

PIANO SAFARI® FOR THE OLDER STUDENT REPERTOIRE & TECHNIQUE BOOK 1

TEACHER GUIDE by Dr. Julie Knerr

Note: To find a specific piece in the Teacher Guide, see the Alphabetical Index.

TEACHER GUIDE SECTION	TEACHER GUIDE PAGE NUMBERS
Teacher Information	1 - 8
Unit 1	9 - 24
Unit 2	25 - 37
Unit 3	38 - 48
Unit 4	49 - 61
Unit 5	62 - 73

Throughout this Teacher Guide, page numbers refer to *Repertoire & Technique Book 1* pages unless preceded by "TG."

For example:

- "p. 12" refers to p. 12 in *Repertoire & Technique Book 1*
- "TG p. 12" refers to p. 12 of the Teacher's Guide.

For additional teaching resources, including Videos and Mini Essays, visit pianosafari.com.

PIANO SAFARI® FOR THE OLDER STUDENT LEVEL 1

Piano Safari for the Older Student is designed for students ages 10 through adult.

Level 1 consists of:



Repertoire & Technique Book 1

- Reading Pieces
- Rote Pieces
- Technique Exercises
- Technique Rote Pieces
- Challenge Pieces
- Improvisation Pieces



Sight Reading & Theory Book 1

- Sight Reading Exercises
- Rhythm Tapping Exercises
- Written Theory

The two books in Level 1 of Piano Safari for the Older Student work together to provide reinforcement for each concept presented. The five units of each book are correlated.

Each concept is learned through various types of pieces and exercises.

- Students first learn a concept by *playing* it in a **Rote Piece**.
- They then learn the notation for the concept by *seeing* it in **Reading Pieces**.
- They gain further confidence by *practicing* the concept in **Sight Reading Examples**.
- They may also gain further familiarity with a concept or gesture through by encountering it in **Improvisation Pieces** and **Challenge Pieces**.
- They solidify their knowledge through written **Theory**.

PHILOSOPHIES OF PIANO SAFARI

- **Learning Modalities.** Concepts are presented and practiced in various ways to provide students with different ways of interacting with each concept. Our goal is for students to play, hear, see, and write each concept.
- **Sound Before Symbol.** Students first play and hear a concept in a Rote Piece or Technique Exercise taught by rote. They then see and read the concept in Reading Pieces and Sight Reading Exercises.
- **Rote and Reading Simultaneously.** Students learn Rote Pieces alongside a separate body of Reading Pieces. By learning pieces in these two ways simultaneously, students develop both their aural and visual literacy. The type of piece is listed in the upper right hand corner of each piece.
- **Rote Pieces.** The best Rote Pieces are based on patterns that relate to the keyboard layout of black and white keys. These patterns make sense to beginning students who do not yet have knowledge of theory. Students learn that music is made of logical patterns.
- **Reading Pieces.** After an initial phase of pre-staff reading to acquaint students with rhythmic values and finger numbers, students learn to read intervallically. This allows students to see music in groups, rather than reading note by note. Note names on the staff are introduced at the end of Level 1.
- **Rhythm.** A syllabic system of counting is introduced before metric counting to allow students to gain an intuitive and natural sense of pulse and subdivision.
- **Technical Gestures.** Technique is best taught by rote to allow students to focus solely on physical gestures. Foundational technical gestures derived from Dr. Knerr's dissertation research are introduced in Level 1, followed by standard technical patterns of pentascales, scales, chord inversions, and chord progressions in Levels 2 and 3.
- **Unit Study.** Students should work within a unit until all pieces and exercises for that unit are completed in both books. The order in which pieces are assigned within a unit is left to the discretion of the teacher, depending on whether the student needs a new Reading Piece, Rote Piece, etc. in a given week.
- **Repetition for Mastery.** Learning to read music fluently takes much practice and repetition. This is provided through Reading Pieces and Sight Reading Exercises.
- **Spiral Learning.** Concepts return repeatedly in different guises to allow students to build on an initial concept through seeing it in various contexts.
- **Variety of Levels.** A carefully calibrated variety of easy and challenging pieces are combined to provide students with a rich and varied program of study. Easier pieces build fluency and confidence, while more challenging pieces allow the student to build their skill level.
- **Creativity.** Students who are taught that music is composed in logical patterns and who are taught Rote Pieces from the beginning of study learn that they can manipulate patterns to create their own music. They naturally begin to improvise and compose.

