

# PIANO SAFARI®

## REPERTOIRE BOOK 1

TEACHER GUIDE  
By Dr. Julie Knerr & Katherine Fisher

### INTRODUCTORY UNIT

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# INTRODUCTORY UNIT

## Goals and Objectives

A child coming to their first piano lesson is usually very excited! The child's goal is to play great sounding pieces right away and to have to a fun time.

In the Introductory Unit, our goal is to satisfy this goal in an engaging way. We have discovered that the best way to accomplish this is to teach the beginning pieces by rote. The Rote Pieces in Piano Safari were composed specifically to be taught by rote. They feature patterns that are based on topography of the black and white keys on the piano, which are immediately understandable to children with no prior musical knowledge. Because of this, we can also call them "Pattern Pieces."

Not every piece makes a good Rote Piece, because not every piece has patterns that are understandable to children with no theory knowledge. The patterned Rote Pieces in Piano Safari show students that music is not a random collection of notes. Instead, music is created using logical patterns.

In the Introductory Unit, our goals are:

- Teach pieces that will appeal to a child's need to play pieces right away
- Introduce the student to the fact that music is created using logical patterns
- Build a student's understanding of the layout of black and white keys on the keyboard
- Build a student's memory skills by learning pieces by rote
- Allow students to develop basic coordination of the large muscles of the arm by playing *non legato* with Finger 2
- Develop the student's trust that we will not require the child to do anything that is too hard. We want the first days at the piano to be fun, easy, and frustration-free.
- Develop the student's basic sense of rhythm through playing a variety of rhythms and hearing the teacher accompaniments.
- Build the confidence of the student that he really can walk up to any piano and play great sounding pieces without relying on notation
- Introduce the student to the basics of sitting at the piano and preview finger numbers in preparation for Unit 1
- Introduce notation through basic rhythmic values before reading them in music notation

Notice that the Introductory Unit does not include any Reading Pieces or Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards. This is because children learn best aurally. We want to build the foundations of technique, rhythm, and musicality before introducing notation. The confidence and trust we build in students by allowing them to successfully play great sounding music without the score can then transfer to learning to *read* notation, which is a completely separate skill from learning to *play* the piano.

**Audio Tracks** for all Rote Pieces are available by digital download. The code is listed on the title page of *Repertoire Book 1*. Pieces that have Audio Tracks are denoted by this symbol:



Pages 8 - 11 in *Repertoire Book 1* present introductory concepts that students should master over the first several months of study. These pages are not meant to all be presented at once. They can be introduced gradually over the first weeks and months of study at the discretion of the teacher.

**Step 1:** Use the page to explain to the parent and child the proper height and distance from the bench. Emphasize the need for correct posture to be maintained at home from the beginning of study. This means that the parent will need to find some large books or carpet squares to place on the bench, since many benches are too low for children. Emphasize that cushions or pillows should not be used, as they do not provide a solid base of support. The parent should purchase a footstool or pedal extender for children who cannot reach the floor, as dangling feet do not provide a firm base of support. Parents can purchase a pedal extender and resell it to another student when their child outgrows it. It is well worth the cost, as small children may need to use the pedal extender for several years. We recommend the PE-2 Pedal Extender (shown below), as less expensive pedal extenders can be frustrating to adjust and tend to slip.

### Objectives

- Learn the importance of proper height and distance from the piano
- Educate the parent about setting the bench appropriately at home

**Step 2:** Ask the student to check your posture at the piano. Put the bench too close or too far away, and ask the student to correct your sitting position.

**Step 3:** Take a photo of the student and have him critique his posture.

**Step 4:** Ask the parent to take a photo of the child at home at his own piano to be sure he is at the correct height and distance from the piano.

**Step 5:** Continue to check bench position with every student at the beginning of every lesson.



Forming a good Piano Hand Shape is one of the most important tasks of the teacher and student in the first year of piano study. A good Piano Hand Shape will not form itself! It requires work and constant attention until it is automatic.

In the **Introductory Unit** of the book, the pieces are played mostly with Finger 2, with the hand in a gentle fist. This is obviously not a proper Piano Hand Shape, but the goal in these first pieces is to develop basic coordination of the large muscles of the arm before turning attention to the hands and fingers.

**Unit 1** is played on the Black Keys. Although it may not be attainable for the student to play with a perfect Piano Hand Shape at this stage, the basics of hand shape can be introduced.

