



KEYBOARD LESSON PLANS

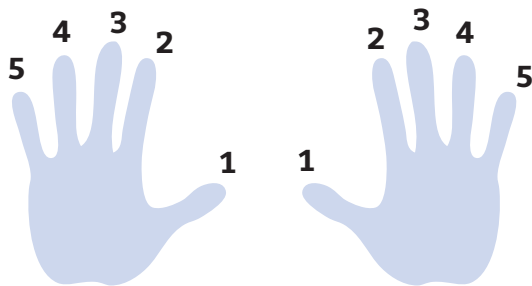
LESSON PLAN: Finger Numbers

Objective:

Students will be able to memorize the way fingers are numbered in keyboard playing.

Procedures:

- ① Ask students to hold both of their fists in the air. Opening your fists one finger at a time, stick up your thumbs together saying out loud “one”, followed by the index finger “two”, the middle finger “three”, the ring finger “four”, and the pinky “five”, until every finger of the hand remains open.
- ② Repeat the same procedure in the reverse order, beginning with closed fists and opening pinkies first saying “five”, followed by ring fingers “four”, etc.
- ③ Hold your hand open in front of the class and ask them to call out as a group which finger you are pointing to using your other hand.
- ④ Switch hands and repeat, making sure everyone understands that on both hands the thumb is finger number 1 and the pinky is finger number 5.
- ⑤ Ask students to play specific notes with specific fingers. “When I say ‘go’ I want everyone to use the right hand to play C with the 2nd finger....ready....GO!”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

A Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.3 b. Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities, and identified performance challenges. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.A When counting objects, say the number names in the standard order, pairing each object with one and only one number name and each number name with one and only one object.



LESSON PLAN: Chopsticks and Forks

Objective:

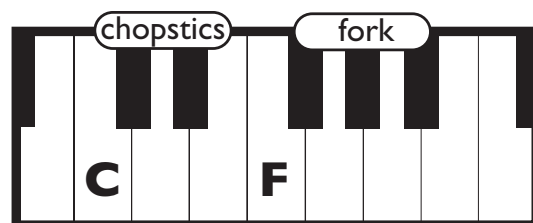
Students will be able to use the black keys to recognize any note on the keyboard.

Resources:

Only a keyboard!

Procedures:

- 1 Describe the group of 2 black keys as “chopsticks”. Ask students to find as many pairs of chopsticks on their keyboards as they can.
- 2 Describe the group of 3 black keys as a “fork” and have students find all of the forks on their keyboard.
- 3 Play groups of chopsticks or forks going from high to low or low to high.
- 4 Indicate that since C stands for “chopsticks” it is the name of the white key to the left of the chopsticks. Ask students to find all of the C’s.
- 5 Explain the same about the fork. The word begins with F and that is the note located to the left of every fork. Have students find all of the F’s.
- 6 Relate other letters from the musical alphabet to the C and F, locating each one everywhere it appears on the keyboard.



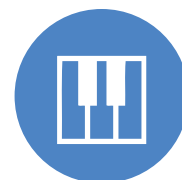
Extensions:

Younger students will enjoy placing a small object on notes you ask them to find. Be careful not to use something small enough to slip between the keys.

Older students can be paired up to make a set of musical alphabet flash cards to test each other from.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
 Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.3 b. Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities, and identified performance challenges. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Keyboard Hand Positions

Objective:

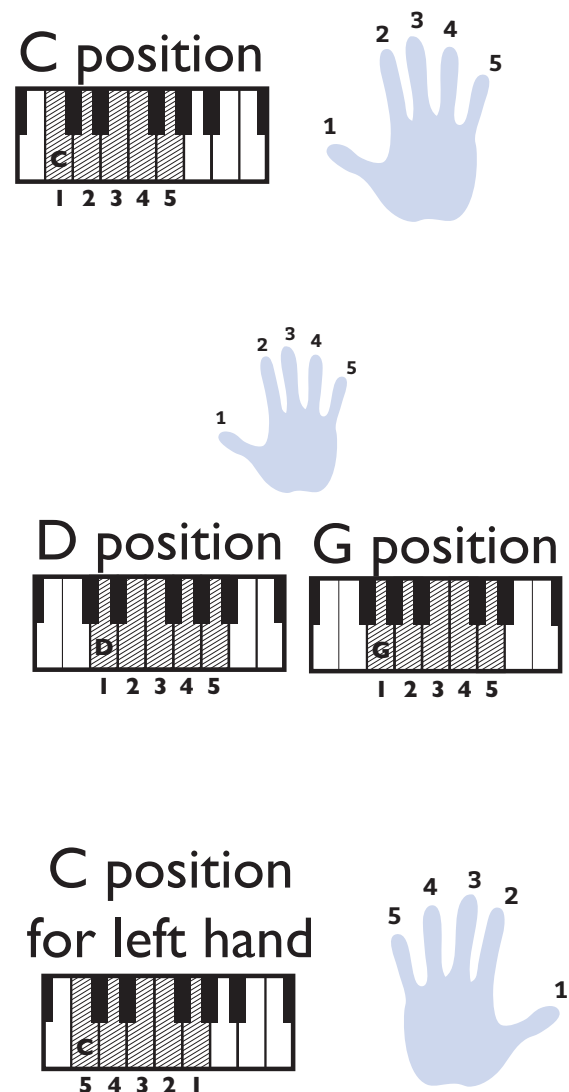
Students will be able to use the put note letter names and finger numbers together to make good keyboard habits.

