famous        | 47. reminder     |
| 4. approach         | 26. fewer         | 48. right        |
| 5. as written       | 27. fit together  | 49. save time    |
| 6. basketball       | 28. following     | 50. saying       |
| 7. because          | 29. fresh start   | 51. shooting     |
| 8. beginning        | 30. goal          | 52. should       |
| 9. bottom line      | 31. happens       | 53. skill        |
| 10. break           | 32. important     | 54. something    |
| 11. catching        | 33. in order to   | 55. sometimes    |
| 12. certain order   | 34. instrument    | 56. step-by-step |
| 13. clear your mind | 35. lightly       | 57. strange      |
| 14. complete        | 36. mistake       | 58. strong       |
| 15. confusing       | 37. musical       | 59. take a break |
| 16. court           | 38. ourselves     | 60. team player  |
| 17. daily           | 39. pay attention | 61. throwing     |
| 18. different       | 40. perfectly     | 62. together     |
| 19. difficult       | 41. player        | 63. whenever     |
| 20. directions      | 42. point         | 64. worse        |
| 21. dribbling       | 43. practice      | 65. yourself     |
| 22. easiest         | 44. probably      |                  |

# Review Questions 1

Pages 1-5

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. Doing something \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ means to do it in a certain order.
2. "Practice Makes \_\_\_\_\_" is a famous saying about practicing.
3. To be a good team member, a basketball player must \_\_\_\_\_ his different skills at \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Directions tell us \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If we do not follow the directions when making a cake, it might \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Practice directions help us learn because you pay attention to only \_\_\_\_\_ thing at a time.
7. If we practice something over and over, but it does not get better, we should \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A basketball player must be able to do two skills at the same time, such as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
9. When we do something \_\_\_\_\_, that is we do it with no mistakes, then we know that we have practiced it enough.
10. If we don't follow the directions, we can make \_\_\_\_\_ or the thing we are making might break or look \_\_\_\_\_.

# Quarter Note and Half Note

The word *quarter* is hard to read, hard to spell and hard to say, but by now you have practiced it several times with your teacher. You have learned that a quarter note is 1 beat and a half note is 2 beats. This means that a half note is the same length as a 2 quarter notes, or a quarter note is the same length as half of a half note. Another way to think about it is that a half note is *twice as long* as a quarter note, or a quarter note is *half as long* as a half note. No matter how you think about it, the two notes have different lengths. One is short and the other is long! The quarter note and half note look very similar. They both have an *oval* or egg-shaped part called the *note head* and they both have a line that goes up or down called the *stem*. The difference between them is that the quarter note has a filled in or black note head and the half note has an open or white note head.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. The note that is filled in or black is called \_\_\_\_\_ note.
2. The note that is open or white is called \_\_\_\_\_ note.
3. Both types of notes have a note \_\_\_\_\_ (the oval part) and a \_\_\_\_\_ (the line that goes up or down).
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ note is 1 beat and the \_\_\_\_\_ note is 2 beats.
5. One \_\_\_\_\_ note is \_\_\_\_\_ as long as one \_\_\_\_\_ note.

# Measures

*Bar lines* group the notes in music into *measures*. Each measure has the same number of *beats or counts*, but not always the same number of notes. If a song has 4 beats in each measure, then one measure might have 4 quarter notes, and another measure might have 2 quarter notes and 1 half note (only 3 notes). In both cases, the number of beats is the same, but the number of notes is different. We need the bar lines to help us read music, because without them the music would be confusing. They would look like a bunch of jumbled notes. The bar lines are like the spaces between words. If we did not have spaces between words, they would be difficult to read and would look like a bunch of jumbled letters. Even though bar lines are important, we do not do anything when we see them. We do not stop. We do not play anything. They are there to guide our eye when we read, but they are silent. When you come to a bar line in the music, simply skip over it and play the very next note. A special kind of bar line called *double bar line* appears at the end of music. It is not just two regular bar lines put together. One is thin like a regular bar line and the second one is **thick**. It means “the end” and tells you to stop playing.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ group the notes of music into \_\_\_\_\_ which always have the same number of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A special \_\_\_\_\_ is at the end of the music, and has one \_\_\_\_\_ line and one \_\_\_\_\_ line.
3. We never \_\_\_\_\_ when we see a bar line, we just play the next note.
4. Without bar lines, the music would look like \_\_\_\_\_ notes.
5. One measure can have 4 quarter notes, and the next measure can have 2 quarter notes and 1 half note because they each have the \_\_\_\_\_ number of \_\_\_\_\_.

