

PIANO SAFARI® REPERTOIRE BOOK 1

TEACHER GUIDE: UNIT 2

TITLE	COMPOSER	TYPE	TEACHER GUIDE PAGE NUMBER
Level B Introduction to Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards		Reading	51
White Keys		Musicianship	52
Alphabet Boogie	Knerr	Rote	58
Mary Had a Little Lamb	English Folk Song	Reading	59
Fuzzy Wuzzy	Knerr	Reading	60
Zechariah Zebra	Knerr	Technique	61
Zebra on a Pogo Stick	Knerr	Technique Rote	64
Sea Adventure	Knerr & Fisher	Reading	66
River Rafting	Knerr & Fisher	Reading	67
Cleaver the Beaver	Stevens	Rote	68
Ode to Joy	Beethoven	Reading	69

UNIT 2: PRE-STAFF WHITE KEYS WITH FINGERS 1 2 3 4 5

SIGHT READING & RHYTHM CARDS FOR BOOK 1

LEVEL B CARDS: PRE-STAFF WHITE KEYS WITH FINGERS 1 2 3 4 5

OBJECTIVES:

- Read finger numbers on white keys, beginning on various finger numbers
- Use all five fingers
- Learn the names of the white keys
- Track from left to right on the page when reading
- Tap and count rhythmic notation
- Refine piano hand shape and work on strong fingertips

Sample Level B Card

The sample Level B card is divided into two sections: RH 1 on G and LH 4 on C. The RH section features a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 1, 1. The LH section features a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 4, 3, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4. The card is labeled 'Level B.1' in the top right corner.

During **Unit 2**, assign **Level B** of *Piano Safari® Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards for Book 1*.

See pianosafari.com for the Teacher Guide to *Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards for Book 1*.

Step 1: Learning the names of the white keys can take several weeks or months, depending on the age of the student. Teach note names at each lesson using the following Activities until the child can quickly name any note you play. We suggest starting the process of learning the white keys at the first lesson.

OBJECTIVE:

- Learn the names of the white keys on the piano

Step 2: Follow the directions on the page. Students can complete this page as homework, in a group class, or in the lesson.

ACTIVITY 1: NOTE CARDS

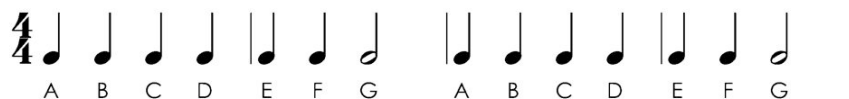
This Activity is best for students who are ages 4-6.

Step 1: Make two or more sets of cards with one letter on each card, A through G.



Step 2: Direct the child to put the cards in order on the music rack or floor. Tell the student that there is no H. In music, we just go to G and then start over on A.

Step 3: Point to each card and chant with the student, "A B C D E F G A B C D E F G" in the rhythm of the "Alphabet Boogie" Rote Piece in this unit.



Step 4: The student closes his eyes while the teacher scrambles the cards.

Step 5: The student opens his eyes and puts the cards in order.

Step 6: Repeat Steps 3-5.

ACTIVITY 2: DECORATING THE PIANO

This is a great activity for a student's very first piano lesson. This activity can be done at each lesson or class until the student is ready to move on to other White Key Activities.

This Activity is best for students who are ages 4-10.

Step 1: Make small foam or cardboard letters that fit on the keys for each of the white keys of the piano. Color code them so that:

- 8 A's are red
- 8 B's orange
- 8 C's yellow
- 7 D's green
- 7 E's blue
- 7 F's purple
- 7 G's pink

Buy 7 bouncy balls and 7 plastic toy worms.

Step 2: Have the student put bouncy balls on the groups of two black keys, and worms on groups of three black keys.



Step 3: Hand the student all the D foam letters. Tell him the D's are right in the middle of the groups of two black keys. He puts the D foam letters on all the D's of the piano.



Step 4: Ask the student what comes in the alphabet before D. Say, "A B..." He will say, "C." Say, "Yes. C comes right before D," and put a C foam letter on the piano to the left of D. Hand the student all the C foam letters. He puts them on all the C's of the piano.