**Unit 2** introduces pieces on White Keys. At this point, the student should be encouraged to play with a good Piano Hand Shape and firm fingertips. This is much easier to accomplish on white keys than it is on black keys.

Throughout these first three units, students should only play *non legato*. Playing *non legato* provides students with the best foundation for playing with a relaxed and correct technique in terms of Piano Hand Shape and coordination. Do not allow students to play *legato* until the movements are relaxed and the Piano Hand Shape and firm fingertips are secure! *Legato* is introduced with the Tree Frog Technique on p. 88 (TG p. 113).

See **Mini Essay 5: Technique Basics for Beginners** on the Resources page at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) for more information.

**Step 1:** Have the student to stand with his arms relaxed by his side. Show him how his hands naturally have a good piano hand shape.

**Step 2:** Have him to sit on the bench and lift the hands gently to the keyboard.

**Step 3:** Discuss the components of a good hand shape found on p. 9.

**Step 4:** Do the **Fuzzy Hand** activity, described on TG p. 16.

**Step 5:** Take a picture of the student's hand and discuss how it looks. Have him check your hand or his parent's hand.

### Objectives

- Learn the features of piano hand shape
- Understand the importance of piano hand shape

# Fuzzy Hand

This idea is modified from Mary Craig Powell's version, where she uses a pencil kitty to check hand position. Thanks to Mary Craig Powell for all she taught me when I was researching my dissertation!

I created these Fuzzies with pompoms, googly eyes, and foam feet I cut out.

- Step 1:** From a relaxed position by his side, the student brings his hand up to the piano and places it on the keyboard.
- Step 2:** Fuzzy sits on the student's shoulder to check that it is relaxed. I tell the student, "Shoulders up!" Fuzzy gets scared because he is afraid of heights and lets out a squeak. "Shoulders down." The student puts his shoulders down, and Fuzzy is relieved.
- Step 3:** Fuzzy walks down the student's arm. There should be a smooth road (arm) for Fuzzy to walk on down the forearm, with no hills or valleys in the wrist.
- Step 4:** Fuzzy walks down the gently curved fingers.
- Step 5:** Fuzzy goes in his Fuzzy House (Piano Hand) by walking through the space under the bridge of the hand between the thumb and Finger 2. The thumb is on its corner and the bridge is tall. If the thumb is flat or the bridge is collapsed, either Fuzzy will not be able to get into his Fuzzy House, or the roof will collapse and injure Fuzzy!



Several analogies I have found that appeal to children when working on Piano Hand Shape:

- **Pencil Shark:** For a wrist that is too low, I tell the student, "Sharks swim down there, and they are getting ready to eat your hand. Keep it up above the sharks!" I hold a pencil (sharp end up) under the student's hand to keep him from dropping his wrist too low.
- **Fuzzy House:** For a flat hand with collapsed bridge, say, "Oh no! You just squished Fuzzy in his house." Put Fuzzy under the child's hand.
- **Pancake Fingers:** For flat fingers with collapsed end joints: "Oh no. Look at those pancake fingers. They are all flat. We don't want pancake fingers!"

**Step 1:** Close the fallboard. Tell the student, "We are going to tap Finger 1." Do not say, "Tap your first finger," as this may be confusing to young children who do not know that "one" and "first" mean the same thing. Tap Finger 1's (thumbs) HT (Hands Together) with the student, saying, "1 1 1 1." Be sure the student is tapping on the corner of the thumb with good Piano Hand Shape (Fuzzy House).

### Objectives

- Learn that the fingers each have a number
- Practice tapping fingers with a good Piano Hand Shape

**Step 2:** Repeat with Fingers 2, 3, 4, 5 HT.

**Step 3:** Call out finger numbers in random order while you and the student tap.

**Step 4:** Ask the student to close his eyes, and repeat **Step 3**.

**Step 5:** Repeat this at each lesson until mastered.

**Step 6:** Once the student is competent with tapping single fingers hands together, you can add the following variations.

