

PIANO SAFARI®  
FRIENDS

TEACHER GUIDE

BY

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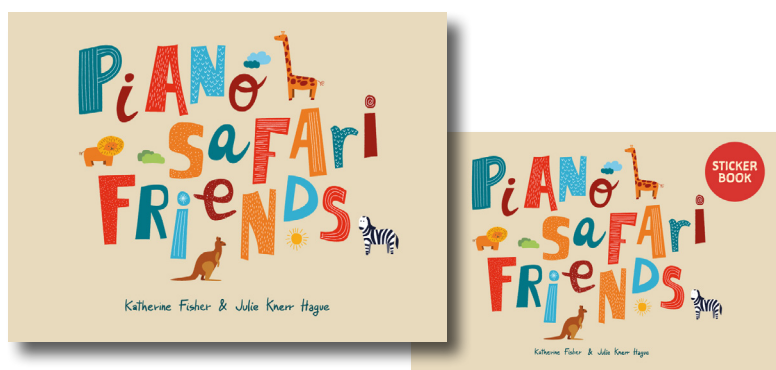
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# PIANO SAFARI® FRIENDS PACK for the Student

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The [Piano Safari Friends Pack](#) for the Student includes:

- Lesson Book
- Sticker Book
- Digital Audio Tracks for the pieces and techniques (code on p. 1 of book)
- PDF of the Piano Decorating Kit (code on p. 1)
- PDF of the Alphabet Leaves (code on p. 1)

[MP3](#) and [MIDI](#) Accompaniment Tracks and correlating [Piece Cards](#) are available for purchase at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com).

Reminder Videos are available on the Piano Safari YouTube channel and at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com).

# PIANO SAFARI® FRIENDS RESOURCE PACK for the Teacher

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The [Piano Safari Friends Teacher Resource Pack](#) includes:

- [Lesson Book](#)
- [Teacher Guide](#)
- [Music Alphabet Cards](#)
- [Animal Rhythm Pattern Cards](#)

Items in the Teacher Resource Pack are also sold separately.

# INTRODUCTION

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## GOAL

*Piano Safari Friends* is intended to prepare students ages four to six for Piano Safari Level 1. Its aim is to provide rich and enjoyable musical experiences at the piano through imitating, improvising, singing, moving, and learning the fundamentals of rhythmic notation and pre-staff reading.

The book has a unit-based design. Each unit is centered around a letter of the music alphabet. Although the teacher may proceed through the book in order, the teacher may also present the pieces and activities in any order within the unit to keep a well-balanced assignment that is tailored to the individual student.

## AGE OF STUDENT

*Piano Safari Friends* is designed for beginning piano students ages four to six. There is a great deal of variation in attention and development in students of these ages. In order for students to have a good experience in *Piano Safari Friends*, we recommend the following characteristics:

- The student is able to follow instructions given by the teacher.
- The student is able to copy a four-note pattern on two keys at the piano. For example, the teacher plays C C D D. The student watches and imitates the teacher's playing.
- The parent is supportive of piano study and supervises and participates in practice.

It is not necessary for the student to know how to read words or music, although some familiarity with the letters of the alphabet is helpful.

Because of the variation in skill level and maturity found in children ages four to six, there is a variety of levels included in the book. Use the book in a way that best suits your student. For example, some four-year-olds will easily understand the patterns in the most difficult Rote Pieces in the book, while other four-year-olds may need to focus on the Follow the Leader and easiest Rote Pieces for an extended period of time before their development allows them to progress to the more difficult pieces.

*Piano Safari Friends* is designed as a year long curriculum to prepare students to enter Piano Safari Level 1 at the age of six or seven. However, time to complete *Piano Safari Friends* will vary based on the age of the student. Four-year-olds may spend two years in *Piano Safari Friends*, while six-year-olds may progress through the book in less than a year.

## LESSON LENGTH AND PRACTICING

We recommend 30 - 45 minute lessons once or twice a week. In planning for lessons, teachers should be prepared to change activities frequently to accommodate the attention span of the student.

A combination of activities away from the piano and playing pieces at the piano will provide the most successful and engaging lessons with this age group.

Young children learn through play, so activities should be enjoyable, fun, and playful. Additional teaching aids such as stuffed animals or other manipulatives may be added to enhance the lessons.

Practicing at this stage may be very short. The parent should aim to have the student play the piano for two short segments of five to ten minutes, five or six days per week. This may be expanded or modified at the parent's discretion based on the interest level and attention span of the student. The goal of practicing at this stage is to set up the discipline and expectation of playing the piano each day.

# MAIN CONCEPTS

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## ROTE TEACHING

The majority of pieces in *Piano Safari Friends* are designed to be taught by rote. The teacher plays a short pattern, and the student imitates the notes, rhythm, technique, and sound. We have found that a carefully designed system for rote teaching in the beginning stages of study yields multiple benefits. If you would like to learn more about this topic, please visit [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) and read [Mini Essay 6: The Benefits of Rote Teaching](#). We believe that young students ages four to six are best served by learning primarily by rote, as there is a wide variety in reading readiness in this age group.

In *Piano Safari Friends*, there are two types of pieces that use rote teaching:

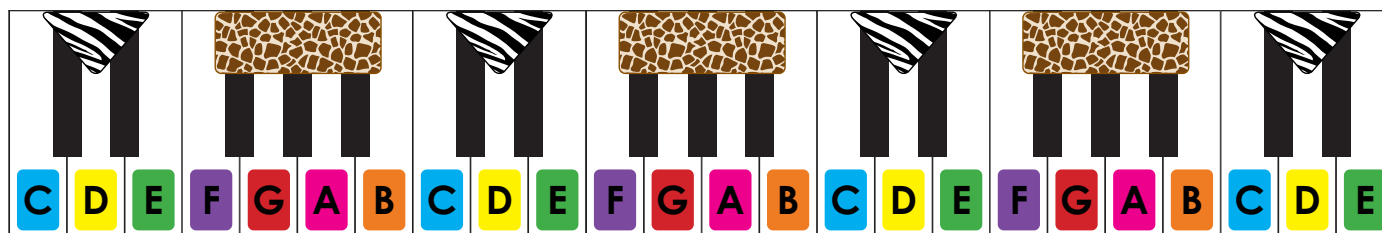
- **Follow the Leader Pieces:** Students imitate short phrases directly after the teacher. This allows them to remember short patterns and have the immediate satisfaction of playing a piece. Follow the Leader Pieces build concentration and short term memory skills.
- **Rote Pieces:** Students learn a longer series of patterns by rote and add them together to form a piece.

## WHITE KEY LETTER NAMES

Unit 1 introduces the groups of two and three black keys. Units 2 - 8 each feature a letter of the music alphabet. By the end of the book, students will develop a thorough knowledge of the piano keyboard.

The [Piano Decorating Kit](#) is used in each unit. The student decorates the piano with pieces designed for the black keys groups and individual white keys. [Click here to watch a video!](#)

- Zebra triangles on groups of two black keys
- Giraffe rectangles on groups of three black keys
- Letters on the white keys









A portion of the keyboard is decorated in each unit as students gradually learn the white key names. Pieces, technique, and activities in each unit center around the letter name that is currently being introduced. The ready-made Piano Decorating Kit is available for purchase at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com). Because it is an integral part of *Piano Safari Friends*, a PDF version is included to enable the teacher and student to print and cut out their own kit.

# RHYTHM

*Piano Safari Friends* has two main goals for rhythmic development.

First, we want students to experience meter and rhythm by moving, singing and playing the piano. Initially, students learn rhythm patterns by rote. Aural and rhythmic understanding precede reading the notation.

Second, we teach students to tap back and to recognize the notation for common rhythm patterns, which we call the [Animal Rhythm Patterns](#). These patterns are presented on *Piano Safari Friends* p. 12 and are used throughout the entire book in conjunction with the *Piano Safari Friends Sticker Book*, which is included in the Piano Safari Friends Pack. The *Piano Safari Friends Sticker Book* should be in the possession of parent and teacher (rather than the student), because the stickers are to be placed in specific locations in the book.

Rhythm Pattern	Animal Counting: Units 1 - 8	Syllabic Counting: Unit 8
	Charlie Chipmunk	Ta Ta Ta Ta
	Hip - po	Ta - 2 Ta - 2
	Tall Giraffe	Ta Ta Ta - 2
	Zechariah Zebra	Ta - ti Ta - ti Ta Ta
	Kangaroo	Ta - ti Ta
	Roar - 2 - 3 - 4	Ta - 2 - 3 - 4

The presentation of the Animal Rhythm Patterns is as follows:

- Students experience the Animal Rhythm Patterns aurally throughout the book. The teacher taps the rhythm while saying the animal name, and the student echoes back.
- Students play the Animal Rhythm Patterns by rote before the notation is presented.
- Students learn the notation of a specific rhythm pattern and identify the pattern in their Reading Exercises.
- In Unit 8, students are introduced to the syllabic counting system (counting with Ta), which is further developed in Piano Safari Level 1.

Our goal in presenting rhythm in this manner is to allow students to develop a vocabulary of common patterns that foster a sense of pulse and rhythmic understanding. We also want students to recognize patterns in groups of notes, rather than viewing each note individually.

A supplemental teaching aid called [Piano Safari Animal Rhythm Patterns](#) is available for purchase at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) for use in private and group classes. These large, colorful cards allow students to match the animal with the notated Animal Rhythm Pattern and create their own rhythmic sentences.

# TYPES OF PIECES

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*Piano Safari Friends* includes the following types of pieces and activities:

- Follow the Leader Pieces
- Rote Pieces
- Improvisation Pieces
- Technique Exercises
- Reading Exercises
- Songs
- Activities

## UNIT BASED

*Piano Safari Friends* is organized in unit study format. Rather than moving in order from page to page through a unit, the teacher may create a balanced lesson plan and assignment that includes a variety of pieces and activities from within the unit. This flexibility in order allows the teacher to tailor the approach for each student based on their needs.

Once all the pieces, exercises, and activities in a unit are mastered, the student graduates to the next unit.

Because young students enjoy the comfort found in routine and repetition, the focus should be on providing enjoyable musical experiences rather than moving in a fast-paced forward trajectory through the book. Take the time to review the student's favorite pieces, even if they are in previous units. Repetition builds fluency and skill and is enjoyable for young students.