Step 5: Ask the student what comes in the alphabet after C. Say, "A B C D..." He will say, "E." Hand the student all the E foam letters to put on the E's of the piano.



Step 6: Continue saying the alphabet and figuring out what comes next. “A B C D E…” “F.” Tell the student that the F goes to the left of the group of 3 black keys. Hand the student all the F foam letters. He puts them on all the F’s of the piano. Repeat with G, A, B.



Step 7: Celebrate how great the piano looks now that it is decorated!



Step 8: In future lessons, have the student:

- Put on the balls and worms
- Play the CDE groups up the piano
- Play the FGAB groups up the piano
- Hand the student a CDE or FGAB group of foam letters.
- At subsequent lessons, hand the student small groups of foam letters in random order. Help the student find the right keys by using the CDE and FGAB groups rather than counting up from A for every letter.

ACTIVITY 3: NOTE NAME RACES

This Activity is best for students who are ages 4-8.

Step 1: If you have two pianos, assign the student one piano and the parent the other piano. If you have one piano, assign the parent one half of the keyboard and student the other half.

Step 2: Call out a letter. "D! Ready, set, go!"

Step 3: The student and parent race to play all the D's in their jurisdiction. Cheer for whomever wins. If the student is slow, hopefully the parent will let him win sometimes, but as the student gets faster, he should be able to win on his own.

Step 4: Repeat **Steps 2** and **3** with other notes.

Note: If you do not have an available parent, you can race the student with the handicap of you having your eyes closed while he has his eyes open.

ACTIVITY 4: SUCTION CUP LETTER CARDS

This Activity is best for students who are ages 4-10 and can be used in both private lesson and group class settings.

Step 1: Attach the note cards you used in **Activity 1: Note Cards** to a mirror or window.



Step 2: The student throws your suction cup ball at the mirror/window. (Suction cup balls can be found in the party section of Target or similar stores.) You take down the card closest to where the ball stuck.



Step 3: The student plays all the keys of that letter. For example, if the ball stuck closest to the C card, he plays all the C's. Encourage the student to play as fast as he can.

Step 4: Repeat **Steps 2** and **3** with the other cards until all cards are used.

Step 5: Have him put the note cards in order, and then play "Alphabet Boogie" once he has learned it.

ACTIVITY 5: FUZZY LETTERS

This Activity is best for students who are ages 4-8 and can be used in both private lesson and group class settings.

Step 1: Hand the student a Fuzzy and ask him to put it on a G. A Fuzzy is a pom pom with eyes and foam feet glued on. If you do not want to make Fuzzies, you can use flat marbles or other small objects.



Step 2: Hand the student another Fuzzy and ask him to put it on a C.

Step 3: Keep handing the student Fuzzies and having him put them on various white keys until you run out of Fuzzies.

Step 4: Once the student becomes fast at putting Fuzzies on the proper notes, you chant or sing in rhythm:

“Put a Fuzzy on a C (clap, clap, clap, clap). Put a Fuzzy on an E (clap, clap, clap, clap).” etc.

The student must work quickly to put the Fuzzy on during the four beats you are clapping to keep the game going. Repeat until you run out of Fuzzies.

ACTIVITY 6: TENUTO APP

Step 1: Have the student practice finding the names of the white key at home by using an app such as Tenuto on a tablet or smartphone.

ALPHABET BOOGIE

KNERR AND C. FISHER

UNIT 2

ROTE PIECE



Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video at pianosafari.com for reference at home.

Step 1: Have the student listen to this piece on his Listening CD several times before introducing it.

Step 2: Beginning on the very lowest note of the piano, play and sing, "A B C D E F G A B C D E F G" in rhythm using RH Finger 2 for all the notes. Student imitates.

Step 3: When he is confident, add the teacher accompaniment.

Step 4: Have the student to play "Alphabet Boogie" with LH.

Step 5: Congratulate the student on his good concentration if he is able to play all the way up the piano without making a mistake or stopping. If his concentration is lacking, encourage him to concentrate all the way from the bottom to the top of the piano.

Step 6: This piece works well in a first lesson, since it is easy to play, and in combination with **Activity 2: Decorating the Piano**, explained earlier in this unit.