ROTE PIECES

How Students Learn Rote Pieces

- Listen to the Audio Tracks. (A code to download the tracks is provided on the title page of *Repertoire & Technique Book 1*.)
- Model the teacher phrase by phrase.
- Reminder Videos for home practice are available on the Videos page at pianosafari.com.
- Since older students will generally be able to learn to read music notation more quickly than children, teachers may allow students to refer to the score to detect patterns. We call this kind of teaching "quasi-rote." Some pieces may be taught entirely by rote, while others lend themselves well to quasi-rote teaching.

Teaching Tips

- Teaching students by rote (by imitation with little or no reference to the score), allows students to develop the ear, memory, and technique without the added complication of reading notation. Music is an aural art, and students should understand music with their ears as well as learn to read notation with their eyes. A balance between pieces taught by notation (eye) and those taught by rote (ear) will help students understand and internalize music and become musically literate both visually and aurally.
- Not every piece makes a good rote piece! The Rote Pieces included in Piano Safari been specially composed based on keyboard patterns of black and white keys that students can understand easily. Patterns are essential to a successful Rote Piece.
- To teach a Rote Piece, the teacher should break the piece into manageable parts (a measure or phrase at a time) and play that part for the student. The student watches the teacher play on the piano and then imitates that part. As each part is successfully learned, the teacher can add on another part until the whole piece is learned. In this way, students understand the patterns, memorize the piece while learning it, and are able to play much more difficult music than they would be able to read in notation. This builds confidence that the student can walk up to any piano and play a great sounding piece, rather than being always reliant on the printed score.
- The Rote Pieces in *Repertoire & Technique Book 1* may look difficult, but we have found that students who have played Rote Pieces from the beginning of study develop an astounding ability to easily understand and internalize patterns. Therefore, although the Rote Pieces increase in difficulty, we have found that the more Rote Pieces the student plays, the easier they become to learn.
- For more information about the benefits of teaching by rote, see **Mini Essay 6: The Benefits of Rote Teaching** on the Resources page at pianosafari.com.

READING PIECES

How Students Learn Reading Pieces

- Students learn the Reading Pieces by reading the music notation.
- Reading Pieces are not included on the Audio Tracks, because we want to be sure students are learning to read notation rather than learning these pieces by ear.
- The following table summarizes the introduction of new concepts and intervals in the Reading Pieces found in *Repertoire & Technique Book 1*.

UNIT	READING PIECES: MAIN CONCEPTS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-staff notation on black and white keys• Fingers 2 3 4, followed by the addition of Fingers 1 and 5
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landmark Notes of Treble G, Bass C, and Middle C• Interval of a 2nd
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interval of a 3rd
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2nds & 3rds combined beginning on Landmark Notes
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note Names on the grand staff• 2nds & 3rds beginning on various notes on the staff

Teaching Tips

- Focusing on one interval for an entire unit allows students to completely master one interval before combining it with other intervals.
- To add complexity to the single staff Reading Pieces and to build coordination, we recommend that students play selected Reading Pieces hands together in parallel motion.
- In addition to the Reading Pieces provided in *Repertoire & Technique Book 1*, students gain vital additional practice in reading and rhythm skills in the *Sight Reading & Theory Book 1*. See the Teacher Guide for this book under Resources at pianosafari.com. The two books work together, and both are necessary for a successful learning experience.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

How Students Learn Technical Exercises

- Listen to the Audio Tracks. (A code to download the tracks is provided on the title page of *Repertoire & Technique Book 1*.)
- Learn by rote, imitating the motions and gestures of the teacher.
- Reminder Videos for home practice, available on the Videos page at pianosafari.com

The **Technical Exercises** presented in this book are designed to help students master basic motions that provide a solid foundation for future piano study. The exercises were developed through Dr. Julie Knerr's dissertation research with respected teachers of pre-college students, in which she observed lessons and interviewed the teachers about how they teach technique to beginning students. If you would like to read the dissertation, it is available on the Resources page at pianosafari.com.