Following is a description of each type of piece or activity found in *Piano Safari Friends*.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER PIECES

In Follow the Leader Pieces, the melody is played by the teacher in short phrases that are immediately copied by the student. The goal is for students to imitate the teacher's notes, rhythm, fingering, technical gesture, and sound. Students do not read the notation. The short phrases allow students to successfully remember short patterns and play them back immediately, rather than retaining the longer patterns presented in the Rote Pieces.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate short phrases, which develops concentration
- Establish a sense of pitch and pulse
- Develop technique

General Steps for Teaching:

- The student may prepare to learn the piece by listening to the audio track at home in advance of the lesson.



- Play the melody (usually RH) without the hand that is playing the accompaniment. The teacher plays a phrase and the student immediately imitates. The student does not read the notation.
- When secure, add the teacher's accompanying hand.
- Because these pieces are teacher dependent, they are designed to be primarily used at the lesson as musical experiences. If the parent is a pianist, the parent may also play these pieces with the student at home. If the non-pianist parent and student would like to practice Follow the Leader Pieces at home, videos are provided at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com). However, practicing these pieces at home is not required.

## ROTE PIECES

Rote Pieces allow students to learn repertoire that is satisfying to play with or without the teacher accompaniment.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Allow students to play more complicated pieces than they can read
- Develop aural, technical, musical, rhythmic, and memorization skills
- Develop kinesthetic familiarity with patterns at the piano

General Steps for Teaching:

- The student may prepare to learn the piece by listening to the audio track at home in advance of the lesson.
- The teacher plays a short pattern or phrase at the piano. The student watches the teacher and imitates the phrase until it is securely learned. The teacher continues to add short phrases until the piece is complete. Lyrics or other words related to the pattern may be added to help the student learn each phrase. The student does not read the notation.
- The student plays the entire piece alone.
- When secure, the teacher accompaniment is added.
- Students may practice Rote Pieces at home. Reminder Videos are provided at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) to aid in home practice.

## IMPROVISATION PIECES

Improvisation Pieces allow students to explore sounds in a free way.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Develop creativity
- Experience new sounds

General Steps for Teaching:

- Show the student which keys may be played in each Improvisation Piece.
- Most children of this age will be enthusiastic about creating their own music, but you may suggest a few simple patterns for shy improvisers.

- Play the teacher accompaniment while the student improvises. Be encouraging about the sounds created without criticism or correction. The student should have freedom to play whatever they decide in these pieces (within the given parameters). As the student grows in experience, the improvisations will become more rhythmic and inventive.

## TECHNIQUE EXERCISES

Technique Exercises present foundational technical gestures that enable students to play in a healthy and efficient manner.

- Sitting at the piano
- Bunny House Hand Shape
- Lion Paw (arm weight)
- Tall Giraffe (*non legato* articulation)
- Zechariah Zebra and Kangaroo (repeated notes, hand shape, and firm fingertips)

The animal technique exercises in *Piano Safari Friends* prepare students for the more extensive versions of these exercises presented in Piano Safari Level 1.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Master basic motions of beginning piano technique

General Steps for Teaching:

- Students may stand or sit at the piano, depending on their height.
- Formation of a good piano hand shape takes time. It is introduced through the Bunny House activity.
- The Technique Exercises are taught by rote. You will find specific teaching steps later in this guide.
- Students play all pieces and exercises *non legato*, which enables them to produce a singing tone by using arm weight. It also helps students “keep the hand small” (rather than stretched) and reach any key. *Non legato* articulation also allows for the development of a good piano hand shape without the added complication of connecting the fingers.

## READING EXERCISES

Reading Exercises prepare students for reading on the staff through pre-staff notation. Most pieces in *Piano Safari Friends* are taught by rote, which is appropriate for the learning stage of most four- to six-year-olds. However, these Reading Exercises have been included to prepare for the extensive reading instruction Piano Safari Level 1.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Practice tracking from left to right
- Identify notated Animal Rhythm Patterns
- Learn and reinforce finger numbers

### General Steps for Teaching:

- Help the student identify the hand that will play.
- Identify the Animal Rhythm Patterns used in the exercise, marking each with a sticker from the *Piano Safari Friends Sticker Book*.
- Play the exercise on the fallboard of the piano with the student, saying the finger numbers.
- When secure, play on the piano.
- The Reading Exercise pages may be reviewed throughout the study of the unit, and Reading Exercises from previous units may also be reviewed. Confidence grows from repetition.

## SONGS

Three songs are presented throughout *Piano Safari Friends* to provide experience with moving to the music in both duple and triple meter.

### Pedagogical Objectives:

- Move to duple and triple meter
- Practice singing in order to match pitch

### General Steps for Teaching:

- Play the audio track as you sing and move with the student.
- Play the accompaniment as student and parent sing and move as directed in the lyrics.

## ACTIVITIES

Activities are presented throughout *Piano Safari Friends* to present or review concepts in a fun and imaginative way.

### Pedagogical Objectives:

- Practice concepts
- Add enjoyment to lessons

### General Steps for Teaching:

- Follow the instructions for each Activity.
- For the Listening Pages, students are introduced to famous pieces from the piano repertoire. The teacher or parent can access the music at [pianosafari.com/friends-listening](http://pianosafari.com/friends-listening), where playlists for Spotify and YouTube are included. The student may color the page or dance to the music.

# LESSON PLANS AND ASSIGNMENTS

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## LESSON PLANNING

Lessons for four- to six-year-olds should be a combination of structured routine, which provides security, and playful engagement in all activities. The goal is for the lesson to be a joyful and fun experience with music at the piano, so that the child is eager to attend each lesson. We recommend 30-minute or 45-minute lessons once or twice a week if possible.

Activities should be a mixture of on and off the bench activities. In order to provide the routine that yields security, find an order of activities that works for you as a teacher, and preserve that order structure. Some teachers prefer changing activities very frequently, as shown in the sample lesson plan below, while other teachers prefer to cover fewer concepts with more steps and activities for each concept. Find the lesson plan that works best for you.

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN (45 Minutes)

Type	On/Off Bench	Skill	Duration
Follow the Leader Piece	On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Imitating short patterns at the piano</li></ul>	5 min.
Song	Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Singing and moving to music</li></ul>	4 min.
Rote Piece	On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Learning a piece by rote</li></ul>	8 min.
Rhythm Tap Backs	Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developing rhythmic understanding</li></ul>	2 min.
Reading Exercise or Technique Exercise (alternating weeks)	On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reading: Practice finger numbers and tracking left to right</li><li>Technique: Developing coordination</li></ul>	5 min.
Improvisation	On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Discovering sounds</li></ul>	3 min.
Activity	Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reinforcing concepts in a fun way</li></ul>	7 min.
Review Pieces	On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building confidence and fluency</li></ul>	8 min.

The durations provided above are simply estimates. Feel free to alter as desired. Also, time was left in the lesson plan above for entering, transitions between activities, and saying goodbye.

## ASSIGNMENTS

As noted previously, assignments at this age will be brief. The parent should set up the expectation for visiting the piano daily, perhaps several times a day, rather than setting an exact length of time spent at the piano.

Assignments will consist mainly of the following elements:

- Listening to the Audio Tracks for current and upcoming pieces.
- Practicing Rote Pieces. Reminder Videos are provided at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com) to remind the student how to play the pieces, and MP3 accompaniment tracks are available to play along with. Students may also practice without the aid of these digital items.
- Other types of pieces, such as Follow the Leader Pieces and Improvisation Pieces, need not be practiced at home, as these are designed to provide musical experiences at the lesson and are dependent on the teacher.
- For parents and students who would like to incorporate these pieces into their practice time at home, Follow the Leader Videos are available at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com), and the student may play along with the Accompaniment Tracks for the Improvisation Pieces.

## FLEXIBLE APPROACH

There is great variety in how students progress in the four to six age range. Our goal is to provide flexible and interesting work at the piano for a variety of maturity and developmental levels. If your particular student is not ready for a certain piece or activity, by all means, skip it and return to it later. What is difficult at age four may be very easy for the same student at age five, as children at this age grow in their abilities at an astounding rate!

Likewise, there is great variation in how teachers approach music education and piano teaching to students in this age range. This curriculum is designed to be flexible enough for teachers to use exactly as it is, or to add other components. For example, some teachers may want to use solfege, emphasize singing, and use specific movement activities. On the other hand, some teachers prefer a more direct, keyboard based approach. To provide flexibility, we do not endorse a specific method or style, but leave specific approaches to each teacher's discretion.

*Piano Safari Friends* is not a music readiness curriculum. It is a piano method that aims to present material for teaching four- to six-year-old children to play the piano. We have found that many parents and students are eager to start piano lessons at this age, and young children can accomplish much at the piano. We hope that whatever your teaching approach, you will find *Piano Safari Friends* to be an engaging introduction to the piano for young students.

# UNIT 1: BLACK KEYS

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## FINGER NUMBERS (p. 8)

Type: Activity

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the number for each finger
- Match each finger number with a sticker

This simple activity page introduces finger numbers. Assist students in finding the correct sticker and placing it on the corresponding circle. (Finger number stickers are found on the first page of the *Piano Safari Friend Sticker Book*). Students may enjoy coloring in the hands as well. This page will serve as a reminder for the upcoming Finger Number Song on p. 9.

## FINGER NUMBER SONG (p. 9)

Type: Song

Composer: Traditional, arr. Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Move finger numbers in rhythm to the music

The accompanying audio track has a singer to guide students through the motions for each finger. Upon first introduction of this song, we suggest that teachers turn on the recording so that the motions may be done alongside the student. We envision that the finger movement be with the beat of the music, which will help develop a sense of steady beat. If this is too much for some young students, encourage them to simply wiggle or tap the finger at any speed. The primary objectives are to learn the finger numbers and sing along. During the two measures at the outset of the piece, it may be helpful for teachers to prepare students for the upcoming finger by giving a cue (e.g., "Let's get Finger 2 ready!"). When the student is solid with the finger numbers and motions, the teacher may play the piece with the accompaniment and let the student complete the motions independently, or perhaps along with a parent.

## ANIMAL SOUNDS (p. 10 - 11)

Type: Improvisation

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Low and high
- Creating animal sounds on the piano

**Step 1:** Suggest animals that make high and low sounds, and create the sounds with the student using your voices (e.g. low growl for a lion, or high bird sounds). Have the student suggest other animals, and decide if they make high or low sounds.

**Step 2:** Draw pictures of a few animals on a separate piece of paper or whiteboard. Improvise a sound on the piano to match the animal, and ask the student to guess which animal you are playing. These can be simple sounds using the flat palm on black keys at the low end of the piano (to represent a low hippo), or a high trill at the top of the piano to represent a bird. The goal is to hear the difference between low and high on the piano and to understand that we can relate sounds in nature to sounds on the piano.

