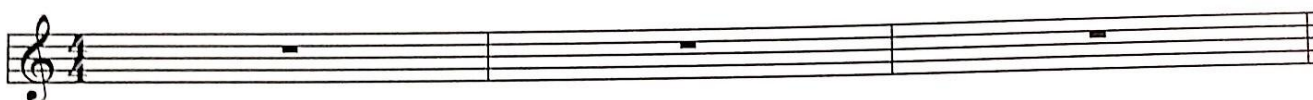


The Staff and the Notes

The following will introduce some very basic concepts that will help you to understand the notes on the piano. Music is a language, and it is written on a staff. A staff has five lines and four spaces.



To give order to the music the staff is divided into measures. A vertical line called a bar is used to mark the measures. Here is the staff with a G clef (also called a treble clef), a 4/4 time signature, and a double bar line at the end.



The double bar line tells the piano player that he or she is at the end of a section or strain of music. Sometimes, however, there will be two dots before the double bar line. That means to repeat the section of music.



Repeat Sign

The Notes

Next we shall take a look at what gets written on the staff. The notes tell us what tones to play, and take on the names of the lines or spaces they occupy. A note has three parts.

The Head: This gives a general indication of time: a hollow oval indicates a half note or a whole note, while a solid oval denotes a quarter, eighth, or other note.

The Stem: all notes except for whole notes have a stem.

The Flag: the presence of a flag indicates an eighth or sixteenth note.

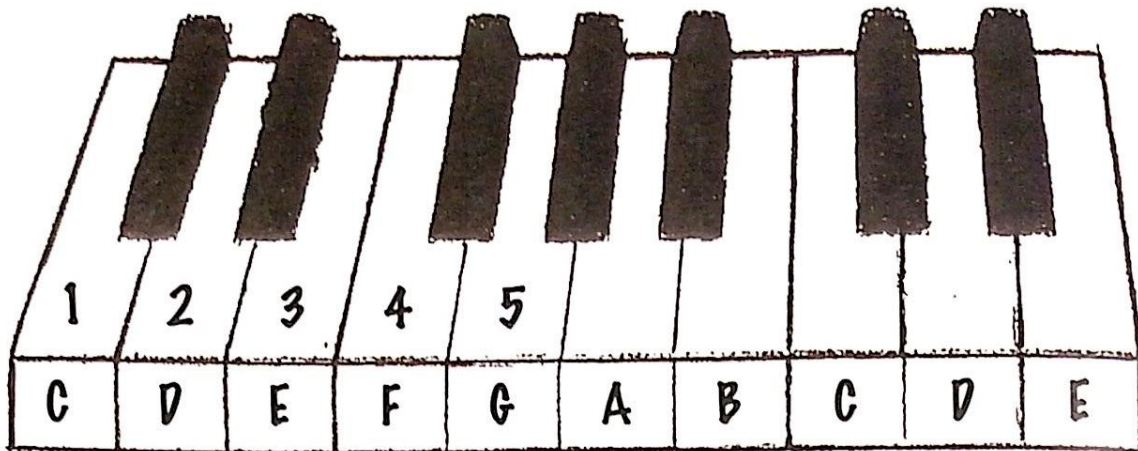


The Stem



The Flag

You can find notes *on* the staff, *above* the staff, and *below* the staff.

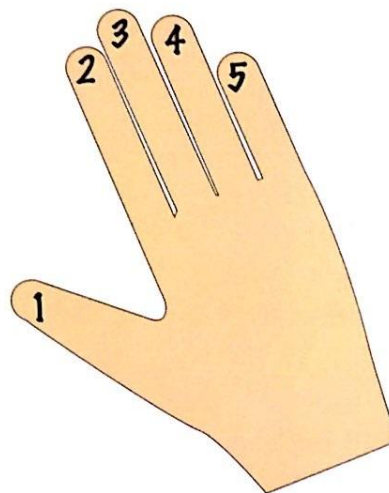
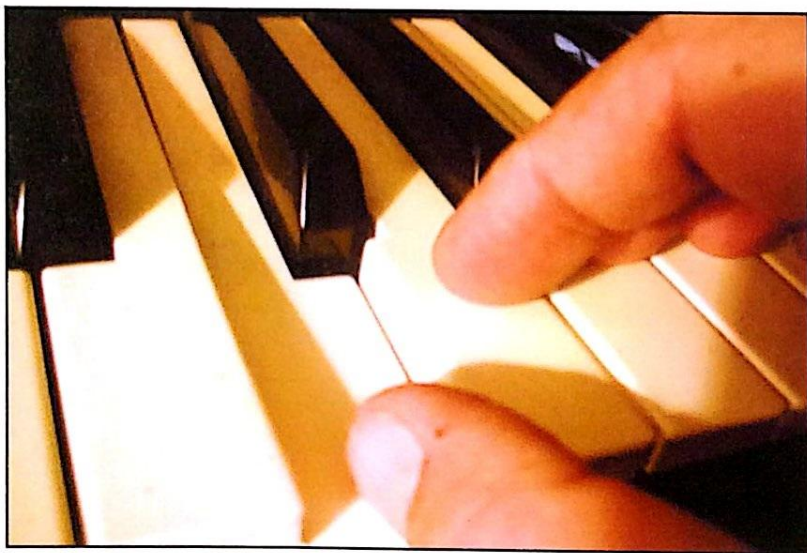


The Right Hand

Most music is played in the middle of the piano. This is called the middle range. And most of the time the melody of a song is played by the right hand. A melody or tune can only go in one of three ways:

1. It may ascend, or go up each line and/or space.
2. It may descend, or go down each line and/or space.
3. It may repeat, meaning it would stay on the same note.