- **Animal Rhythm Pattern Variation:** "Finger 1, ready go. Zechariah Zebra (while tapping Finger 1's in Zechariah Zebra rhythm). Finger 3, ready go. Zechariah Zebra," etc. (See TG p. 21 for the Animal Rhythm Patterns used in *Repertoire Book 1*.)
- **Single Hand Variation:** "Tap RH Finger 3." "Tap LH Finger 2."
- **Ring Variation:** Buy plastic rings and say, "Put the pink ring on RH Finger 5." "Put the green ring on LH Finger 3."
- **Sticker Variation:** "Put a red sticker on RH Finger 2." "Put a blue sticker on LH Finger 3," etc. until both hands are decorated.
- **Double Finger Variation:** "Tap Fingers 2 4 together." "Tap Fingers 1 3 together."
- **Simon Says Variation:** Playing Simon Says helps students learn to listen and follow directions.
  - "Simon says play Finger 3."
  - "Simon says play Finger 1."
  - "Simon says put your hands on your head."
  - "Simon says run across the room and back three times."
  - "Simon says play Finger 2."
  - "Simon says jump up and down ten times."
- **Fingertips Together:** The student puts his hands in the air, palms facing each other, and puts the fingertips of the hands together. Call out finger numbers for him to tap. For example, he will tap Finger 2's against each other.

**Step 1:** Relate high and low sounds on the piano to animal sounds. Search the internet for audio clips of lion and monkey sounds and talk about whether they sound low or high.

**Step 2:** Have the student play low and high sounds on the piano.

**Step 3:** Close your eyes while the student plays a high sound or a low sound. You guess what he plays. Switch roles.

**Optional:** Play the **Animal Improvisation Game** several times in the course of the first year of study. Steps for this game are presented on the TG p. 19.

### Objectives

- Learn about the high and low registers of the piano
- Relate sounds on the piano to sounds in nature

# Animal Improvisation Game

The **Animal Improvisation Game** helps students relate sounds in nature to sounds on the piano. I have found that this game works well with children from ages 4 to 9 in a group class, but it can be modified for use in a private or partner lesson also.

To see a video example of the Animal Improvisation Game, visit Instructional Videos at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com).

- Step 1:** Ask the students to name some animals. Draw the animal (or write the names) on a whiteboard.
- Step 2:** Choose one student to point to an animal on the board without letting the other students see.
- Step 3:** The teacher improvises music to fit the animal (low, scary music for lions; high, fast music for mice, etc.).
- Step 4:** The other students in the class raise their hands to guess what animal you are improvising based on the list on the whiteboard. You call on students to guess.
- Step 5:** When someone guesses correctly, say why the music represented that animal sound. "Wow. That did sound like mouse music, because it was high and fast, just like a quick, squeaky mouse."
- Step 6:** Erase that animal from the whiteboard. The student who guessed correctly chooses another animal from the whiteboard. Repeat from **Step 3**.
- Step 7:** After you have played some of the animal music and the students understand the game, ask the student choosing the animal, "Do you want to play or do you want me to?" This allows students who want to improvise to do so while not forcing shy students to play if they are not comfortable. Eventually, all the students will want to play the improvisations.
- Step 8:** When you have reached the last animal on the whiteboard (for example, a dragon), ask the students, "Who has some good horse music?" and let them all play their dragon music.

**Why not Metric Counting?** We introduce two counting systems in Repertoire Book 1:

- Syllabic counting: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ = Ta Ta Ta Ta
- Animal Rhythm Patterns: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ = Charlie Chipmunk

We have found this to be the best way to help students develop a musical, rhythmic, and secure sense of pulse and understanding of the various rhythmic values. Introducing Metric Counting too soon can be overwhelming because of the many types of numbers found at the beginning of study (finger numbers, page numbers, beat numbers, measure numbers, etc.). It can also lead to counting the right numbers with the wrong rhythm. These types of rhythmic errors rarely occur when students count syllabically.

We introduce Animal Rhythm Patterns to allow students to see that notes are grouped together in logical patterns. They see the whole pattern of a rhythmic grouping rather than individual notes.

Students begin to learn Metric Counting at the beginning of Piano Safari Level 2 and make the transition easily.

**Step 1:** Follow the instructions on the pages.

**Step 2:** Introduce the Animal Rhythm Patterns found on TG p. 21, which are used throughout the *Repertoire Book*, *Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards*, and *Theory Book*. To introduce them, simply tap and say the pattern while looking at the notation, and continue to find them in the student's pieces and Sight Reading Cards. It is amazing how quickly children recognize these

### Objectives

- Learn notation for basic rhythmic values
- Learn syllables for counting each note value
- Learn the terms and symbols for measures and bar lines
- Internalize a rhythmic pulse

rhythm patterns and can find them in their pieces! Students should become adept at counting with both Animal Rhythm Patterns and the Ta Syllabic Counting System.