**Step 3:** Have the student choose animals to draw in the boxes on p. 11, and ask them to create sounds for each animal on the piano. To play this improvisation as a piece, point to one of the boxes. The student plays the music created for that animal. It is fine if the initial music created changes somewhat. General sounds to represent the animal is the goal. If the student is playing that animal's sound mostly on white keys, play the accompaniment for white keys. If black keys, then use the accompaniment for black keys. After a short time, point to another box and continue in this way until all boxes have been played.

## ANIMAL RHYTHM PATTERNS (p. 12)

Type: Rhythm [click for video](#)

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the Animal Rhythm Patterns aurally
- Tap back the rhythm patterns using the animal names

The Animal Rhythm Patterns are commonly occurring rhythms that students learn to execute and identify at the beginning of study. *Aural introduction to the rhythm patterns should precede introduction to the notation.* We assign animal names to common rhythmic patterns for the following reasons:

- Animal names make the rhythm patterns recognizable and appealing to children.
- When students are introduced to the rhythmic notation, they learn to see rhythms in groups rather than focusing on one note value at a time.

Tap a rhythm pattern on the piano fallboard while you say the animal name in rhythm. The student imitates. Then find the matching sticker in the *Piano Safari Friends Sticker Book*, and place the sticker in the box. Continue with all the Animal Rhythm Patterns. The student is only to listen and tap back. Notation for the patterns is introduced gradually throughout the book.

In subsequent lessons during Unit 1, you may review these rhythm patterns by using the following variations:

- Have the student point to a sticker on p. 12. You tap and say the animal name. The student imitates. The student then points to another sticker.
- Once the student has learned the patterns, reverse roles.
- Instead of tapping, play on one key on the piano, play on a drum, walk the rhythm, etc.
- Accompanying resource: Animal Rhythm Patterns (available at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com))

## SITTING AT THE PIANO (p. 13)

Type: Technique

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Introduce posture at the piano
- Find correct sitting height and distance

Talk with the student about the following items relating to posture at the piano, and compare it to how Leo Lion is sitting at the piano.

- Sitting tall
- Shoulders relaxed
- Feet on the floor or footstool
- Arms level with keyboard
- Not too close or too far from the piano

For some pieces in this book, the student will stand to play (Climbing Up on p. 17, Breakfast Time on p. 19). For most of the pieces, the student will be sitting on the bench.

## WAKE UP, CHARLIE! (p. 14 - 15)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Maintain a steady beat
- Experience the Charlie Chipmunk rhythm pattern in a piece
- Play with Finger 2 on the black keys

**Step 1:** Before playing on the piano, be sure students are familiar with the Charlie Chipmunk rhythm pattern and are able to tap back the rhythm accurately. Additionally, prepare the use of Finger 2 playing it in the air, away from the piano. The movement should be from the forearm (like you are bouncing a basketball) rather than the finger alone. We suggest keeping a loose fist with the hand and extending Finger 2 so it is curved and in the proper position.

**Step 2:** After the movement has been practiced in the air, move to the piano with the child seated so that the hand and arm are comfortably aligned behind the correct black key group. Beginning with the first measure, play the teacher RH and ask the student to imitate (follow the leader) immediately after. Teacher and student will need to practice removing the hand immediately after playing each measure so the next person has time to arrive in tempo. The student may use the dominant hand, but RH is recommended. We suggest either singing the lyrics, or singing, "Charlie Chipmunk," for each group of four quarter notes.

**Step 3:** When the student is comfortable with the idea of imitation and is able to play



through the piece from start to finish, add the teacher LH and play the entire piece as written. One variation is to ask the student to imitate in a higher octave than the teacher, or to play the piece again with Finger 2 of the other hand.

## DECORATE THE PIANO: TWO BLACK KEYS (p. 16)

Type: Activity

Pedagogical Objective:

- Identify the groups of two black keys

Download the Piano Decorating Kit. The code is found on p. 1 of Piano Safari Friends. Print in color on card stock and cut out. Using the zebra triangles, the student “decorates” all of the groups of two black keys on the piano by placing the triangle on top with the long side against the piano. After all the groups are decorated, the student may trace the triangles on the activity page.

The Piano Decorating Kit is also available for purchase as a ready-made product at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com).

## CLIMBING UP (p. 17)

Type: Rote Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play the groups of two black keys on the piano
- Move from low notes to high notes
- Maintain a steady beat
- Alternate LH and RH using Finger 2

**Step 1:** Before learning this piece, be sure the student has listened to the corresponding audio track (code on p. 1) and is able to find the groups of two black keys easily.

**Step 2:** Play the student the main theme, which is found in the first two measures of the teacher accompaniment. Chant or sing together, “Charlie Chipmunk, climbing up the oak tree,” in rhythm. Now, tell the student that you will have a conversation. The student says (or sings), “Charlie Chipmunk,” and you answer, “Climbing up the oak tree.” Repeat several times.

**Step 3:** At the piano, pull back the bench and have the student stand behind the initial black key group. Play the student part and ask them to imitate. Direct the student to practice playing, “Charlie Chipmunk,” all the way up the piano, moving up one group at a time from low to high. If it is helpful, keep the zebra triangles on the keys to allow the student to find the next group easily.

**Step 4:** When moving up the piano, be sure the student travels with the body so that the

hand and arm remain in proper alignment behind the black key group that is currently being played. As the student moves to the next group, sing or play your part, "Climbing up the oak tree." This will help the student arrive at the next group in time and play in rhythm. The *glissando* at the end is for either the teacher or the student. We printed it in the student part because many children will find it fun to play, but if it feels too difficult, the teacher may play it instead. The flat of the hand (or a stuffed chipmunk!) may be used to play the *glissando*. When student is confident on their part, add the teacher accompaniment.

## DECORATE THE PIANO: THREE BLACK KEYS (p. 18)

Type: Activity

Pedagogical Objective:

- Identify the groups of three black keys

Using the giraffe rectangles from the Piano Decorating Kit, the student "decorates" all of the groups of three black keys on the piano by placing the rectangle on them. After all the groups are decorated, the student may trace the rectangles on the activity page.

## BREAKFAST TIME (p. 19)

Type: Rote Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play the groups of three black keys on the piano
- Move from high notes to low notes
- Maintain a steady beat

**Step 1:** Before learning this piece, be sure the student has listened to the corresponding audio track and is able to find the groups of three black keys easily.

**Step 2:** Play the main theme, "Time to eat. Acorns are my breakfast treat," (found in student m. 1 and teacher m. 2). Chant or sing this theme together in rhythm. Now, it is time to have a "conversation." The student says (or sings), "Time to eat," and you answer, "Acorns are my breakfast treat." Repeat several times.

**Step 3:** At the piano, pull back the bench and have the student stand behind the highest black key group. Play the student part, using only Finger 2, and ask them to imitate. Direct the student to practice playing, "Time to eat," all the way down the piano, moving one group at a time from high to low. If it is helpful, keep the giraffe rectangles on the keys so the student is able to find the next group easily.

**Step 4:** When moving down the piano, be sure the student travels with the body as well. As the student moves to the next group, sing or play your part, "Acorns are my breakfast treat." This will help the student arrive at the next group in time and play in rhythm. When the student is able to play their part solidly, add the teacher accompaniment.

## LEO LION (p. 20 - 21)

Type: Technique [click for video](#)

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Prepare students for the Lion Paw technique
- Learn to let the arm relax and “fall” using gravity rather than force
- Hear the difference between loud and quiet dynamics

**Step 1:** Set the scene by reading the story about Leo Lion on page 20. Engage the student's imagination by pretending to be sleepy lions with heavy “lion paws” (arms). Let the arms hang loosely at your sides with the hands in a relaxed shape. If the student has trouble relaxing, swing the arms gently back and forth.

**Step 2:** Ask the student if you may pick up their relaxed “lion paw.” If yes, pick up the forearm and shake it gently to be sure the student is relaxed. All of the student's arm weight should be resting in your hand. Sometimes it is difficult for the student to relax completely. If so, it is helpful for the student to pick up the arm of the teacher (or the parent/guardian) so they can feel the weight of the arm. When the arm is resting fully in the hand of the other person, drop the arm so it “falls” back to the side of the body. The fall should be immediate, not controlled.

**Step 3:** Play the printed exercise for the student. Ask them, “Do you think my playing is loud enough to wake up Leo?” Play very quietly at first with a goal of having the student answer, “No, it is not loud enough to wake up Leo.” Gradually increase the volume until you are playing with a loud and heavy drop in the LH. Your LH is modeling the technical gesture the student will be playing in the Lion Paw technique found in Unit 2, p. 34.

**Step 4:** To engage the students even further with their listening for loud and quiet, ask them to respond to the dynamic level with movement. For example, crouch down close to the ground for the quiet dynamic, stand with the hands on the hips for a medium dynamic, and stretch the hands high above the head for a loud dynamic. We have chosen not to introduce the Italian terms for dynamics at this point, but this is an option if you wish.

## MUSIC ALPHABET SONG (p. 22 - 23)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Learn the music alphabet
- Play with Finger 2 on the white keys

**Step 1:** Turn on the corresponding audio track and march with the student around the room to the quarter note beat.

**Step 2:** After marching to the beat, show students the large keyboard with letters on p. 23. Point at each letter and chant the music alphabet several times.

**Step 3:** Cover up the D E F G letters on the page with a piece of paper, so that only letters A B C are showing. You may also opt to use the Music Alphabet Cards and have the student find A B C to put them in order on the fallboard. Play RH m. 4. The student imitates. If the student has trouble finding the A to start on when repeating your phrase, put a small marker (fuzzy, page marking tab, eraser) on the A, as this is the student's starting note for each phrase.

**Step 4:** Move the paper to uncover the letter D, so that A B C D are now showing. Play m. 6. The student imitates. Repeat with the remaining phrases, uncovering the letters until the entire alphabet is showing.

**Step 5:** After previewing each phrase, play the teacher RH, with student imitating for the entire piece. When secure, add accompaniment.

[Click here for an additional video](#)

# UNIT 2: The Letter C

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## BUNNY HOUSE (p. 24)

Type: Technique [click for video](#)

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn to form a correct piano hand shape

**Step 1:** The student and teacher dangle both arms at their sides with the hands in a natural position. Then sit at the piano and bring the RH up to the fallboard or keys to make a Bunny House. The hand should have:

- Gently curved fingers
- A raised, not collapsed, hand bridge
- Thumb on its corner tip, not flat on its side
- Arm and wrist level and aligned

**Step 2:** Find a small object (eraser, pom pom, etc.) and pretend it is a bunny. The bunny sits on the student's relaxed shoulder and then hops down the student's arm over a level and aligned arm and wrist and over the tall bridge of the hand. It hops down the gently curved fingers and enters the Bunny House through the space created between Fingers 1 and 2 and the raised bridge. The bunny sits comfortably under the hand in its house.