OBJECTIVES:

- Review the music alphabet by playing a piece
- Increase concentration by playing from the very bottom to the top of the piano

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Free forearm motion
- Good tone
- Rhythmic playing
- Concentration through the whole piece

Praise the student for good effort and concentration more often than for "being smart." This will reinforce the behavior most necessary for progressing in piano study: working hard. For an interesting book on this subject, read *Nurture Shock* by Po Bronson, available at amazon.com.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

ENGLISH FOLK SONG, ARR. KNERR

UNIT 2

READING PIECE

Step 1: Play and sing the piece for the student.

Step 2: The student circles the keyboard picture red to remind him that the piece is played with the RH.

Step 3: The student finds his hand position based on the keyboard picture.

Step 4: Have the student preview and play each line. Point to the notes on the page and say the finger numbers to keep the student tracking with his eyes and playing with correct rhythm.

Step 5: When the student can play the piece well alone, add the teacher accompaniment.

Step 6: Show the student how he can start on different notes and play the same piece (transpose). Help him put his Finger 4 on A and play the piece. Repeat starting with Finger 4 on B and on a group of 3 black keys.

Step 7: By this point the student probably will not have to look at the finger numbers but will have the piece memorized or be playing it by ear. He can then play the piece with the LH by ear and HT in parallel motion.

Step 8: As the student masters each transposition, put a sticker in the box next to that transposition.

Step 9: Play the teacher accompaniment with him as he masters each transposition. These Accompaniment Transpositions are found at the end of the book or can be downloaded at www.pianosafari.com.

OBJECTIVES:

- Read pre-staff notation using finger numbers 2 3 4 on white keys
- Transpose to various keys

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Good piano hand shape, with firm fingertips, tall bridge, thumb on corner

Step 1: Play and sing the piece for the student.

Step 2: The student circles the keyboard pictures for RH red and LH blue.

Step 3: Ask the student how many groups of notes there are. "4." Circle the lowest group blue for LH and play it for the student in the lowest octave that the student can easily reach, saying, "E C." Student imitates.

Step 4: You play RH while student plays LH. This is to allow him to play the LH in rhythm at the appropriate time.

Step 5: Ask the student which two groups are the same (1, 2). Have him circle these two groups red for RH. Since group 3 is played by the RH but is different from the other RH groups, have him circle it red and draw some fuzz next to it to denote that it is different.

Step 6: Play m. 1-2 while the student points to the notes and says the finger numbers.

Step 7: Student plays m. 1-2 and then m. 3-4 an octave higher.

Step 8: Play m. 5-6 while the student points to the notes and says the finger numbers.

Step 9: Student plays m. 5-6.

Step 10: Student plays the entire piece.

Step 11: When the student can play the piece well alone, add the teacher accompaniment.

Step 12: Play the piece on groups of three black keys with transposed teacher accompaniment, available the end of the book or for download at www.pianosafari.com. Put a sticker in the the box as the student completes each transposition.

OBJECTIVES:

- Read pre-staff notation using finger numbers 2 3 4 on white keys
- Move to different octaves on the piano in rhythm

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Good piano hand shape, with firm fingertips, tall bridge, thumb on corner
- Rhythmic shift from octave to octave



Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video at pianosafari.com for reference at home.

In my dissertation research with excellent pre-college teachers, three of the four teachers in my original study used this exercise under different guises:

- Marvin Blickenstaff called it "Ebenezer Sneezer."
- Carolyn Shaak called it "Colorado Mountain."
- Mary Craig Powell called it "Mississippi Hop Frog."

Mary Craig Powell explained to me the benefits of this exercise in developing the following:

- Firm fingertips, which are easier to develop when playing repeated fingers rather than consecutive fingers
- Loose arm, because if students can play this exercise at a fast tempo, they have to be loose. It is not possible to play this exercise well with a stiff arm
- Confidence in playing fast repeated notes.

This exercise may take a month or more to master. At first, the piano hand shape may not look very good, especially with Fingers 4 and 5. Keep working to shape the hand until the student develops control to play this exercise with firm fingertips and a good piano hand shape.

Fingers should absolutely *not* be glued to the keys. The whole forearm bounces on the eighth notes, with a higher bounce for the quarter notes. The arm aligns behind the playing finger.