# Rhythm

The word *rhythm* is difficult in three ways. First it is hard to say and second it is hard to spell. Why does it need that “h” after the “r”, anyway? But more importantly, the word rhythm is hard to *define*. Exactly what does it mean? Can you say what rhythm means in your own words? It is hard to do. If you look at your music books, you will see that they do not really define rhythm. They do a good job of defining a half note and quarter note, but the word rhythm is mentioned with only examples for you to see. They hope you can figure it out on your own, without a specific definition. Probably the easiest way to think of rhythm is to think of the different lengths of notes you have learned. Quarter notes are one beat, half notes are two beats and whole notes are four beats. There are many more lengths of notes you have not yet learned, but basically rhythm describes how notes can be many different lengths. Some are long, some are short, some are very long and some are very short. When played all together with their different lengths, they become the rhythm of the song.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. The rhythm of a song comes from the different \_\_\_\_\_ of notes in the song – some are long and some are short.
2. Write the word rhythm to practice spelling it: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ notes are one beat and \_\_\_\_\_ notes are two beats.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ notes are four beats long.
5. Individual notes do not make the rhythm, but instead it is all the notes \_\_\_\_\_ that make the rhythm of the song.

# Bar Lines

By now you have learned about *measures* and *bar lines* and how the bar lines *divide* music into different measures. The bar lines are there to help you read the music. They do not take time. You do not have to do anything when you see them. In fact, you really have to try to ignore them. It is important to play the first note of the next measure right after the last note in the previous measure. No stopping! No gaps! In music there are several types of bar lines: regular bar lines which separate the measures, double bar lines that are the end of music, and the special *repeat sign* which is a double bar line with two dots. The double bar line has one thin line and one thick line, but there are other double bar lines you have not seen yet. They have two thin lines and will appear in the middle of the music. They are used to divide the big *sections* of a very long song.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. Bar lines divide \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Bar lines do not tell us to do anything, but are there to help us \_\_\_\_\_ the music.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ bar lines have one \_\_\_\_\_ line and one \_\_\_\_\_ line and they appear at the end of the song.
4. When we see a bar line, we should not \_\_\_\_\_ or make a \_\_\_\_\_ in the music. We just keep playing.
5. The double bar line with two thin lines separates different \_\_\_\_\_ of very long \_\_\_\_\_.

# Practice Saying (List 2)

Read and say these words aloud every day! Only by saying them aloud will you be able to remember them and use them when you talk about music.

- |                      |                  |                    |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. another           | 22. gaps         | 43. rhythm         |
| 2. anything          | 23. guide        | 44. same           |
| 3. appears           | 24. half as long | 45. second         |
| 4. bar line          | 25. half note    | 46. section        |
| 5. basically         | 26. ignore       | 47. separate       |
| 6. beat              | 27. individual   | 48. several        |
| 7. become            | 28. jumbled      | 49. silent         |
| 8. between           | 29. learned      | 50. similar        |
| 9. bunch             | 30. length       | 51. simply         |
| 10. count            | 31. measure      | 52. spaces         |
| 11. define           | 32. mentioned    | 53. special        |
| 12. definition       | 33. middle       | 54. specific       |
| 13. describe         | 34. next         | 55. spell          |
| 14. difference       | 35. no matter    | 56. stem           |
| 15. divide           | 36. note head    | 57. teacher        |
| 16. dotted half note | 37. number       | 58. thick          |
| 17. double bar line  | 38. oval         | 59. though         |
| 18. exactly          | 39. practiced    | 60. through        |
| 19. example          | 40. previous     | 61. twice as long  |
| 20. figure           | 41. quarter note | 62. whole note     |
| 21. first            | 42. regular      | 63. your own words |

# Review Questions 2

Pages 7-11

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. Whole notes have \_\_\_\_\_ beat(s) or count(s).
2. Quarter notes have \_\_\_\_\_ beat(s) or count(s).
3. Half notes have \_\_\_\_\_ beat(s) or count(s).
4. Bar lines divide music into \_\_\_\_\_ and each one has the \_\_\_\_\_ number of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ marks the end of a song.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is hard to say, hard to spell and hard to define, and means the different lengths of notes in music.
7. One \_\_\_\_\_ note is \_\_\_\_\_ as long as a \_\_\_\_\_ note.
8. When your eye comes to a bar line, never \_\_\_\_\_ but instead go right on to play the next \_\_\_\_\_.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ looks just like a double bar line with two dots in front.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ notes have filled in or black \_\_\_\_\_, otherwise they look the same as \_\_\_\_\_ notes.