**Step 3:** Repeat with LH.

Continue to practice making Bunny Houses frequently at lessons until the student can easily form the correct hand shape. The pieces in Unit 1 are played with Finger 2, with the hand in a loose fist, to help the student gain control of the large muscles of the arm. Coordination of large muscles precedes use of small muscles of the fingers. However, introducing the Bunny House early will prepare the student for opening the hand, which is presented in Unit 2.

## I HAD A ROOSTER (p. 25)

Type: Song

Composer: Traditional, arr. Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Experience triple meter by moving to the music
- Practice singing

This cumulative folk song is a fun way to experience triple meter. As you and the student listen and sing along to the audio track, sway on beat 1, feeling the triple meter in one large beat per measure. Feel free to create your own motions to demonstrate the animals in the song.

## THE LETTER C (p. 26)

Type: Activity

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of C on the piano in relation to the groups of two black keys
- Decorate the piano with zebra triangles and the letter C

Units 2 - 8 each focus on one letter of the music alphabet. In Unit 2, C is the focus. White keys are to be found in relation to the groups of two and three black keys. Students are asked on this page to decorate their piano with the zebra triangles and C's found in the Piano Decorating Kit.

## LETTER C SONG (p. 27)

Type: Rote Piece [click for video](#)

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn to locate C and play a song introducing C
- Tap back Animal Rhythm Patterns

**Step 1:** Sing the lyrics as you teach the student the Letter C Song by rote. If the student has trouble remember the entire song, divide it in half, and assign one half to the student. For example, the teacher plays m. 1 - 2, and the student answers with m. 3 - 4. Repeat in various octaves. Once the student is secure, switch parts. Then have the student play the entire song. For a variation, instead of the lyrics, you may sing the Animal Rhythm Patterns (available at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com)), "Hippo, Tall Giraffe, Kangaroo, Kangaroo, Tall Giraffe."

**Step 2:** As an added fun activity, you may hide the four C's found in the Music Alphabet Cards (available at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com)) around the room. The student looks for a card while the teacher puts a marker (fuzzy, eraser, etc.) on one of the C's on the keyboard. The student finds a C card and plays the Letter C Song (or their assigned portion) on the C in the octave marked. The student finds another card and repeats the process.

**Animal Rhythms:** Tap each animal rhythm at the bottom of the page. The student imitates. These should be done aurally. Notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns is introduced gradually throughout the book. Review these tap backs throughout the study of Unit 2. You may vary them by playing on a drum, playing on one key on the piano, or playing on other rhythm instruments.

## COLORS SHINE (p. 28 - 29)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Start on Letter C
- Experience the Charlie Chipmunk, Hippo, and Tall Giraffe rhythms in a piece
- Play with RH Finger 2 and 3 using *non legato* articulation

**Step 1:** Find brightly colored scarves. Turn on the audio track and freely move to the music with the student, using the scarves to visually illustrate the flowing sound of the piece.

**Step 2:** Spend some time doing rhythm tap backs using Charlie Chipmunk, Hippo, and Tall Giraffe, since these are the animal rhythms used in the piece.

**Step 3:** At the piano, begin by reviewing the Bunny House hand shape with the RH. This piece will use an open hand. Review which fingers are 2 and 3 in the RH.

**Step 4:** Play each measure of the teacher RH. The student imitates in the same octave. Play with *non legato* articulation from the forearm. Initially, sing finger numbers to reinforce the fact that RH is using 2 and 3. Lyrics may be added later.

**Step 5:** Add the teacher accompaniment (LH) and pedal when the student is solid with the imitation. The student may play an octave higher if desired.

## ANIMAL NAMES (p. 30 - 31)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Start on Letter C
- Experience the Charlie Chipmunk and Tall Giraffe rhythms in a piece
- Play with LH Finger 3 and 2 using *non legato* articulation

**Step 1:** Consider purchasing stuffed animals. We suggest finding the “Safari Friends,” the main characters throughout the book (Charlie Chipmunk, Leo Lion, Gem Giraffe, Herbie Hippo, Zechariah Zebra, Kristabel Kangaroo). This is not a requirement, but the stuffed animals add playfulness and fun! For movement, choose a stuffed animal and make it “hop” to the quarter note or half note beat as you listen to the audio track.

**Step 2:** At the piano, begin by reviewing the Bunny House hand shape with the LH. Review which fingers are 3 and 2 in the LH.

**Step 3:** Play each measure of the teacher LH. The student imitates in the same octave. Play with *non legato* articulation from the forearm. Initially, sing finger numbers to reinforce the fact that LH is using 3 and 2. Lyrics may be added later.

**Step 4:** Add the teacher accompaniment (RH) when the student is solid with the imitation.

## PLAYGROUND FUN (p. 32 - 33)

Type: Rote Piece [click for video](#)

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a piece by rote and remember longer patterns
- Start on Letter C
- Use the forearm to play with *non legato* articulation

This is the first Rote Piece in the book where the student needs to remember a series of patterns. In the Follow the Leader Pieces, the student imitates a pattern directly after the teacher, remembering only a short pattern. In the previous Rote Pieces of Climbing Up and Breakfast Time, the pattern was short and repeated over the entire keyboard. In Playground Fun, students learn a series of patterns to complete a whole piece.

**Step 1:** The student may play with an open hand in a Bunny House shape. Or, if the Bunny House is not formed enough, the hand may be held in a loose fist with Finger 2 extended, as was used in Climbing Up. Teach each phrase by rote until the student is secure and can remember the patterns in order to put them together into a whole piece. It may be helpful to teach each phrase by singing the number of notes played. For example, in m. 1 - 2 and 3 - 4, sing, "1 2 3 4 5," as you play. The student imitates each phrase. In m. 5 - 6, each phrase has only three notes, so sing, "1 2 3." The last phrase, m. 7 - 8, steps down from G to C.

**Step 2:** The student plays the entire piece. If you have a stuffed lion, a fun way to highlight the length of the whole notes is by singing, "Roar 2 - 3 - 4," while moving the lion in rhythm.

**Step 3:** When student is secure with the patterns and rhythm, add the accompaniment. The student may also play this piece with the LH.

## LION PAW (p. 34 - 35)

Type: Technique Exercise

Composer: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play with arm weight
- Play loud sounds with a relaxed arm, wrist, and hand

The Lion Paw Technique teaches students to use arm weight to produce sound. This is a foundational technical skill. The concept of the heavy, loose arm was introduced away from the piano in Leo Lion (p. 20) in Unit 1. Now, students will bring that concept to the piano.

**Step 1:** After reviewing arm weight with Leo Lion, have the student decorate the groups of two black keys with triangles from the Piano Decorating Kit. This will provide reference for finding C.



**Step 2:** Play teacher RH. The student imitates in the same octave. All the technique exercises throughout this book are in “follow the leader” format so that the student can immediately model your technical gesture.

The motion of the drop is as follows:

- Drop from about three inches above the key onto the C with an open hand. The arm should be loose, and the wrist flexible. Listen for a loud, singing sound that is not harsh.
- The wrist may drop below the keys slightly to exaggerate the motion at first.
- As you come out of the key, the wrist leads, ending with a relaxed wrist in the air. The fingertips point down toward the keys.

You may find it necessary to manipulate the student's arm and wrist gently to help them find the correct motion. This exercise may take several weeks to master.

**Step 3:** Repeat the same process with LH. Be sure to seat the student in alignment between the C's being played. Add the entire teacher accompaniment when secure.

Another useful way to practice the Lion Paw is to have a stuffed lion pretend to be asleep on the piano. The student plays a Lion Paw drop on C. If the tone is warm and loud, the stuffed lion wakes up, startled! If the tone is weak or harsh, or if the arm is stiff instead of flexible, the lion does not respond. The sleeping lion only wakes up to correct Lion Paw drops. Students love this!

## RHYTHM (p. 36)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the notation for Charlie Chipmunk and Leo Lion Animal Rhythm Patterns
- Tap back rhythms using combinations of the Animal Rhythm Patterns.

The notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns is introduced throughout the book. On this page, students learn to recognize the notation for the Charlie Chipmunk and Leo Lion rhythm patterns.

Show the student how each pattern looks on the page. Demonstrate how to point at each note while saying the words for the pattern. Ask the student to imitate, and repeat three times. With the student helping, place the indicated sticker in the boxes provided. If the student is adept at writing, have the student write the two rhythm patterns on a separate piece of paper.

For the bottom portion of the page, tap the rhythms in each box, saying the animal names. The student listens and taps back. These are meant to reinforce all the Animal Rhythm Patterns aurally.

For further reinforcement, purchase the Animal Rhythm Pattern Cards at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com), and have the student match the animal picture of the chipmunk and lion with the correct notation. The student may also make a longer pattern of rhythms using the notated chipmunk and lion cards and tap or play their rhythm pattern on a drum.

## LION LISTENING (p. 37)

Type: Listening

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Introduce students to Classical music
- Listen to music that describes different moods

This page may be completed at the lesson or at home. The student chooses to listen to “gentle” or “joyful” music. The teacher or parent can access the music at [pianosafari.com/friends-listening](http://pianosafari.com/friends-listening), where playlists for Spotify and YouTube are included. The student may color the page or dance to the music. Feel free to listen to the same piece repeatedly over the course of the unit. Alternatively, the parent and teacher may find similar pieces to listen to.

## READING (p. 38 - 39)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Charlie Chipmunk and Leo Lion rhythms
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (C)
- Solidify knowledge of finger numbers

The central focus of *Piano Safari Friends* is to provide enjoyable musical experiences through movement, singing, imitation, and improvising. With this said, it is also important for students to begin building the skills they will need for reading notation. The reading exercises throughout this book provide a slow and systematic introduction to these skills.

**Step 1:** Assist students in identifying the Animal Rhythm Patterns found in the reading exercises and finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. Refer to p. 36 if necessary. Place the stickers in the boxes beneath the corresponding rhythm.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise (e.g. on the Reading Left Hand page, use the LH to tap). As you and the student tap and say the animal rhythm, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right. Repeat several times.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud. Repeat several times.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. The reading exercises always start on the focus key of the unit, so on these pages, both exercises begin on C. Wiggle the finger number that is to play, and place it on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

# UNIT 3: The Letter D

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## THE LETTER D & LETTER D SONG (p. 40 - 41)

Type: Activity & Rote Piece [click for video](#)

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of D on the piano in relation to the groups of two black keys
- Play a Rote Piece on D

D is the easiest key to find, right between the two black keys. We opted to introduce C first to have C D E stay in the order of the Music Alphabet. Decorate the piano using the zebra triangles and D's. Then add the C's, which the student already knows.