**Step 3:** Practice the Rhythm Activities (TG p. 22) throughout the first year of study to reinforce and automatize rhythm. These activities may be done in a private lesson or in a group class.

# Animal Rhythm Patterns & Ta Syllables

Ta Ta Ta Ta



Charlie Chipmunk



Ta - ti Ta - ti Ta Ta



Zechariah Zebra



Ta - 2 Ta - 2



Hip - po



Ta - ti Ta



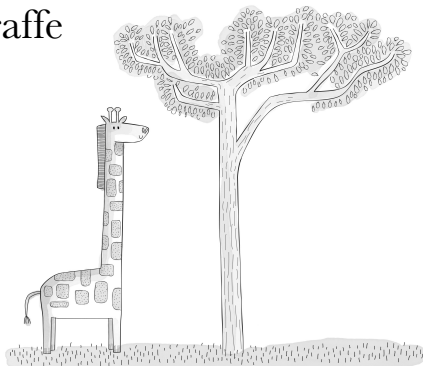
Kangaroo



Ta Ta Ta - 2



Tall Giraffe



Ta - 2 - 3 - 4



Roar 2 - 3 - 4



# RHYTHM ACTIVITIES

Practice the following Rhythm Activities throughout the first year of study to reinforce and automatize rhythm. These activities may be done in a private lesson or in a group class.

## Tapbacks

**Step 1:** Chant and tap a one- or two-measure rhythm, for example:



Ta - ti Ta - ti Ta Ta or Zechariah Zebra

**Step 2:** The student taps and chants back the rhythm. The student should be adept at counting both with Ta's and with Animal Rhythm Patterns. I tend to emphasize the Animal Rhythm Patterns first, especially with younger students. See **Mini Essay 8: Philosophy or Rhythm** on the Resources page at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) for more information.

**Step 3:** You and the student continue to chant various rhythms antiphonally without stopping the rhythm. You tap and chant the rhythm, and the student imitates.

**Step 4:** This exercise can be varied by playing on a drum or tapping on the head, knees, etc.

## Student Tapbacks

**Step 1:** The student plays a rhythm on the drum or taps it on the fallboard.

**Step 2:** You imitate the student's rhythm exactly, even if the rhythm is not in a meter or is very complicated. Hearing you tap back his exact rhythm will develop the student's ear.

# Rhythm Cards

**Step 1:** Create rhythm cards that are in proportion to the rhythmic value of each note. For example, quarter note cards (one beat) are one inch wide and have a quarter note written on them. Half note cards (two beats) two inches wide. Two eighth notes together (one beat) are one inch wide, etc.



**Step 2:** Arrange the cards in a row in various Animal Rhythm Patterns. For example:



Zechariah Zebra

Tall Giraffe

Ta - ti Ta - ti Ta Ta Ta Ta - 2

Tap and count in both the Animal Rhythms and Ta's.

**Step 3:** Next, instruct the student, "Make a rhythm using 8 cards." The student makes the rhythm and you and the student tap and say it. Do not say "8 beats" unless you have older students who can add up beats.

**Step 4:** Next, say, "Make a rhythm 8 cards long that has a Zechariah Zebra." Tap and say it together.

**Step 5:** For group classes, have each student to make his own 8-card rhythm. Then ask each student to tap the rhythm in front of him (his own). After everyone has tapped and said his rhythm, the students rotate one place to the right so they are in front of their neighbor's rhythm. Go around the table and have everyone tap and say the rhythm in front of him. Rotate one place to the right and repeat until the students return to their original place at the table.

**Step 6:** Occasionally, let the class create a long rhythm chain using all the cards. The goal of this step is to add joy to music study, not necessarily to be rhythmically perfect, since practicing short rhythm patterns is more useful than reading long ones. However, joy is important! When students look back on their piano study, they will likely always remember how you let them make a long rhythm chain using all the cards!

# Rhythmic Dictation

**Step 1:** Tap and say "Ta Ta Kangaroo." 

**Step 2:** The student taps and repeats what you said and then uses the rhythm cards to make the rhythm. You can use Ta's, Animal Rhythm Patterns, or mix the two systems (as in Step 1).