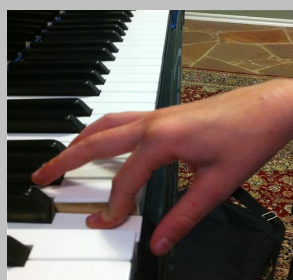
Finger 1 plays on its corner, not flat on its side. It is slightly curved (rather than turned out with collapsed joints):



Fingers 2 and 3 are the easiest fingers. They should play with firm fingertips and a raised (not collapsed) hand knuckle bridge:



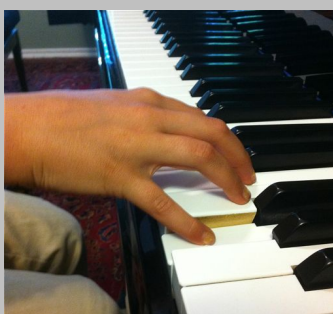
Finger nail joints should not collapse like this!



Finger 4 will need to stand taller than fingers 2 and 3 in order to play with a firm fingertip and good piano hand shape, as it tends to want to play flat and pull the hand down.



Finger 5 plays on its outer corner tip, not straight on its tip, as this would make it stand too tall and cause a hand position in which the fingers are too curved. However, Finger 5 should not play flat either.



Step 1: Have the student listen to this exercise on his Listening CD several times before introducing it.

Step 2: Play m. 1 for the student. Then hold his hand and thumb and play the measure using his thumb. You are doing all the work while he has a relaxed arm. Be sure the thumb plays up on its corner, not flat on its side. Proper thumb position will prevent many technical problems in the future. The arm bounces as a unit from the elbow.

Tempo should be about ♩ = 120.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop the ability to play repeated notes fast with a loose arm
- Develop firm fingertips

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Firm fingertips
- Good piano hand shape after gradually working on this exercise
- Bouncy arm, with bigger bounce on eighth notes

Step 3: Let him play m. 1 by himself. Check for relaxed shoulders. If the shoulders are not relaxed, touch them to relax them.

Step 4: Check for good piano hand shape in preparation for Finger 2 on D (m. 3). Play using his hand. Then let him play it himself.

Step 5: Check for a good piano hand shape in preparation for Finger 3 on E (m. 5). Play it with his finger before letting him play it himself. Be sure the arm is aligned behind Finger 3.

Step 6: Check for a good piano hand shape in preparation for Finger 4 on F (m. 7). Say, "Tall Finger 4." Play it with his finger before letting him play it himself. Be sure the arm is aligned behind Finger 4.

Step 7: Check for a good piano hand shape in preparation for Finger 5 on G (m. 9), saying, "Tall Finger 5." Play it with his finger before letting him play it himself. Be sure the arm is aligned behind Finger 5.

Step 8: Keep setting the student's hand for each finger as you repeat the exercise with the LH.

Step 9: As the student progresses and is able to maintain a good piano hand shape for each finger on his own, add the teacher accompaniment in one hand and play the student part displaced by an octave with the student. Stop to fix a poor hand shape during the whole rest before allowing him to play the next note. Also, address any problems while the student is playing a specific finger. For example, if non-playing fingers are flying up very high, ask the student to relax those fingers. As the student gains strength and control, this will become easier. You can also make your hand look bad (fingers sticking up in the air, flat thumb, etc.) and ask him what is wrong with your hand and have him fix it.

Step 10: After the student demonstrates the ability to have a good piano hand shape throughout the whole exercise, play the teacher accompaniment and coach him verbally for each finger during the whole rest before he plays that finger:

In summary, the progression of working on the **Zechariah Zebra Technique** is:

- You play a finger using the student's hand. Student plays that finger himself.
- Student plays each finger. Stop before each finger to check hand shape.
- Student plays while you play teacher accompaniment and verbally coach him for each finger. Stop as needed between fingers to fix hand shape.
- Student plays alone with teacher accompaniment.

ZEBRA ON A POGO STICK

KNERR

UNIT 2

ROTE PIECE



I usually teach student **Steps 1-5** at one lesson, **Steps 6-9** at the next lesson, and **Steps 10-11** at the following lesson.

Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video at pianosafari.com for reference at home.

This piece is a definite challenge for students in terms of coordination. Keep working on it, and be sure the student plays at a moderate tempo that he can maintain throughout the piece.