Teach the Letter D Song by Rote. Since the rhythm is the same as the Letter C Song (p. 27), this will likely be very easy. You may add variety by having the student play the song in different octaves, play with either RH or LH, and play loud or quiet, slow or fast.

## HIDE AND SEEK (p. 42 - 43)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Start on Letter D
- Play a piece using a combination of black and white keys
- Use multiple fingers

**Step 1:** Before playing this piece, turn on the audio track and hide a stuffed animal somewhere in the room. Play a brief game of hide and seek while listening to the audio track in the background.

**Step 2:** Spend some time doing rhythm tap backs using the rhythmic combinations found in the piece (e.g. Tall Giraffe, Charlie Chipmunk, Roar - 2 - 3 - 4).

**Step 3:** At the piano, begin by reviewing the Bunny House hand shape with the RH. This piece will use an open hand.

**Step 4:** Play each measure of the teacher RH. The student imitates in the same octave. Play with *non legato* articulation from the forearm. Singing finger numbers may be helpful, especially when the RH uses 2 3 4. Lyrics may be added later.

**Step 5:** Add the teacher accompaniment (LH) when the student is solid with the imitation. The student may play an octave higher if desired.

## TALL GIRAFFE (p. 44 - 45)

Type: Technique Exercise [click for video](#)

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Refine the *non legato* articulation students have been using in their pieces
- Learn the wrist lift

**Step 1:** Read the story and follow the steps on p. 44. This will prepare the student to play the Tall Giraffe technique exercise on p. 45.

**Step 2:** Using *non legato* articulation, play RH parts as written without a wrist lift. The forearm moves as a unit. Aim for strong fingertips and a Bunny House hand shape.

**Step 3:** Once this is secure, add the Tall Giraffe wrist lift. If you have a stuffed giraffe, you may have the student practice this motion by petting the back of the giraffe's neck from bottom to top, with the giraffe facing toward the student. The wrist lift is only used on the half notes. Use an exaggerated wrist lift at first, and gradually reduce the motion to be more subtle. The goal of the wrist lift is to promote flexibility in the wrist in coordination with the arm and fingers.

**Step 4:** Play RH as written with teacher accompaniment. Then repeat the steps above with the LH part.

## HIPPO SWIMMING (p. 46 - 47)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Experience the Hippo rhythm in a piece (two half notes)
- Start on Letter D
- Use the Lion Paw technique

**Step 1:** Turn on the audio track. Move around the room by stomping on the half note beat like a heavy hippo.

**Step 2:** Review the Hippo rhythm pattern by doing some tapbacks before moving to the piano. Combine the Hippo rhythm with Charlie Chipmunk and Tall Giraffe rhythms to prepare for all of the Animal Rhythm Patterns found in this piece.

**Step 3:** Teach the first two measures by rote, using a small Lion Paw drop (p. 34 - 35) on each note. Ideally, the hand should be open in a Bunny House hand shape. The alternate LH fingering, 2 3 2, may be used if desired. If the student struggles to model correctly after one or two tries, teach one measure at a time.

**Step 4:** Ask the student a question such as, “Do you know what the hippo’s name is?” Measures 3 - 4 are essentially the same as the opening, with just the rhythm altered to include the name, Herbie. Thinking about the hippo’s name will help make this phrase more memorable. Teach m. 3 - 4 by rote. This first line may be all a young student can handle in one lesson. If so, save the next steps for the following lesson.

**Step 5:** Teach m. 5 - 6 by rote. These measures shift from D, the starting note of the previous phrases. If the student has trouble finding F, consider marking the group of three black keys with the giraffe rectangles from the Piano Decorating Kit. The three black keys provide a reference point for F. Some students may prefer using fingers 4 3 2 (LH 2 3 4) for these measures. This is fine as long as *non legato* articulation is used.

**Step 6:** Measures 7 - 8 are the same as m. 1 - 2. Bring the student’s attention to the fact that it is simply a repetition of the opening.

**Step 7:** After the student is able to play their part independently, add the teacher accompaniment.

## RHYTHM (p. 48)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the notation for the Tall Giraffe Animal Rhythm Pattern
- Tap back rhythms using combinations of the Animal Rhythm Patterns

The notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns is introduced throughout the book. On this page, students learn to recognize the notation for the Tall Giraffe rhythm pattern.

Show the student how each pattern looks on the page. Demonstrate how to point at each note while saying the words for the pattern. Ask the student to imitate, and repeat three times. With the student helping, place the indicated sticker in the box provided. If the student is adept at writing, have the student write the rhythm pattern on a separate piece of paper.

For the bottom portion of the page, tap the rhythms in each box, saying the animal names. The student listens and taps back. These are meant to aurally reinforce all the Animal Rhythm Patterns.

## SUNNY DAYS WITH GEM AND GEORGE (p. 49)

Type: Improvisation Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Create music on black keys
- Play freely to explore sounds

In this piece, the student improvises music along with the accompaniment using only black keys. Before putting both parts together, ask the student to imitate as you play several black key patterns using the Tall Giraffe rhythm. This will give the student an idea of what to play. However, the student may play any black keys in any rhythm using either or both hands. Anything the student plays on the black keys will match the teacher accompaniment. Encourage the student to play freely, no matter the result. The goal is to have freedom to explore sounds without worrying about playing “wrong” notes. If the student is not rhythmically matching the accompaniment, do not correct the student. With experience over time, it is likely the patterns and rhythms will become more rhythmic.

## READING (p. 50 - 51)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Tall Giraffe and Charlie Chipmunk rhythms
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (D)
- Solidify knowledge of finger numbers

**Step 1:** Assist students in finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. It may be helpful to refer back to the rhythm page (Tall Giraffe: p. 48, Charlie Chipmunk: p. 36). Place the stickers in the boxes beneath the corresponding rhythm.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise (e.g. on the Reading LH page, use the LH to tap). As you and the student tap and say the animal rhythm, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right. Repeat several times.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud. Repeat several times.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. The reading exercises always start on the focus key of the unit, so on these pages, both exercises begin on D. Wiggle the finger number that is to play, and place on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

# UNIT 4: The Letter E

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## THE LETTER E & LETTER E SONG (p. 52 - 53)

Type: Activity & Rote Piece

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of E on the piano in relation to the groups of two black keys
- Play a Rote Piece on E

**Step 1:** Teach the location of E by following the instructions on p. 52.

**Step 2:** Teach the Letter E Song by Rote. You may add variety by having the student play the song in different octaves, with RH or LH, loud or quiet, slow or fast.

**Step 3:** Have the student decorate the piano as shown at the bottom of p. 53.

## MY THREE PETS (p. 54 - 55)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Traditional, arr. Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a familiar tune (Hot Cross Buns renamed)
- Experience different tempi and moods that relate to animals

**Step 1:** Listen to the audio track as you move to the music at fast, moderate, and slow tempos. The dog is a very happy dog and moves fast! ([Click for dog video](#)) The cat is sitting on a windowsill calmly looking outside and purring. The cat moves at a moderate tempo. Turtles are very slow. [Click for turtle video](#)

**Step 2:** After reviewing the Bunny House hand shape, ask the student what note you start on (E). Use the keyboard picture for reference. Teach the dog part by rote one measure at a time, beginning with a moderate tempo until the student understands the pattern. Once the student can play the dog part successfully, add the teacher accompaniment and play at a faster tempo.

**Step 3:** In subsequent lessons, transpose the piece for the cat and turtle parts, beginning on the notes as shown in the keyboard picture. Eventually, the student will be able to play all three animal parts. Emphasize the different moods and tempi. You may even make up stories for each animal! Students who need a further challenge may also play this piece with LH or HT in parallel or contrary motion. Some students naturally gravitate to parallel motion, while others find contrary motion easier. Either will work for this piece, as both are valuable coordinations to master.

## LOOKING FOR LEAVES (p. 56 - 57)

Type: Activity

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Review Tall Giraffe technique (introduced on p. 44 - 45)
- Review the location of C D E on the keyboard

**Step 1:** To play this review game, download the Alphabet Leaves document that came with your Piano Safari Friends Pack, print the C D E leaves, and cut apart. If you would like to hide multiple C D E leaves to prolong the game, print extra copies.

**Step 2:** Hide the C D E leaves around the room before the student arrives for the lesson, or you may have the student cover their eyes while you hide the leaves during the lesson.

**Step 3:** Read the story on p. 56. Then have the student find one hidden leaf and bring it to the piano. Play the corresponding music with the student in Follow the Leader format. For example, if the student finds a D leaf, play the music indicated for D. At the end of the line, repeat on a different D. Repeat as many times as desired.

**Step 4:** The student finds another hidden leaf and brings it to the piano, where you play the corresponding music. Repeat until all hidden leaves are found.

This game is a fun way to review the Tall Giraffe technique and the location of C D E on the piano before moving to the keys that surround the three black keys in the next unit.

## DANCING WITH DAISIES (p. 58 - 59)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Start on Letter E
- Play in 3/4 meter
- Play with RH Fingers 2 3 4 using *non legato* articulation

**Step 1:** It is very important for students to feel one large beat per measure in 3/4 meter. While listening to the audio track, sway or swing to the beat. You may hold hands with the student to help sway on the downbeats if the student is comfortable with holding your hands. Alternately, you may swing a scarf back and forth with the large beat.

**Step 2:** Play the dotted half note E with RH Finger 4 (m. 1) with a wrist lift like in the Tall Giraffe technique. Count "Ta - 2 - 3" as you lift. The student imitates. Repeat with D and C, also with Finger 4 (as found in the teacher part m. 5 and 9). This wrist lift helps emphasize the length of the note.



**Step 3:** Play the teacher RH, with the student imitating in the same octave. Use a wrist lift on the dotted half notes as you encounter them, counting “Ta - 2 - 3” on each one.

**Step 4:** Add the teacher accompaniment (LH) when the student is secure. As a variation, the student may imitate your RH up an octave.