First, you need to find the proper place for your right hand. Start by placing your thumb (finger 1, as shown in the fingering diagram below) on Middle C, as shown in the keyboard diagram above and the picture below.



Right Hand Fingering

Next, place your index finger (finger 2) on the note D.

Place your middle finger (finger 3) on E, your ring finger (4) on F, and your pinky finger (5) on G. Make sure you play using the rounded part of your fingertips and hold your wrists parallel with the floor.



The note D



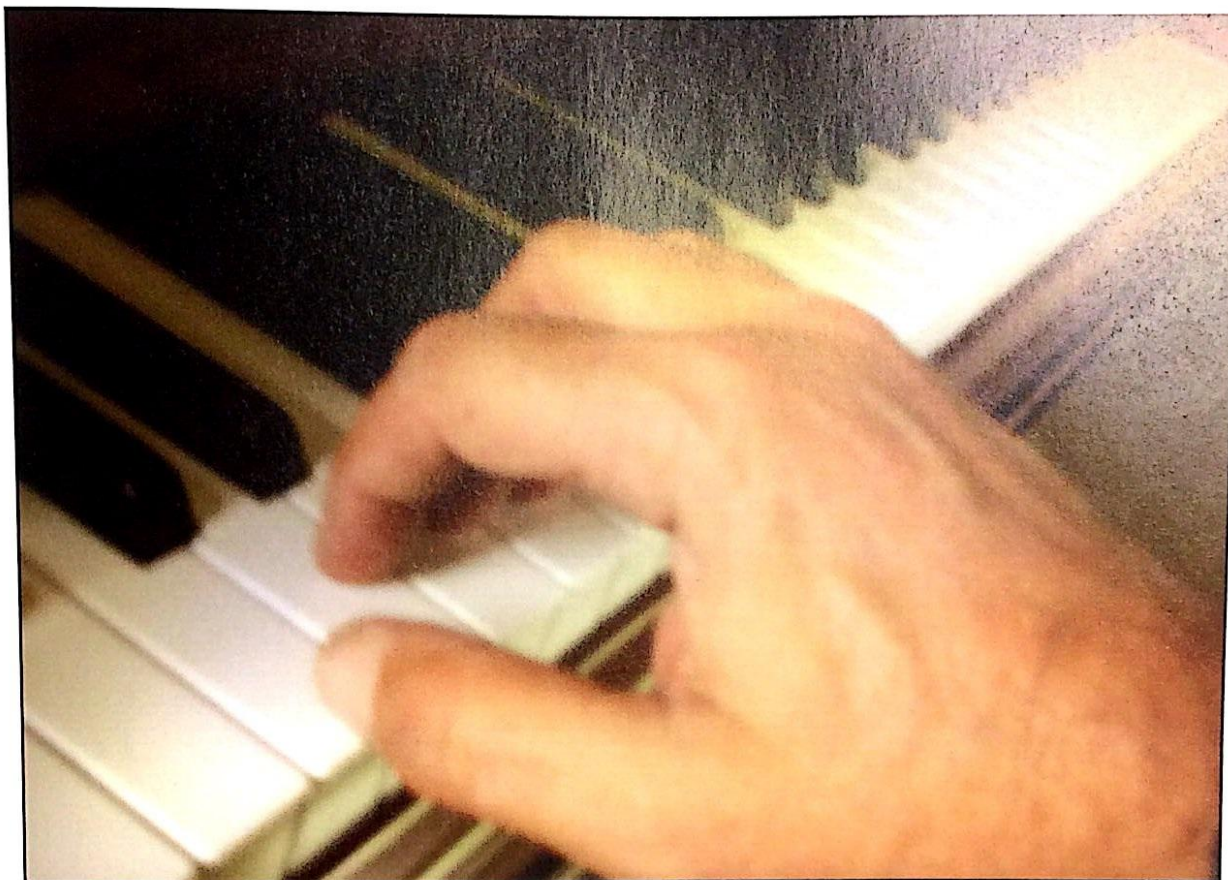
The note E



The note F



The note G



Gently play each of the notes: first C, then D, E, F, and G. Play the pattern over and over again starting with your thumb. Keep your fingers relaxed, press firmly, and lift each finger as the next finger plays the next note.

The proper fingering is marked above the notes as they appear on the musical staff.