Step 1: Have the student listen to this piece on his Listening CD several times before introducing it.

Step 2: Play and sing the piece for the student.

Step 3: Have the student play the RH of m. 1-6 while the teacher plays LH. Coach him about which finger to play next. He can refer to the score to see the finger numbers.

Step 4: For m. 7-8, tell him that Finger 4 does not play. Play RH while singing, "Zechariah Zebra 3 2 1." Student imitates.

Step 5: Student plays RH and teacher plays LH for the entire piece.

Step 6: Play LH m. 2 with two different fingerings, 1 1 1 1 2 2 3, or 1 1 1 1 3 3 4. Have the student try both and decide which he likes better. I have students who have chosen each fingering as more comfortable. Write in the fingering he chooses. This passage can be difficult for students. For older students who you know can technically play it well, this is a time to let the student work hard until he masters this. After teaching this piece to many students, I have discovered that some students can play the LH part easily, while other students struggle technically. For those students who need a version with a simplified LH, you can use:

- This is also a great practice step for eventually playing the original version:



- This is the most simplified version:



Step 7: For the original version in m. 4, use the same fingering as m. 2 in reverse. Student imitates.

Step 8: Play LH m. 6. Student imitates. Make sure he has an extra bouncy arm, like a zebra bouncing on his pogo stick.

Step 9: Teacher plays RH while student plays LH.

Step 10: Student plays HT.

Step 11: When the student can play the piece well alone, add the teacher accompaniment.

"Fuzzy Wuzzy" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" focused on the white keys surrounding the groups of two black keys (C D E group). The next two pieces, "Sea Adventure" and "River Rafting" highlight the white keys around the groups of three black keys (F G A B group).

Step 1: Play the piece for the student and sing the words. Be sure you are playing with a *non legato* articulation with an arm bounce on each note. Talk about the animals that are in the ocean.

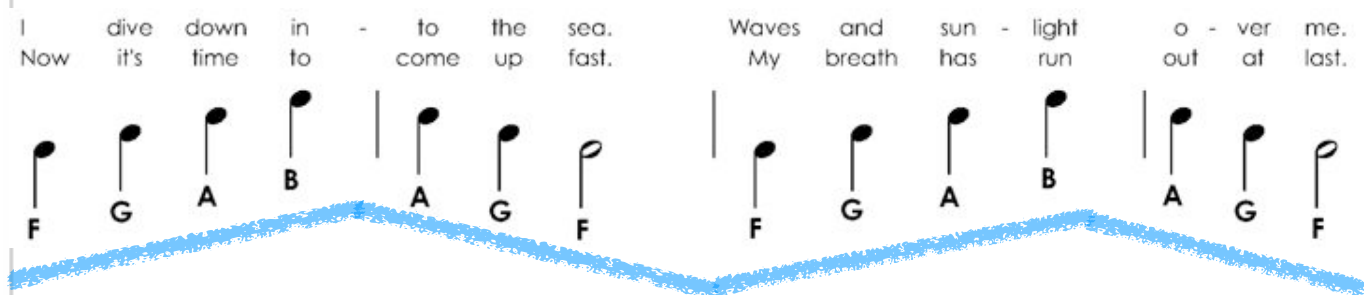
Step 2: Play the piece for the student while he points to the notes and says the letter names. Show the student how the notes on the page and keyboard go up and down, just like the waves of the ocean. Draw lines on the page to show the pattern, as shown below:

OBJECTIVES:

- Read pre-staff notation with letter names for the F G A B group of white keys (the letters that surrounds the group of three black keys).

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Understanding of the white key group F G A B
- Correct rhythm



Step 3: Have the student circle the LH keyboard picture with blue to show that the piece is played with the LH.

Step 4: Student plays while you point to the notes on the page and say the letter names.

Step 5: When the student can play the piece well alone, with steady rhythm, firm fingertips in his piano hand shape, and an arm bounce on each note with a *non legato* articulation, add the teacher accompaniment.