## A DAY AT THE POND (p. 60 - 61)

Type: Rote Piece and Ensemble

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a piece by rote that uses whole tone sounds
- Understand how music is able to represent sounds in nature
- Play an ensemble
- Play with two hands, Fingers 2 3 4, using *non legato* articulation

**Step 1:** The Silver Fish Swimming part (Pianist 1) is the main melody and should be taught first. To preview the rhythm and hand coordination, stand or sit with the student behind a hard surface (e.g. table or back of a chair). Be sure you are facing the same direction so that the student does not get confused with left and right. Tell the student that you are going to tap using both hands, and that the student should listen and watch carefully to copy your hands exactly. Chant the lyrics for m. 1 - 2 and tap with the corresponding hands. (RH) “Silver Fish” (LH) “swimming down.” The student imitates. You may chant the animal rhythm patterns instead of lyrics if preferred. Repeat this phrase as necessary. Continue with the following phrases.

**Step 2:** Move to the piano. Tap and say m. 1 - 2 on the fallboard. The student imitates. Then play m. 1 - 2 on the piano as written, using *non legato* articulation. The student imitates. You may hold down the pedal for the student to create the proper atmosphere. If you have a stuffed animal fish (or other object), have the student close their eyes. Put the fish on a different octave to mark where to play. Repeat this phrase in various octaves until the student is able to play it easily.

**Step 3:** Repeat the same process for the remaining phrases (m. 3 - 4, m. 5 -6, m. 7 - 8).

**Step 4:** At this point, the student may be able to echo each phrase, but may not be able to play the piece straight through from start to finish. In order to assist the student, you might try drawing a few pictures on a white board or separate piece of paper to make the order of phrases more memorable. As an example, m. 1 - 2 could be a picture of fish swimming downward. For m. 3 - 4, draw some waves to represent water. For the second line, it will be helpful to say the key color (e.g. black, black, white, white, black).

**Step 5:** When the student is solid with Silver Fish Swimming, add the Bullfrog part, which is simply a very low note (with pedal) played on the downbeat. You may play this with the student, or teach a parent to play this part.

**Step 6:** Add the final part of the ensemble (Lily Pads), played by you, a parent, or another student.

**Step 7:** Once the student has played the Silver Fish Swimming Part with the rest of the ensemble, teach the other parts at following lessons and switch roles. This piece will work well with a group class or as an ensemble performance at a recital!

**Step 8:** As a final layer or refinement, you may discuss balance between parts by relating the subject to the sound. For example, the bullfrog makes quiet and low sounds, while the floating lily pads are high and light. Both parts should remain quieter than the theme. The silver fish are the loudest because they are in a large group, swimming together.

## RHYTHM (p. 62)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the notation for the Hippo Animal Rhythm Pattern
- Tap back rhythms using combinations of the Animal Rhythm Patterns

The notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns is introduced throughout the book. On this page, students learn to recognize the notation for the Hippo rhythm pattern (two half notes).

Show the student how the pattern looks on the page. Demonstrate how to point at each note while saying the words for the pattern. Ask the student to imitate, and repeat three times. With the student helping, place the indicated sticker in the box provided. If the student is adept at writing, have the student write the rhythm pattern on a separate piece of paper.

For the bottom portion of the page, tap the rhythms in each box, saying the animal names. The student listens and taps back. These are meant to aurally reinforce the Animal Rhythm Patterns.

## HIPPO LISTENING (p. 63)

Type: Listening

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Introduce students to Classical music
- Listen to music that describes different moods

This page may be completed at the lesson or at home. The student chooses to listen to “peaceful” or “cheerful” music. The teacher or parent can access the music at [pianosafari.com/friends-listening](https://pianosafari.com/friends-listening), where playlists for Spotify and YouTube are included. The student may color the page or dance to the music. Feel free to listen to the same piece repeatedly over the course of the unit. Alternatively, the parent and teacher may find similar pieces to listen to.

## READING (p. 64 - 65)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Hippo, Tall Giraffe and Charlie Chipmunk rhythms
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (E)
- Solidify knowledge of finger numbers

**Step 1:** Assist students in finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. It may be helpful to refer back to the rhythm pages (Hippo: p. 63, Tall Giraffe: pg. 48, Charlie Chipmunk: p. 36). Place the stickers in the boxes beneath the corresponding rhythm.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise. As you and the student tap and say the animal rhythm, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right. Repeat several times.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud. Repeat several times.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. The reading exercises always start on the focus key of the unit, so on these pages, both exercises begin on E. Wiggle the finger number that is to play, and place on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

# UNIT 5: The Letter F

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## THE LETTER F & LETTER F SONG (p. 66 - 67)

Type: Activity & Rote Piece

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of F on the piano in relation to the groups of three black keys
- Play a Rote Piece on F

**Step 1:** Teach the location of F by following the instructions on p. 66.

**Step 2:** Teach the Letter F Song by Rote. You may add variety by having the student play the song in different octaves, with RH or LH, loud or quiet, slow or fast.

**Step 3:** Have the student decorate the piano as shown at the bottom of p. 67.

## GIRAFFE DANCE (p. 68 - 69)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Start on Letter F
- Experience the Tall Giraffe and Kangaroo rhythms in a piece
- Play with RH Fingers 2 3 4 using *non legato* articulation

**Step 1:** Before playing this piece, turn on the audio track and act out the lyrics. Actions are as follows: 1. Tie shoes; "Tie shoes, start moves." 2. Dance; "Right foot slide, left foot glide." 3. Clap or cheer; "This is fun." 4. Leap in the air at the finish; "Now she's done!"

**Step 2:** Spend some time doing rhythm tap backs using the rhythmic combinations found in the piece (e.g. Tall Giraffe and Kangaroo).

**Step 3:** At the piano, begin by reviewing the Bunny House hand shape with the RH. This piece will use an open hand.

**Step 4:** Play each measure of the teacher RH. The student imitates in the same octave. Play with *non legato* articulation from the forearm. Singing finger numbers may be helpful. Lyrics may be added later.

**Step 5:** Add the teacher accompaniment (LH) when the student is solid with the imitation. The student may play an octave higher if desired.

## ZECHARIAH ZEBRA (p. 70 - 71)

Type: Technique Exercise

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play fast repeated notes using the Zechariah Zebra rhythm pattern
- Maintain a firm finger joint and good Bunny House hand shape
- Keep non-playing fingers relaxed

**Step 1:** Read the story and follow the steps on p. 70. This will prepare the student to play the Zechariah Zebra technique exercise on p. 71.

**Step 2:** At the piano, ask the student to find F. Place the giraffe rectangles on the groups of three black keys for reference.

**Step 3:** Using RH Finger 2, play the Zechariah Zebra rhythm. The student imitates in the same octave. One of the technical goals is to keep a firm finger joint. If the student has trouble with this, practice making a finger circle between Finger 1 and Finger 2. Gently press on the Finger 2 joint to be sure it can hold against a little resistance.

The second technical goal is to keep the non-playing fingers relaxed. Often, when the student is learning this technique for the first time, the non-playing fingers fly in the air while Finger 2 is playing the repeated notes. Remind the student to return to a Bunny House hand shape during the rest. Eventually, the student will be able to keep the Bunny House shape while playing as well. Try using the words, "Keep a Bunny House, please," along with the Zechariah rhythm to remind the student.

**Step 4:** To play repeated notes efficiently, the faster notes need a smaller motion. Work with the student on staying closer to the key on the eighth notes. Use the following words with the Zechariah Zebra rhythm, "Low bounce, low bounce, high bounce." The student ends with the hand in the air. I (Katherine) learned this strategy while observing master Suzuki teacher, Mary Craig Powell.

**Step 5:** Repeat the process above for the LH.

## PICNIC TIME (p. 72 - 73)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a Rote Piece in triple meter
- Start on Letter F
- Alternate LH and RH
- Use the Tall Giraffe wrist lift on the dotted half notes

**Step 1:** Listen to the audio track and sway back and forth on Beat 1 to establish the feel of triple meter.

**Step 2:** At the piano, place a giraffe rectangle on the three black keys above the LH F, and the zebra triangle on the two black keys above the RH C. These will provide a reference point for each hand.

**Step 3:** Play m. 1 - 2 for the student. Use *non legato* articulation for the LH, and roll off the RH C using a Tall Giraffe wrist lift. The student imitates. Practice this phrase several times.

**Step 4:** Introduce m. 3 - 4. Before playing, tell the student that you are going to play the phrase again, but will change one thing. See if they can catch the RH note change. Repeat this phase several times, asking the student to imitate.

**Step 5:** Play m. 5 - 8 for the student. This is a longer phrase that may be broken down if needed. To make it more understandable, try adding words that describe the direction. An example of this might be something like, "Left hand moves up and back down, up." You can model each direction (e.g. begin with the notes F G A C, "Left hand moves up," followed by A G F, "and back down," before putting them together). Finally, add the last dotted half note (G) to represent the last "up" in this phrase.

**Step 6:** Measures 9 - 12 are a repetition of the first two phrases of the piece. Remember to play with lifts off the dotted half notes.

**Step 7:** The last four measures of the piece are almost exactly the same as m. 5 - 8. The only difference is the last note. Draw the student's attention to the similarities and differences.

**Step 8:** Add the teacher accompaniment when the student is secure.

Note: This piece has a more advanced form than previous Rote Pieces and may need to be taught over the course of several weeks.

## RHYTHM (p. 74)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the notation for the Zechariah Zebra Animal Rhythm Pattern
- Tap back rhythms using combinations of the Animal Rhythm Patterns

The notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns is introduced throughout the book. On this page, students learn to recognize the notation for the Zechariah Zebra rhythm pattern.

Show the student how the pattern looks on the page. Demonstrate how to point at each note while saying the words for the pattern. Ask the student to imitate, and repeat three times. Then, with the student helping, place the indicated sticker in the box provided. If the student is adept at writing, have the student write the rhythm pattern on a separate piece of paper.

For the bottom portion of the page, tap the rhythms in each box, saying the animal names. The student listens and taps back. These are meant to aurally reinforce the Animal Rhythm Patterns.

## CHIPMUNK BLUES (p. 75)

Type: Improvisation [click for video](#)

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Improvise music along with a Twelve Bar Blues accompaniment

**Step 1:** Familiarize the student with the style by playing the teacher LH (blocked 5ths) with an improvised melody using the notes of the blues scale.

**Step 2:** Place the page marking tabs on the keys as illustrated in the keyboard diagram.

**Step 3:** Play the two measure introduction to set the tempo and meter. Give the student a cue for entry such as, "Charlie Chipmunk, one, two, three, play!"