# The Musical Alphabet

In music each different sound or *pitch* we can make is given its own letter name using the seven letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. The reason we use only seven letters, even though there are many more pitches we can make (the piano can play 88 different pitches) is because the next pitch after G actually sounds the same as A, only an *octave* higher. For this reason, we just restart at A after G and repeat the pattern for each octave up the scale or keyboard. The word octave comes from the Latin word “eight”, because the higher A is the 8<sup>th</sup> note up from the lower A as you count up. You may be wondering about the black keys on the piano, since these letters only apply to the white keys. You will have to wait until later for an explanation on that, because it is much more complicated than you are ready to understand right now.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. The word *octave* comes from the Latin word for \_\_\_\_\_ because the higher note is \_\_\_\_\_ notes away from the lower note with the same letter name.
2. The musical alphabet has only \_\_\_\_\_ letters because the next note after G sounds the same as the letter \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The black keys on the piano do not have the same \_\_\_\_\_ names as the white keys, which you will learn about \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Each letter name represents a different sound or \_\_\_\_\_ and the piano is capable of \_\_\_\_\_ different sounds.
5. When counting up the musical alphabet the letter after G is \_\_\_\_\_ and the letter before A is \_\_\_\_\_.

# Metronome

The *metronome* is an important tool for learning music. It was invented by an *Austrian* named Johann Maelzel (say: *YO-hon MELT-sel*), and is usually abbreviated M.M. for “Maelzel’s Metronome”. The metronome produces a steady click very much like the tick-tock of the clock, except that you can change the speed of the clicks. When you set the metronome to lower numbers it is slower and higher numbers it is faster. The number actually means *how many clicks per minute*, so setting the M.M. to 60 produces 60 clicks in a minute, which is the same as one click per second. (There are 60 seconds in a minute). The metronome performs two important *functions*: First, it helps the musician know how fast to play a piece of music, since every song is a different speed or *tempo*. Second, it helps the musician keep a steady beat while playing – whether a long complex piece of music or just an exercise. For beginning musicians is very important so that you can learn how to feel the beat inside yourself and keep it steady. Eventually, you will have an *internal clock* that will keep a steady beat, but until then you will need to use the metronome to help you. The metronome also helps you learn to play notes faster. As you increase the metronome setting to higher numbers, the faster you play. Your teacher will explain which tempos to use for each of your technique exercises, and as you get better your teacher will increase those numbers as a way of measuring your speed. In this way, the metronome is used just like a stopwatch is used to test how fast you can run.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. The metronome setting 80 means that the metronome will produce 80 \_\_\_\_\_ per \_\_\_\_\_.
2. There are \_\_\_\_\_ seconds in a minute.
3. An \_\_\_\_\_ is when you can feel the beat inside you.
4. Using the metronome can help you find out how fast to play a song, which is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The metronome has two \_\_\_\_\_: 1) To tell you how fast to play a song, and 2) to help you keep a \_\_\_\_\_.

# Correct Finger Motion

On all musical instruments it is important to learn to move your fingers with the correct motion. It is important not to have excess motion that can get in the way of playing fast. The better the motion, the more *efficiently* you move your fingers and the faster and cleaner you can play. Imagine trying to run while waving your arms around and maybe even wiggling your legs. All that extra motion makes it difficult to run and certainly very difficult to run fast. To run fast you must move your legs efficiently and the same is true with musical instruments. On musical instruments, normally the fingers must be curved and only the tips of your fingers contact (or touch) the instrument. If you push or squeeze too hard, your fingers will *buckle*, which means they collapse and bend inside-out. When you move your fingers up and down, they should keep the curved shape and move with a simple motion - no wiggling or wobbling! Your teacher will explain exactly how to move your fingers correctly and will always remind you if you do not use correct finger motion.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ your arms and \_\_\_\_\_ your legs can make it very difficult to run.
2. Using \_\_\_\_\_ finger motion allows you to move your fingers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ which means you play much more \_\_\_\_\_.
3. On most instruments the fingers must be \_\_\_\_\_ for proper shape and motion, and if you push or \_\_\_\_\_ too hard they will \_\_\_\_\_ which means they turn inside-out.
4. Only the finger \_\_\_\_\_ should contact the instrument and when the fingers move they should not \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_, but instead move \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_ motion.