Mastering the following technical motions will aid the student greatly in playing first year repertoire and will provide a framework of physical freedom and confidence on which to build all future piano technique.

Technical Exercises in Level 1

- Arm Drop. The basis of all piano technique is arm weight.
- *Non legato* articulation with an arm bounce on each note
- *Legato* articulation with an arm bounce on each note
- *Legato* articulation in a three-note slur, with one arm gesture over several notes
- Fast Repeated notes with a loose arm and firm fingertips
- Rotation

A Rote Piece that uses the technical motion follows each of the Technique Exercises presented throughout the book.

Important! All pieces should be played *non legato* until the Legato Exercise found on p. 52. We have found that an extended period of playing *non legato* helps students develop the coordination between arm and fingers and aids in forming a good piano hand shape. Once the hand shape is secure and this coordination is in place, students can then begin to connect fingers in the *legato* articulation presented on p. 52. Beginning with a *non legato* articulation will prevent most technical problems.

IMPROVISATION PIECES

How Students Learn Improvisation Pieces

- Model the teacher
- Create their own sounds within a given framework

Teaching Tips

- Improvisation Pieces provide parameters within which a student may create their own sounds at the piano. These pieces allow students to develop and express their creativity.
- We also encourage students in their creativity by allowing them to alter their Rote Pieces or Reading Pieces by playing them in new ways. They can change the key, tempo, range, dynamics, play a one-handed piece hands together, or add pedal to experience how these changes affect the sound. We have found that this freedom to alter pieces encourages students to begin to create their own music.

CHALLENGE PIECES

How Students Learn Challenge Pieces

- Read notation by interval and note names.
- Because students may not yet have encountered all the intervals found in the pieces, judiciously placed finger numbers are included to aid in reading.

Teaching Tips

- Challenge Pieces are pieces from the standard classical piano repertoire. This first taste of classical piano repertoire is exciting for students! Each of the piece presents a challenge in reading, technique, or in refinement of phrasing or balance between hands.
- Work carefully on the Challenge Pieces to help students refine their playing. I generally like to assign the most difficult pieces in a unit during the first week's lesson for that unit. This often includes the Challenge Piece and the most difficult Rote Piece. In this way, students have a longer period of time in which to master these more difficult pieces, while working gradually through the other pieces and exercises in the unit. As noted on TG p. 3, the Piano Safari books are designed as unit studies. The student works within a unit until all pieces and exercises for that unit are mastered before graduating to the next unit. The order in which pieces are assigned is left to the discretion of the teacher.

LESSON ORGANIZATION

What is included in a Piano Safari lesson?

We recommend 45 or 60-minute lessons for all students. The Older Student Method can also work well in Partner Lessons or Group Lessons.

The order of lesson and times can be adjusted as desired. Here is a sample breakdown of a 45-minute private lesson.

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF PIECES	TIME
Pieces a Student is Working On	2 - 5	13 minutes
Technical Exercise	1	3 minutes
New Pieces	1 - 2	10 minutes
Review Pieces	3 - 5	5 minutes
Improvisation	1	2 minutes
Sight Reading & Rhythm Exercises	2 - 4	10 minutes
Assign Theory Pages	2 - 3 pages	2 minutes

ASSIGNING PIECES

Students should work within a unit in the Repertoire & Technique Book 1 and the corresponding unit in the *Sight Reading & Theory Book 1* until all pieces and exercises for that unit are completed before graduating to the next unit.

The order in which pieces are assigned within a unit is left to the discretion of the teacher. One week a student may need a new Reading Piece or two, while another week he may need a new Rote Piece or Challenge Piece.

Students usually take an average of one academic year to complete Level 1. However, this varies depending on various factors.

Students should continue to play pieces that are "passed" as Review Pieces for as long as they enjoy playing these pieces, while also working on new pieces. This allows students to develop technical fluency.

We have found that marking the pages with page marking tabs helps students keep track of the pieces they are playing. One color tab can denote "Working on Pieces" while another color tab can be used for "Review Pieces."