**Step 3:** You and the student tap and say the rhythm while looking at the cards to see if the student made the rhythm correctly.

**Step 4:** Repeat with other rhythms.

# Rhythm Ensembles

**Step 1:** The student taps steady quarter notes saying, "Ta Ta Ta Ta," while you tap half notes, saying nothing. When you think the student can concentrate on keeping his rhythm going, say, "Ta - 2 Ta - 2" for your half notes while the student continues with quarter notes.

**Step 2:** Trade parts. The student taps half notes while you tap quarter notes.

**Step 3:** Repeat with whole notes and eighth notes. This is a first step toward confident ensemble playing. Use a drum or Orff instruments to add variety.

# Suction Cup Rhythms

**Step 1:** Create four measure rhythms on cards and stick them to a window, mirror, or large whiteboard (you can also use the *Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards*, which have Rhythm Tapping Exercises at the bottom of each card). Buy a ball that has suction cups (found in the party section of Target or other stores).



**Step 2:** The student throws the suction cup ball at the cards. It will stick to the mirror/window or to the card if it is laminated. Take down the card that the ball lands nearest.



**Step 3:** You and the student tap or play this rhythm card on a drum, piano, or on the fallboard. You may also choose to provide maracas or other Orff instruments. I like to have several stations to allow the student to practice playing the same rhythm in a variety of ways. For example, we play the same card at the drum station, the maraca station, and the hopping station (to get out some excess energy!).



**Step 4:** Repeat **Steps 2** and **3** until all cards are completed.

Of course, all these activities are not necessary to effectively learn rhythms. However, they do make the experience more joyful. At the beginning of study, anything you can do to playfully engage the student will help him internalize the rhythms and feel confident and excited about the process.

For additional reinforcement in learning rhythms and for practice writing rhythms we advise all students to work through *Piano Safari® Theory Book 1*.

# ALPHABET BOOGIE p. 15

By Julie Knerr & Christopher Fisher



INTRODUCTION  
ROTE

Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video for all Rote Pieces and Technique Exercises at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) for home practice.

**Step 1:** Have the student listen to the Audio Track several times before introducing it. Although the Rote Pieces can be taught without prior listening, having the student listen to the Audio Track does speed up the learning process.

**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. The 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:** Use this piece in combination with **Decorate the Piano**, TG p. 27.

## 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 entire piece

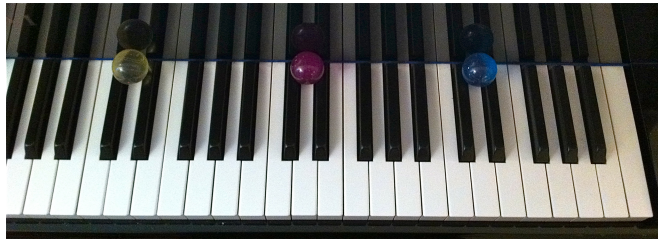
# Decorate the Piano

**Step 1:** Have the student put letter cards in order of the Music Alphabet on the music rack.  
(Music Alphabet Cards are available at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) on the Supplements page.)

## You Will Need:

- Rhythmic playing
- 7 Bouncy Balls
- 7 Plastic Caterpillars
- 8 Foam A's
- 8 Foam B's
- 8 Foam C's
- 7 Foam D's
- 7 Foam E's
- 7 Foam F's
- 7 Foam G's

**Step 2:** Have the student place a bouncy ball on each group of two black keys,



**Step 3:** Have a student lay a plastic caterpillar across each group of three black keys.



**Step 4:** Hand the student the foam D's. Tell the student that D is the white key between the two black keys under the ball. The student puts all the D's on the piano.



**Step 5:** Hand the student the foam C's. Count up from A to help the student find C's, noting that C is to the left of D.



**Step 6:** Repeat the process with E's, noting that E is to the right of D.



**Step 7:** Repeat with F, G, A, and B.



**Step 8:** Celebrate how great the piano looks now that it is decorated!





I teach this piece at the very first lesson. Present as many or few steps per lesson as the student can handle based on age and ability. Most students are able to learn the entire piece (**Steps 1- 8**) in one lesson. (Of course, this is not the only thing the student works on in the lesson. It usually takes about 3 - 7 minutes for the student to learn this piece.) **Steps 9 - 14** can be taught at subsequent lessons.

Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) for all Rote Pieces for home practice.

The student plays the entire piece with Finger 2. The student may hold his hand in a loose fist with Finger 2 extended or with the thumb bracing Finger 2 under the first knuckle. Generally, students who try to play this piece with the hand in a regular piano position end up with fingers that are tight, sticking up, or curled, what I call "pterodactyl hands." Hence it is better for the student to play with the loose fist or braced Finger 2. Free arm movement and control of larger muscles is the focus of this piece.

The notation is for teacher and parent reference only. The student learns by imitation through the following steps.

Many of the pieces in *Repertoire Book 1* have Instructional Videos and Performance Videos to aid in teaching these pieces and exercises. Please see [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) to watch these videos.

**Step 1:** Play and sing the piece for the student, with Teacher Accompaniment.

**Step 2:** Play m. 1 of Student Part, singing "1 2 1 2." The student imitates.

**Step 3:** Play m. 2, singing "Go-ing up." The student imitates.

**Step 4:** Play m. 1-2, singing "1 2 1 2 Go-ing up." The student imitates.

**Step 5:** Repeat with m. 3-4, singing "1 2 1 2 Go-ing down."

**Step 6:** Repeat m. 5-6 (same as m. 1-2).

**Step 7:** "Now for the special ending!" Play m. 7-8 singing "1 2 1 2 1 2 3," "Mi mi re re do do do," or the lyrics. Any of these three will work.

**Step 8:** Put all phrases together.

## Objectives

- Learn a patterned piece by rote
- Gain control over the forearm motion

## Does Your Student Have?

- Steady rhythm
- Relaxed forearm motion

- Step 9:** Once the student can play the piece well, some students that have good fine motor control can be asked to play with a firm end joint, rather than a floppy or collapsed one, on Finger 2. Some children will not have the control to play with a firm end joint at this point. If this is the case, don't worry. The student's technique will progress as he becomes more coordinated over the first weeks of lessons. It is more important at this point that the student has a relaxed and comfortable forearm motion than that the fingertip is firm.
- Step 10:** When the student is confident and can play the piece correctly by himself, add the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Step 11:** Have the student play in different octaves of his choice to create a Chipmunk Family (Low = Grandpa Chipmunk. High = Baby Chipmunk). If you have a stuffed chipmunk, have the student close his eyes, and have the chipmunk play the group of two black keys in the octave he wants the student to start. Children love to see where the chipmunk will have them play next!
- Step 12:** Have the student play the piece with the LH. Place a sticker in the boxes as the student masters the RH and LH variations.
- Step 13:** Have several students or family members play together in different octaves.
- Step 14:** Create a story with the student, playing in different tempos and octaves to match the story. For example, as you vamp on the Teacher Accompaniment, say:
- "Once upon a time, Brother Chipmunk went out to play."
  - Student plays at moderate tempo in the middle of the piano.
  - "As Brother Chipmunk was in the woods, he heard a screech. He got really scared and ran towards home."
  - Student plays the piece at a fast tempo.
  - "When he got home, Mama Chipmunk soothed him and said it was probably just the neighbor practicing his kazoo. Shhh, Sister Chipmunk is taking her nap."
  - Student plays the piece up high and slowly.

Be encouraging of whatever the student plays when he is improvising. If he has serious rhythm problems and plays with no sense of pulse, see **Step 3**. Do not be overly corrective. A rhythmic pulse will develop with time. The goal of improvisation is to explore sounds at the piano. Take a few minutes at each lesson to improvise, which will help the student gain confidence, freedom, rhythm, and creativity at the piano.

**Step 1:** Play the LH of the Teacher

Accompaniment and improvise with RH  
Finger 2 on black keys in a steady rhythm  
to show the student what he might play.  
You can also have the student march  
around the room while you play.

**Step 2:** Play the Teacher Accompaniment and ask  
the student to play whatever black keys  
he wants, using Finger 2 in one or both  
hands. If he is timid, ask him to play louder.

**Step 3:** If the student does not have a steady beat and appears not to be listening at all to your  
rhythmic pulse, play a simple pattern on the black keys of 3 or 4 notes using Ta and Ta - ti  
and have the student imitate you. After several patterns, play the improvisation again.  
Gradually, the student will improve in matching your meter and rhythm in his improvisations.