# Following With Your Eyes

When you read a book you must follow the words carefully with your eyes. You must do the same when reading music. You must keep your eyes focused on the music. You must move your eyes from one note to the next note, as you play them. You cannot look down at your hands! You cannot look away from the music! If you do either of these things, you will probably lose your place or have a gap in playing because you need to take time to find your place in the music again. Your teacher will tell you not to look at your hands, and may even place a book over your hands so you cannot see them. At first you may feel strange, but soon you will realize that you do not need to see your hands. You know where they are and you can make your fingers move without seeing them. It is much more important to see the music and keep your eyes on the music the whole time. You may even find that it is easier to control your fingers when you do not look at them!

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. Looking at your hands while playing may cause a \_\_\_\_\_ and you may \_\_\_\_\_ your place in the music.
2. Following the music with your eyes means to look at each \_\_\_\_\_ one after the other as you \_\_\_\_\_ them.
3. A book over your hands helps you keep your \_\_\_\_\_ on the music, and prevents you from \_\_\_\_\_ at your hands.
4. If you lose your place in the music, it will take \_\_\_\_\_ to find it again which creates a pause or \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When you read a book, you follow the \_\_\_\_\_ one-by-one, and when you read music you follow the \_\_\_\_\_ one-by-one.

# Memory

Your *memory* is like a *storage warehouse* of everything you know. This includes facts as well as things you have experienced. Your experiences can be actions, sounds, smells, tastes or feelings. Everything you remember is in your memory. The names of your friends are in your memory. What you did last summer is in your memory. How to play the piano is in your memory. Every word you know is in your memory. How to add or subtract is in your memory. The smell of your favorite cake is in your memory. A big part of playing piano is to play songs *from memory*. This means you cannot look at any music. You know what to play and what to do with your fingers all by yourself. You can sit down at any piano and play your songs from memory at any time, because they are in your head and you do not need your music.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. If you remember something you have done, it is in your \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The things you have done, smelled, tasted or felt are all part of your \_\_\_\_\_.
3. To play a song \_\_\_\_\_ means you do not need to look at your music. It also means you can play that song on any \_\_\_\_\_ anywhere, at any \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Your memory is like a \_\_\_\_\_ of everything you know.
5. How to do something is just as much a part of your \_\_\_\_\_ as experiences such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ are.

# Technique

A *technique* (also spelled “technic”) is a skill that is very difficult, that requires a lot of practice to master and which results in something that is creative in nature. Many skills are not techniques. Some are easy like tying your shoes or making your bed. Some are difficult like catching a ball or making a basket. But neither of those skills are techniques, because they are not creative. Cooking, painting, dancing, music, sculpting, and many other things require technique, because they are difficult skills to master and result in something you create. When you think of the word technique you should think of the word **how**, because “how you do it” is the most important thing about a technique. Your teacher will explain very carefully how you are to play your technique assignments. It is never enough just to play the notes, and certainly it is not enough just to play them fast. It is much more important how you play those notes. Sometimes you will not understand right away and it may take several lessons. Sometimes you will understand easily, but you will not be able to do it because you have to practice it over 100 times to get your fingers to do it right. Sometimes you will understand it, and you will not have any difficulty doing it, but you will still have to practice it to make your fingers stronger and faster. Whatever the case is for you, it is necessary to practice technique assignments every day, many times a day, for many years in order to master the techniques needed to play your instrument.

Answer the questions or fill in the blanks:

1. The most important thing to practice in a technique exercise is \_\_\_\_\_ you play it, not just the notes and rhythm.
2. Technique exercises must be played \_\_\_\_\_ times \_\_\_\_\_ day for \_\_\_\_\_ years in order for them to help make your fingers stronger and faster.
3. A technique is a \_\_\_\_\_ skill that results in something that is \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ shoes and \_\_\_\_\_ your bed are **not** examples of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Sometimes you will understand \_\_\_\_\_ to do a technique before you are able to make your \_\_\_\_\_ do the technique.
5. Sometimes a technique is \_\_\_\_\_ to do, but you just have to do it to make your fingers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

# Matching Game (Synonyms) 5

Write the number of the word or phrase in Column 1 in front of the word or phrase in Column 2 that means the same thing.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
1. Performance	___ <b>Why</b> music works the way it does
2. Ledger line	___ From line to line, or space to space
3. Line note	___ Series of difficult skills you learn
4. Theory	___ Same line or space
5. Skip	___ Note head touches two lines
6. Step	___ Playing music for others
7. Repeat	___ Small lines to write notes on
8. Lessons	___ <b>How</b> to do something correctly
9. Space note	___ Line to space, or space to line
10. Technique	___ Half above & half below the line