**Step 4:** The student improvises freely on the notes marked with the tabs. Either (or both) hands may be used.

## READING (p. 76 - 77)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Zechariah Zebra, Charlie Chipmunk and Hippo rhythms
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (F)

**Step 1:** Assist students in finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. It may be helpful to refer back to the rhythm pages.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise. As you and the student tap, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. Wiggle the finger number that is to play (F) and place on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

# UNIT 6: The Letter G

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## THE LETTER G & LETTER G SONG (p. 78 - 79)

Type: Activity & Rote Piece

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of G on the piano in relation to the groups of three black keys
- Play a Rote Piece on G

**Step 1:** Teach the location of G by following the instructions on p. 78.

**Step 2:** Teach the Letter G Song by Rote. You may add variety by having the student play the song in different octaves, with RH or LH, loud or quiet, slow or fast.

**Step 3:** Have the student decorate the piano as shown at the bottom of p. 79.

## HAPPY ZEBRA DAYS (p. 80 - 81)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Apply the Zechariah Zebra technique in a Rote Piece (introduced on p. 70 - 71)
- Start on Letter G
- Alternate LH and RH

**Step 1:** Turn on the audio track and walk around the room to the quarter note beat. This will be a fast walk! If student is able, add a clap on the half note beats as you walk.

**Step 2:** Review the Zechariah Zebra technique by playing the RH only. For example, play m. 1. Student imitates. Play m. 3. Student imitates. Play m. 5. Student imitates. Bring the student's attention to the pattern of the notes that were played (G, A, G).

**Step 3:** Teach the RH ending (m. 7 -8 ).

**Step 4:** Take turns: The student plays the RH part, and you fill in with the LH part in the measures between (e.g. student plays m. 1, you play m. 2, student plays m. 3, etc.).

**Step 5:** Teach the student the LH. This is the same pattern the entire piece, and uses the Tall Giraffe rhythm. Switch roles, so that you play the RH and the student plays the LH.

**Step 6:** Play the entire piece for the student to show once more how both hands fit together. The student imitates by playing the entire piece. Add accompaniment.



## LEAP FROG (p. 82 - 83)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Follow the leader using the LH and RH
- Start on Letter G in different octaves
- Switch positions on the bench and use a new hand
- Play "skips" (3rds)

**Step 1:** Turn on the audio track. Hop around the room as you listen, imagining that you and the student are leaping frogs.

**Step 2:** For m. 1 - 8, play teacher LH. The student imitates with the LH in the same octave as the teacher. It may take some extra repetition and practice to master skipping a note. The preferred fingering is 4 2 4, but if student struggles, the student may use all Finger 2.

**Step 3:** Direct the student to slide off the bench to the left, walk around the back of the bench, and sit on the right side of the bench to be ready to play m. 9 - 18 with the RH.

**Step 4:** Play teacher RH. Student imitates with the RH in the same octave as the teacher.

**Step 5:** Put the entire piece together by starting back at the beginning and adding the teacher accompaniment.

## ZECHARIAH'S WALK (p. 84 - 85)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Apply the Zechariah Zebra technique in a Rote Piece
- Play a piece with a more complex form
- Start on Letter G
- Alternate LH and RH

**Step 1:** Decide where Zechariah will walk based on the suggestions on p. 84. Turn on the audio track and walk around the room to the beat. It may be easier to walk to the half note beat, or walk to the quarter note beat as you clap with the half note beat. An alternate suggestion is to use a Zebra stuffed animal and pretend it is walking to wherever you have chosen.

**Step 2:** Teach the introduction by rote (m. 1 - 4). The student should play with the Lion Paw technique, using Finger 2 with an open hand. It may be helpful to chant either the letter names ("G, G, G, G, A, A, Roar - 2 - 3 - 4") or the Animal Rhythm Patterns ("Hip - po, Hip - po..." etc.).

**Step 3:** Introduce the Zechariah theme (m. 5 - 8). This theme is made up of two main ideas: "Zechariah Zebra Walks" (m. 5 - 6) and the location (m. 7 - 8). Teach the student m. 5 - 6, and you answer with m. 7 - 8. After the student is comfortable with this, switch roles. Finally, ask the student to play the entire line by themselves.

**Step 4:** Teach m. 9 - 12. This is the same as the previous line except that the first "Zechariah Zebra Walks" pattern begins on B.

**Step 5:** Play m. 5 - 12 for the student. Keep the location the same for this entire section (both lines). This will help the student remember where they are in the piece. Ask the student to play m. 5 - 12 as you provide reminders.

**Step 6:** Now Zechariah wants to walk somewhere else! Choose a different location for the repeat of m. 5 - 12 so that the student knows it is the second time. Ask the student to play the repeated section, and sing the words for the new location.

**Step 7:** The last line of the piece is the same as the beginning, with the exception of the very last note. Play the last line for the student, and ask them to imitate.

**Step 8:** When student is solid, add the accompaniment.

In general, the greatest difficulty in this piece is the form. Drawing a picture of the form on a white board or separate sheet of paper may be helpful. For example, Line 1 can be a picture of Zechariah walking. Line 2 - 3 can be represented by a picture of the first location. The repeat of this section can be represented by a picture of the second location. Finally, draw a picture of Zechariah walking to represent the last line.

## RHYTHM (p. 86)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Review the notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns

This page reviews the notation for the Charlie Chipmunk, Tall Giraffe, Hippo, and Zechariah Zebra rhythm patterns. Assist the student in identifying each rhythm. Place the corresponding sticker in the box below. Demonstrate how to point at each note while saying the words for the pattern. Ask the student to imitate, and repeat several times. If the student is adept at writing, have the student write the rhythm pattern on a separate piece of paper.

## ZEBRA LISTENING (p. 87)

Type: Listening

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Introduce students to Classical music
- Listen to music that describes different moods

This page may be completed at the lesson or at home. The student chooses to listen to “playful” or “excited” music. The teacher or parent can access the music at [pianosafari.com/friends-listening](https://pianosafari.com/friends-listening), where playlists for Spotify and YouTube are included. The student may color the page or dance to the music. Feel free to listen to the same piece repeatedly over the course of the unit. Alternatively, the parent and teacher may find similar pieces to listen to.

## READING (p. 88 - 89)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Zechariah Zebra, Charlie Chipmunk and Tall Giraffe rhythms
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (G)

**Step 1:** Assist students in finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. It may be helpful to refer back to the rhythm pages.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise. As you and the student tap, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. Wiggle the finger number that is to play (G) and place on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

# UNIT 7: The Letter A

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## THE LETTER A & LETTER A SONG (p. 90 - 91)

Type: Activity & Rote Piece

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of A on the piano in relation to the groups of three black keys
- Play a Rote Piece on A

**Step 1:** Teach the location of A by following the instructions on p. 90.

**Step 2:** Teach the Letter A Song by Rote. You may add variety by having the student play the song in different octaves, with RH or LH, loud or quiet, slow or fast.

**Step 3:** Have the student decorate the piano as shown at the bottom of p. 91.

## BUILDING A NEST (p. 92 - 93)

Type: Follow the Leader Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Imitate the teacher
- Start on Letter A
- Play the Kangaroo, Charlie Chipmunk, and Tall Giraffe rhythms
- Alternate between white keys and black keys

**Step 1:** Listen to the audio track as you and the student act out the lyrics (e.g. building a nest, gathering twigs, building the nest up high).

**Step 2:** At the piano, begin by reviewing the Bunny House hand shape with the RH. This piece will use an open hand.

**Step 3:** Demonstrate a few measures for the student. Stop after each and ask what color of key you are playing. This observation will help the students imitate you more accurately.

**Step 4:** Play each measure of the teacher RH. The student imitates in the same octave. Play with *non legato* articulation.

**Step 5:** Add the teacher accompaniment (LH) when the student is solid with the imitation.

**Step 6:** Once the piece is learned and the student is able to play with accompaniment, have the student play one octave higher than written.

## KANGAROO (p. 94 - 95)

Type: Technique Exercise

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play fast repeated notes using the Kangaroo rhythm pattern
- Maintain a firm finger joint
- Keep non-playing fingers relaxed

**Step 1:** Read the story and follow the steps on p. 94. This will prepare the student to play the Kangaroo technique exercise on p. 95.

**Step 2:** At the piano, place the giraffe rectangles on the groups of three black keys for reference. Ask the student to find A.

**Step 3:** Using RH Finger 2, play the Kangaroo rhythm. The student imitates in the same octave. One of the technical goals is to keep a firm finger joint. The student should be familiar with this concept from the Zechariah Zebra technique exercise (p. 70 - 71).

The non-playing fingers should stay relaxed. It is possible that the non-playing fingers will fly in the air while Finger 2 is playing the repeated notes. Remind the student to return to a Bunny House hand shape during the rest. Also, consider using imagery such as “sleepy” fingers.

**Step 4:** To play repeated notes efficiently, the faster notes need a smaller motion. Work with the student on staying close to the key on the eighth notes. Say, “Low bounce, high!” with the Kangaroo rhythm. The student ends with the hand in the air.

**Step 5:** Repeat the process above for the LH.

## MOONBEAM DREAMS (p. 96 - 97)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a slow and lyrical Rote Piece
- Start on Letter A
- Use Finger 1
- Alternate between RH and LH
- Shift between octaves

**Step 1:** Turn on the audio track and move freely to the music, reflecting the mood and tempo. If you have stuffed animals that match the animals in the piece (chipmunk, hippo, and giraffe), consider placing them around the room as if they are sleeping (read the lyrics in piece for reference).

**Step 2:** Students will use Finger 1 in this piece. Before teaching the first phrase by rote, prepare the use of Finger 1. After forming the Bunny House hand shape on the surface of the keys, talk about how Finger 1 plays on the corner tip, not the entire side. If the thumb falls down, the bunny will not be able to enter the door of the house! Practice playing Finger 1 in different locations on the keyboard, keeping it on the corner tip.

**Step 3:** Teach m. 1 - 2 by rote. Use *non legato* articulation throughout this piece. When the student is able to play the opening phrase successfully, take turns alternating phrases (e.g. student plays m. 1 - 2, teacher plays m. 3 - 4, student plays m. 5 - 6, teacher plays m. 7 - 8, repeat the entire section).

**Step 4:** Teach m. 3 - 4 by rote. Using the lyrics will help the student track where they are in the piece.

**Step 5:** Play m. 1 - 4 for the student, singing the lyrics. The student imitates.

**Step 5:** Teach m. 7 - 8 by rote.

**Step 6:** Play m. 5 - 8 for the student, singing the lyrics. The student imitates.

**Step 7:** Play m. 1 - 8 for the student, singing the lyrics. The student imitates. Play m. 1 - 8 again with the lyrics for the second verse. The student imitates.

**Step 8:** Teach the "special ending" of the piece, the last line. Ideally, the student will use the Tall Giraffe wrist lift off the half notes between the octave changes.