## Objective

- Improvise in a steady beat on black keys

## Does Your Student Have?

- Steady rhythm
- Strong tone

# HUNGRY HERBIE HIPPO p. 18

Traditional, arr. Knerr



INTRODUCTION  
ROTE

I would like to thank Carolyn Shaak for my first introduction to the benefits of transposing this folk song.

Tell the parent that there is a Reminder Video at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) for reference at home. The student should also listen to the Audio Track.

The student plays the entire piece with Finger 2 together. The student should have his hand in a loose fist with Finger 2 extended. Free arm movement and control of larger muscles is the focus of this piece, not Piano Hand Shape.

**Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH**

**Step 1:** Start with the G-flat version (on black keys).  
Play and sing the piece for the student.

**Step 2:** You play the RH while playing the LH part using the student's Finger 2. You are holding his finger and controlling it. Play the piece.

**Step 3:** Tell the student, "You play your note (LH Finger 2) after I play each of my notes." The teacher plays a note, the student plays his LH note, the teacher plays the next note, the student plays his LH note, etc. Hold up his hand at the end "cheeseburger" so he does not play the LH there.

**Step 4:** Play m. 1 HT (Hands Together). The student imitates. If the student has trouble keeping the LH from moving to play other notes, put some sticky tack or tape on his LH finger and stick his finger to the key. If you make it fun, he will think it is great to have his finger stuck to the key.

**Step 5:** Play m. 1-2. The student imitates.

**Step 6:** Tell the student, "We play the first part three times and then keep going down for the cheeseburger." Point to the keys as necessary to help the student remember where to play next.

**Step 7:** When the student has mastered the piece, add the Teacher Accompaniment. Play the introduction to the accompaniment and say, "Ready go" on the last two beats before he starts to cue his entrance. After several repetitions, the student will be able to hear on his own when to start playing.

## Objectives:

- Play hands together
- Gain control over the forearm motion
- Experience transposition
- Develop coordination

## Does Your Student Have?

- Rhythmic energy
- Even rhythm
- Ability to play fast after practice
- Ability to play all transpositions without marbles or coins.

- Step 8:** To teach the transposition to B, put the penny and nickel in the position shown in the picture on the second page of this piece (penny on A#, nickel on B). (You can also use flat marbles, which will be less likely than coins to fall between the keys.) Play the piece for the student, telling him, "Skip the penny note and end on the nickel note." Then show him where to put his hands and have him try it. Older students can place the penny, nickel, and fingers themselves according to the picture.
- Step 9:** For the transpositions to C, F, and G, put the pennies in place (for young students) or have the student put the pennies in place according to the picture (for older students). Play it and say, "Skip the penny notes." It is not necessary for the student to know the names of the white keys to play this piece. He can refer to the picture and spatially know where to put the pennies and how to find his starting position based on the groups of two and three black keys.
- Step 10:** When the student is confident, add the Teacher Accompaniment (available for download at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) on the Resources page). Start the accompaniment introduction at various tempos to have the student practice matching your tempo.

# I LIKE BANANAS p. 20

By Julie Knerr



INTRODUCTION  
ROTE

**Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH**

**Step 1:** Play the piece for the student.

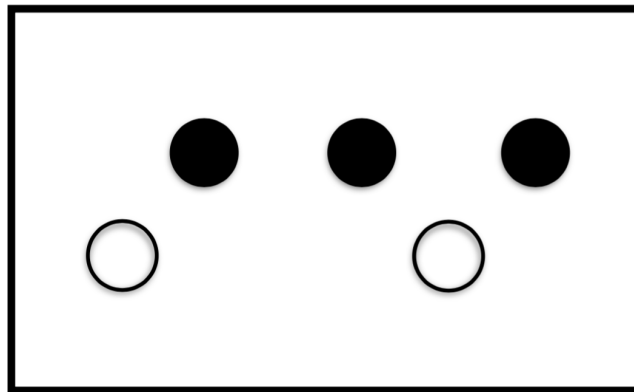
**Step 2:** Play the first two notes, "I like," using Finger 2 extended in both hands, with the hands in a loose fist. The student imitates.