- Step 1:** Play and sing the piece for the student while he points to the notes and says the finger numbers. Play *non legato*. Be sure you have a well-paced *ritardando* at the end, and define this term for the student.
- Step 2:** The student previews and plays each line.
- Step 3:** At the end, coach the *ritardando* by singing, playing, and conducting as the student plays.
- Step 4:** Student plays the entire piece.
- Step 5:** When the student can play the piece well alone, add the teacher accompaniment.

OBJECTIVES:

- Read pre-staff notation with letter names for the F G A B group of white keys.
- Learn the term *ritardando*

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Good piano hand shape
- Understanding of the white key group F G A B
- Well-paced *ritardando*

CLEAVER THE BEAVER STEVENS

UNIT 2 ROTE PIECE



I usually teach **Steps 1-7** at one lesson and **Steps 8-11** at the next lesson.

Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video at pianosafari.com for reference at home.

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Have the student listen to this piece on his Listening CD several times before introducing it.

Step 2: Play the piece for the student and sing the words while playing the teacher accompaniment. This allows the student to hear the waltz.

Step 3: Play m. 1-2 and sing "C D E C D E." Student imitates. Make sure the student plays *non legato* with an arm bounce on each note and with firm fingertips.

Step 4: Play m. 3-4 and sing "G A B Together." Student imitates.

Step 5: Student plays m. 1-4 until secure. Count "1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10" and use **Playing Insurance** if the student has a tendency to stop on the bar lines.

Step 6: Move the student's hands to the next position. Student plays m. 5-8 (repeat of m. 1-4 an octave higher).

Step 7: Student plays m. 1-8.

Step 8: Play m. 9-12, and alert the student, "This part is different. C D E together. G A B together." Student imitates.

Step 9: For m. 13-16, say, "Now for the special ending." Ask the student to tell you which note you do not play. Play m. 13-15. Student says, "F." Student imitates. End with low C.

Step 10: Put the entire piece together.

Step 11: When the student can play the piece well alone, add the teacher accompaniment.

OBJECTIVES:

- Play a rote piece that moves over the entire piano
- Practice moving between hand positions that begin on C and G.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Coordinated movements between C and G.
- Continuous rhythm

ODE TO JOY

BEETHOVEN, ARR. KNERR

UNIT 2

READING PIECE



Celebrate the fact that the student is playing a tune written by the famous composer, Beethoven. Talk a bit about Beethoven's life. Did you know his favorite dinner, according to his administrative assistant and early biographer Anton Schindler, was macaroni and cheese? Have the student listen to some music by Beethoven. A good resource for composer biographies that appeal to children is the "Getting to Know the World's Greatest Composers" series by Mike Venezia, available on amazon.com. I have a library of these books and lend them to students with the correlating listening CDs I created.

Step 1: Play the piece for the student using *non legato* articulation even on the eighth notes.

Step 2: Have the student color the RH keyboard picture red and the LH keyboard picture blue.

Step 3: Tell the student there is only one LH note (m. 12 stem down). Circle this note with blue.

Step 4: Play m. 1-4 for the student so he can hear the rhythm for m. 4. Student plays.

Explanation of the   rhythm is not necessary. This rhythm should be taught by rote at this stage, as the student is usually too young to understand the fractions necessary to explain the dotted rhythm mathematically.

Step 5: Student previews and plays m. 5-8, after discovering that it is the same as m. 1-4 except for the last measure.

Step 6: Play m. 9-12 for the student so he can hear the rhythm. Student imitates. Make sure he plays the entire piece, including the eighth notes, *non legato* to preserve a good piano hand shape. This will also keep him from smearing or rushing the eighth notes.

Step 7: Student plays m. 13-16 and then plays the entire piece.

Step 8: When the student can play the piece well alone, add the teacher accompaniment.

Step 9: Instruct the student to transpose the piece to C Major by starting with RH 3 on E. The LH note will be G. The teacher accompaniment in C is at the end of the book, or download it at www.pianosafari.com.

OBJECTIVES:

- Read pre-staff notation using finger numbers with all fingers on white keys.
- Play a familiar tune by a famous composer
- Read eighth notes in pre-staff notation in a piece
- Hear the dotted quarter eighth rhythm, which is formally introduced in *Piano Safari® Repertoire Book 2*.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation on all notes
- Good piano hand shape, with firm fingertips, tall bridge, thumb on corner
- Correct rhythm