## RHYTHM (p. 98)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the notation for the Kangaroo Animal Rhythm Pattern
- Tap back rhythms using combinations of the Animal Rhythm Patterns

The notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns is introduced throughout the book. On this page, students learn to recognize the notation for the Kangaroo rhythm pattern.

Show the student how the pattern looks on the page. Demonstrate how to point at each note while saying the words for the pattern. Ask the student to imitate, and repeat three times. Then, with the student helping, place the indicated sticker in the box provided. If the student is adept at writing, have the student write the rhythm pattern on a separate piece of paper.

## SLEEPY LION (p. 99)

Type: Improvisation

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Improvise with accompaniment in triple meter
- Start and end on Letter A
- Create a “sleepy” mood by playing slowly and lyrically

**Step 1:** Play the accompaniment as the student moves slowly around the room, pretending to be a sleepy lion. If you have a lion stuffed animal, give it to the student to hold.

**Step 2:** At the piano, ask the student to place the giraffe rectangle (from the Piano Decorating Kit) on the group of three black keys in the starting octave. Using the rectangle as reference, ask the student to find Letter A. This is the note that will start and end the improvisation.

**Step 3:** Play several measures of the opening melodic figure (A B C) for the student. The student imitates. It may be helpful to add lyrics to this theme such as, “Lion sleeps.” Use this opportunity to check the position of Finger 1. It needs to be played on the corner tip to create a correct Bunny House hand shape.

**Step 4:** Tell the student you will begin by playing the “Lion sleeps” melody together, and that you will nod when it is time to begin improvising freely, using only white keys.

**Step 5:** When the improvisation is coming to a close, prompt the student to end on A. Take extra time with the *ritardando* at the end, as if the lion has completely fallen asleep.

## READING (p. 100 - 101)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Kangaroo, Hippo and Lion (“Roar - 2 - 3 - 4”) rhythms
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (A)

**Step 1:** Assist students in finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. It may be helpful to refer back to the rhythm pages.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise. As you and the student tap, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. Wiggle the finger number that is to play (A) and place on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

# UNIT 8: The Letter B

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## THE LETTER B & LETTER B SONG (p. 102 - 103)

Type: Activity & Rote Piece

Composers: Fisher & Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn the location of B on the piano in relation to the groups of three black keys
- Play a Rote Piece on B

**Step 1:** Teach the location of B by following the instructions on p. 102.

**Step 2:** Teach the Letter B Song by Rote. You may add variety by having the student play the song in different octaves, with RH or LH, loud or quiet, slow or fast.

**Step 3:** Have the student decorate the piano as shown at the bottom of p. 103.

## SAFARI FRIENDS PARADE (p. 104 - 105)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a Rote Piece with shifting positions and alternation between the hands
- Start on Letter B

**Step 1:** If you have stuffed animals that match the animals found in the book, set them out on the piano bench or a table top. Let the student choose a stuffed animal. Teacher and/or parent choose one as well! Turn on the audio track and march around the room in a line with the stuffed animals, as if you are marching in a parade. Then choose a different animal to march with.

**Step 2:** Teach by rote in two measure groups. Suggested process and lyrics to aid the learning process are listed below:

- m. 1 - 2. RH: "Marching up and down." LH: "Kangaroo hops."
- m. 3 - 4. RH: "Marching up back up." LH: "Kangaroo hops."
- m. 1 - 4
- m. 5 - 6. "Bouncing high in the sky."
- m. 7 - 8. RH: "Marching up and down." LH: "Kangaroo hops."
- m. 5 - 8
- m. 1 - 8
- Repeat m. 1 - 8 with 2nd ending (the "special ending")

**Step 3:** Add the teacher accompaniment when student is secure.



## ANIMAL GAMES (p. 106 - 107)

Type: Activity

Composer: Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Review the location of A B C D E F G
- Review the Animal Techniques

**Step 1:** Read the student instructions in the gray box aloud (p. 106).

**Step 2:** Ask the student to close their eyes as you hide the Alphabet Leaves around the room (download code is found on p. 1).

**Step 3:** Follow the order of the boxes on p. 107. The first box is a zebra, so the student pretends to be a zebra and searches for an Alphabet Leaf. When the leaf with the letter is found, have the student return to the piano and review the Zechariah Zebra technique (p. 70 - 71) using the letter on the leaf. Model the technique for the student first. Student plays three times in different octaves, using the LH or the RH. You may add the accompaniment if desired.

**Step 4:** Using the same process, continue on with the other boxes.

## TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR (p. 108 - 109)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Traditional, arr. Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a familiar piece
- Use the Tall Giraffe wrist lift on every note
- Transpose to other keys

**Step 1:** Listen to the audio track and sing along. As an optional activity, draw pictures of a few stars and cut them out. You and the student can use the stars to trace the shape of the melodic line. For example, start with the stars directly in front of your bodies. Raise them above the head when the melody leaps by a 5th, and lower them gradually as the melody descends. If this activity is too complicated, dance along with the music instead.

**Step 2:** Find two small items to mark the keys. Ideas for this include page marking tabs, flat marbles, small pom poms, or erasers. Along with the student, mark the starting note (C) and the note you will be leaping to (G). Place the items at the base of the black keys. If you prefer, you can use the Piano Decorating Kit to mark the black key groups, which provide a reference point for the white keys.

**Step 3:** Using Finger 2 and an open hand, model the Tall Giraffe wrist lift for the student by playing C twice. The student imitates.

**Step 4:** Using Finger 2 and an open hand, model the Tall Giraffe wrist lift by playing G twice. The student imitates.

**Step 5:** Add the previous steps together by playing the opening four notes of the piece. The student imitates.

**Step 6:** Continue to add notes to the melody as the student is able. Some students may catch on quickly and be able to play most of the piece by ear. Others may need a more step-by-step approach. The main technical idea, however, is to use a wrist roll on every note and to use only Finger 2.

**Step 7:** Add the teacher accompaniment when the student is secure.

**Step 8:** Transpose to other keys, using the same process as before. Mark the new starting notes on the piano to aid the students in the process. Accompaniment transpositions are available at [pianosafari.com](http://pianosafari.com).

## HERE WE GO ROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH (p. 110)

Type: Song

Composer: Traditional, arr. Julie Knerr Hague

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Experience compound meter by moving to the music
- Practice singing

This folk song is a fun way to experience 6/8 meter. As you and the student listen and sing along to the audio track, sway on the dotted quarter note beat. As the verses progress, act out the motions in the lyrics. For example, during Verse 2, pretend to wash your faces. Keep the motion rhythmic, always moving with the dotted quarter note beat.

Note: When you play the accompaniment, modify the rhythm of the melody as necessary to accommodate lyrics of the different verses.

## KANGAROO LISTENING (p. 111)

Type: Listening

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Introduce students to Classical music
- Listen to music that describes different moods

This page may be completed at the lesson or at home. The student chooses to listen to “thoughtful” or “happy” music. The teacher or parent can access the music at [pianosafari.com/friends-listening](http://pianosafari.com/friends-listening), where playlists for Spotify and YouTube are included. The student may color the page or dance to the music. Feel free to listen to the same piece repeatedly over the course of the unit. Alternatively, the parent and teacher may find similar pieces to listen to.

## RHYTHM (p. 112 - 113)

Type: Rhythm

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learn to count syllabically
- Review the notation for the Animal Rhythm Patterns

These pages introduce the Syllabic Counting system for the Animal Rhythm Patterns. This brief introduction is not meant to be exhaustive, but is intended to make the transition into Level 1 smoother for students.

**Step 1:** Point at each note in the first rhythm (four quarter notes) and count syllabically as shown below the notes. The student imitates by pointing at the notes on the page and repeating the same syllables. Repeat by tapping (student echoes) or clapping. Tell the student, "This is a new way to count one of the names of your animal friends!" Ask the student to identify the correct animal rhythm by looking at the notation. Choose the correct sticker and place it in the box. Take turns tapping back and forth: "Charlie Chipmunk, Ta Ta Ta Ta."

**Step 2:** Repeat the same process for the other rhythms.

## READING (p. 114 - 115)

Type: Reading Exercise

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Identify the Zechariah Zebra, Lion, Charlie Chipmunk, and Kangaroo rhythms
- Count the rhythm with both syllables and the animal name
- Learn to track music left to right
- Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct hand and starting position (B)

**Step 1:** Assist students in finding the correct animal sticker to match the notation. Review the Syllabic Counting system by counting both the syllables and the animal name.

**Step 2:** Tap the rhythm with the hand that is to play the exercise. As you and the student tap, point above each note on the page to help the student track from left to right.

**Step 3:** Close the fallboard of the piano, or move to a hard surface such as a table top. Play the finger numbers on the hard surface and say the numbers aloud.

**Step 4:** Open the piano. Raise the hand that is to play and wiggle the starting finger number. Use the keyboard diagram to find the correct starting note. Wiggle the finger number that is to play (B) and place on the note.

**Step 5:** The student plays each exercise at least three times correctly with *non legato* articulation. You may point above each note to help the student track from left to right.

## GOODBYE, FRIENDS! (p. 116 - 117)

Type: Rote Piece

Composer: Katherine Fisher

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Play a Rote Piece with shifting positions
- Alternate LH and RH
- Play with a more involved accompaniment in Twelve Bar Blues style

**Step 1:** If you own corresponding stuffed animals, set them out on the piano bench or a table top. Turn on the audio track. As you listen, take the animals off the bench or table, and return them to their “home” (e.g. a storage basket). Wave goodbye to the animals! If the student would like, keep one animal out on the piano to “listen.”

**Step 2:** The piece begins on C in both hands, but the LH shifts up to F halfway through the piece. If you feel it would still be helpful, take time with the student to mark the black key groups with the zebra triangles and giraffe rectangles from the Piano Decorating Kit.

**Step 3:** The hands often echo each other rhythmically in the piece. It may be helpful to introduce the idea that the hands are having a conversation. Teach m. 5 - 8 by rote (the student is resting in m. 1 - 4). The LH begins, and the RH imitates it exactly in the following two measures.

**Step 4:** Introduce m. 9 - 12. The only change from the previous four measures is that the LH moves up to F.

**Step 5:** Play m. 5 - 12, and then have the student imitate this larger section.

**Step 6:** Teach m. 13 - 16, the “Goodbye Friends” ending.

**Step 7:** When the student is solid with the entire piece, begin the process of playing with the accompaniment. Before adding both hands in the accompaniment, play just the teacher LH with the student. This provides the rhythmic and harmonic foundation. When this is established and the student feels comfortable, play the teacher RH as well. It is quite busy and rhythmically complex, so it should be the last thing to add to the piece. Congratulate the student on a job well done!