Resources:

Keyboards

Procedures:

- 1 Demonstrate playing a C position using your right hand by placing your thumb on C and then playing D, E, F, and G with the next fingers (finger 2 for D, finger 3 for E, etc.)
- 2 Identify which fingers play which notes in discussion with students. "If I'm in a C position, which finger number plays the F? Which finger number plays the D?" etc.
- 3 Pair students up having them take turns playing the notes of the C position with the right hand. Ascending will be easiest because it starts with the thumb. Descending patterns that go up and down can come later after they're more comfortable using their fingers on the keyboard like this.
- 4 Have students call out notes for each other that are under the hand position. "Play the note E!" the student will have to use the 3rd finger, etc.
- 5 Apply this idea to starting in different positions, not worrying about including any black keys; placing the thumb on the note D puts the D, E, F, G, and A under the five fingers, etc.
- 6 Teach the left hand with this idea. Keep in mind that now the 5th finger (pinky) will be on the starting note and this is much more difficult for a beginning keyboard player.



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.2 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation. (applies 1-4)

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.A.1 Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes, and describe the relative positions of these objects using terms such as above, below, beside, in front of, behind, and next to.



LESSON PLAN: Two Note Chords

Objective:

Students will be able to use a 2 note chord to play a chord progression used in many rock and roll songs. This will reinforce their knowledge of where notes are on the keyboard while providing fingering habits which allow them to eventually play larger chords more easily. By integrating the left hand these

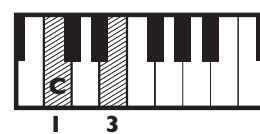
Resources:

Keyboards

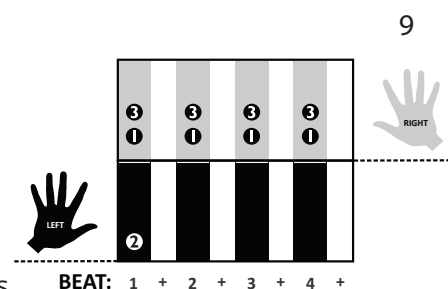
Procedures:

- 1 Make sure the students know their finger numbers by clenching 2 fists and opening one finger at a time simultaneously in both hands while saying "1, 2, 3, 4, 5".
- 2 Help students use the right hand to play a "mini C chord" using the 1 and 3 fingers on C and E in the middle of the keyboard. Having student pair up with each other to help one another is often a good idea to reinforce what they're learning and free up keyboards! Repeat this process with a "mini F chord" using fingers 1 and 3 on the notes F and A.
- 3 Have students find these chords quickly when you call them out, resting their hands on their laps in between so that they have to rely on their eyes to find them.
- 4 Have them play the C chord in 4 steady beats (quarter notes) followed by the F chord in 4 steady beats, and repeat until they can play this progression steadily without stopping.
- 5 Continue playing this steady rhythm while you sing the parts of songs that use this famous chord progression; "Feelin' Alright", "Imagine", "Waiting in Vain", "Drive My Car", "I Can't Get No Satisfaction", "Glory Days", etc.
- 6 Next we're going to begin preparing the left hand to play bass notes by learning to "feel" the keyboard. Tell students they can find C by feeling the group of 2 black keys and F by feeling the group of 3 black keys. Spend a couple of moments asking students to close their eyes and feel for the C or F depending on which note you call out. Remind them that since our eyes can only look at one hand at a time, learning to "feel" the notes of the keyboard can allow us to play with two hands much more easily.
- 7 Ask students to place their left hand 5 finger (pinky) on a low C. This is the finger responsible for playing that bass note.
- 8 Have them play the C chord and bass note together, and then while holding the bass note repeat the chord 3 more times. Do the same thing with the F chord, keeping the bass note as a C so that they don't have to worry about both hands moving to new notes. Remind them to keep their eyes on the right hand which is moving from a C chord to an F chord while "feeling" the left hand pinky playing the C. Once this 2 handed coordination is up and running steadily try singing one of the songs that fits this progression.

Mini C

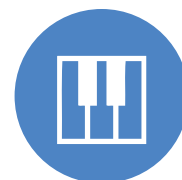


Mini F



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.2 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation. (applies 1-4) Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: General Music MU:Pr6.1.2 a. Perform music for a specific purpose with expression and technical accuracy. (applies K-5) Common Core Correlation: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.A.1 Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes, and describe the relative positions of these objects using terms such as above, below, beside, in front of, behind, and next to.