**Step 3:** Play the next three notes, singing, "Bananas." The student imitates.

**Step 4:** Student plays, "I like." You play, "Bananas," for m. 1.

**Step 5:** Switch parts. You play, "I like," and the student plays, "Bananas."

**Step 6:** Play m. 1, "I like bananas." The student imitates. If the student has trouble, you can say "White black, black white black." You may also draw the pattern on a card, like this:



**Step 7:** Once the student has m. 1 solidly learned, demonstrate m. 2, which is the same pattern of black and white keys but uses different keys. Say, "Just like a monkey," or, "White black, black white black," pointing to the keys from above as necessary. The student imitates.

**Step 8:** Continue playing each measure, and have the student imitate.

**Step 9:** Student plays m. 1 - 8 until confident. Point to notes from above as necessary.

## Objectives:

- Play syncopated rhythms
- Coordinate hands
- Explore pattern of black and white keys on the keyboard
- Play with changing the lyrics of a piece to develop the Discipline for Repetition

## Does Your Student Have?

- Correct rhythm
- Understanding of the patterns
- Discipline for Repetition

- Step 10:** Download the "I Like Banana Cards" on the Teacher Guide page at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com). Cut them apart, and sort them into two groups: food and animals.
- Step 11:** Hold the animal cards up facing you so the student cannot see the animals. The student chooses a card. Repeat with the food cards. Sing the words, replacing, "I like bananas just like a monkey," with the cards the student has drawn. For example, "I like spaghetti just like a panda." Have the student play the piece while you sing these words. Some young students may need to get used to the idea that this is a joke, because pandas don't eat spaghetti. After they understand the joke, they will think this is great fun and will be excited to see what other combinations they can choose. If you do not have the cards downloaded, you can have the student choose combinations of animals and food on the page.
- Step 12:** You can extend the amount of repetitions the student plays by choosing a food and animal for each octave of the piano, beginning with the lowest octave and working up. This develops the Discipline for Repetition, which is an important practicing skill that is necessary to become a good pianist.
- Step 13:** Add the Teacher Accompaniment. In the teacher interludes, cue the student when to start playing again. This may take some rehearsal. The student should listen to the Audio Track to understand how the student and teacher parts sound together.

# OUTER SPACE p. 22

By Julie Knerr



INTRODUCTION  
ROTE

This is the first piece students play with an open hand, in preparation for playing single fingers in Reading Pieces and Sight Reading & Rhythm Cards in Unit 1.

**Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH**

**Step 1:** Play m. 1-8 for the student, the "Space Music."

**Step 2:** Play m. 1-2 for the student, singing "Going to outer space." Student imitates, playing *non legato* with an arm bounce on each note. The pedal will make it sound *legato*, while playing *non legato* will preserve the piano hand shape. Saying, "outer space" on the dotted half note will help the student hold it for three beats.

**Step 3:** Have the student repeat the same pattern up an octave (m. 3-4).

**Step 4:** Demonstrate m. 5-8, singing, "4 3 2 right right left 1 2 3 4." Student imitates.

**Step 5:** Have the student start *piano* and gradually *crescendo* to shape the dynamics.

**Step 6:** Ask the student to think of two objects in outer space and draw pictures of those objects in the space provided. My students have answered, "UFO's, moon, stars, earth, planets, space ships, black holes, supernovas..."

**Step 7:** For each space object, ask the student to think of music to match. If he is timid, give him an idea and demonstrate, such as playing random high black keys for stars, playing black and white hand clusters for earth, or playing fast and loud black keys for UFO's. Create short musical sounds for each of the space things he drew. It works best if there are some black keys involved rather than anything diatonic on the white keys, but I do not censor the children if they start playing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on white keys for their star music. Anything is acceptable. Use pedal throughout to make it sound more space like. The improvisation section music will change slightly each time, which is fine. However, I have found that the children usually do not change their sounds drastically. Once they find a sound they like that goes with their object, they remember it and keep using it.

**Step 8:** You may draw pictures relating to the form of the piece separate pieces of paper and tape them together to show the form of the piece.

## Objectives

- Learn a piece by rote
- Improvise space music
- Open the hand into Piano Hand Shape in preparation for playing single fingers

## Does Your Student Have?

- Bouncy arm
- Correct rhythm
- Open hand

Space  
Music  
(m. 1-8)

Space  
Object 1

Space  
Music  
(m. 1-8)

Space  
Object 2

Space  
Music  
(m. 1-8)

Shooting  
Star