LESSON PLAN: Piano Power Chords

Objective:

The student will be able to chords more easily, using only the thumb and pinky to play the root and fifth of a chord. This builds both the feeling of the 5th in the hand for playing chords while strengthening the pinky.

Resources:

Use any song chart that you are currently working on with your class or that the class chooses. This lesson plan will be based on the “Axis of Awesome” chord progression in C Major, using the C, G, Ami, and F chords

Procedures:

- 1 Play the root and 5th of a C chord for the class with your right hand, using your thumb for the C and pinky for the G. This is a “piano power chord”, because just like in guitar power chords it is using only the root and 5th. Demonstrate how your hand is covering 5 notes and your thumb and pinky easily plant themselves on these two notes. You can also talk about the hollow sound this produces.
- 2 Ask students to try on their keyboards. It’s always a good idea to pair students up for “peer to peer instruction”, having them help each other. Walk around checking that everyone can make a “C Power Chord” (Figure A)
- 3 Demonstrate to students the way you play a “G Power Chord” (Figure B), moving your right hand thumb up to the note G and then feeling five white keys under your five fingers play the thumb and pinky on G and D.
- 4 Do the same thing with the “A Power Chord” (Figure C) and then with the “F Power Chord” (Figure D), moving slowly one chord at a time and making sure everyone gets the concept before applying it to a song or jam session. By doing this simple exercise they’re receiving great ear training by focusing on the root movement of the chord while getting used to where notes are located. They’re also training their bodies in fundamental keyboard muscle habits by getting the pinky and thumb involved in “feeling” this primary keyboard interval.
- 5 Try applying this idea to these chords sequentially playing whole notes on each chord. If you’re working with beginners have students play the “bass note” of the chord on the low half of the keyboard while others play the “piano power chords” in the middle register. After getting around the keyboard this way feels easy, use quarter notes while keeping steady time playing 4 counts on each chord. Remember to have students switch roles if some are playing chords and others bass. (Figures E & F)

Apply this idea to using both hands in an easy keyboard comping pattern or the pattern that comes from the song you’re working on in class (Figures G & H).

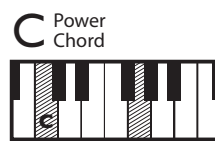


Fig. A

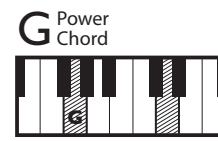


Fig. B

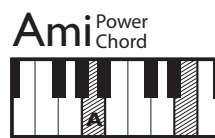


Fig. C

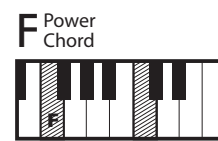


Fig. D

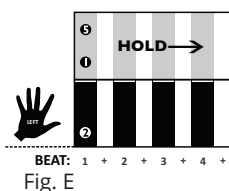


Fig. E

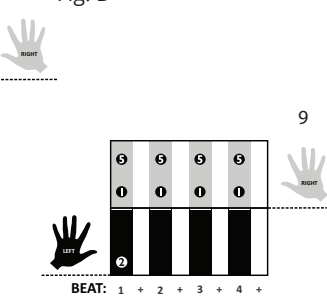


Fig. F

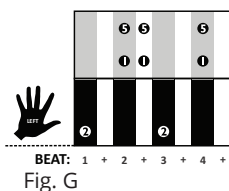


Fig. G

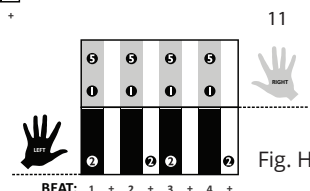
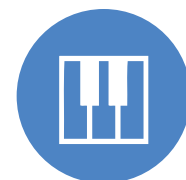


Fig. H

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.2 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation. (applies 1-4) Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: General Music MU:Pr6.1.2 a. Perform music for a specific purpose with expression and technical accuracy. (applies K-5) Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Example: Traditional and Emerging Ensembles MU:Re7.2.E.5a (Novice) Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Keyboard Comping Patterns

Objective:

Students will be able to hear and play keyboard comping patterns while successfully learning to integrate both hands in their playing.

Resources:

Handout “Keyboard Comping Patterns With Block Chords” and “Keyboard Comping Patterns With Broken Chords”. Hint: You can also create a handout easily by using Teacher Manual Keyboard Consumable “Keyboard Rhythms” and circling all the block chord comping patterns (the ones with three black dots aligned vertically).

Procedures:

- 1 Play students recordings of “When I Was Your Man” by Bruno Mars or “Let it Be” by The Beatles to hear “block chord” comping patterns on the piano. Then play them the beginning of “Someone Like You” by Adele and “Clocks” by Coldplay to hear “broken chord” comping patterns (note: in “Someone Like You” the chorus uses a “block chord” pattern to create contrast in the song—a great thing to point out before starting this lesson).
- 2 Demonstrate the difference between block chord and broken chord comping patterns. Explain that “comping” is just the word “accompanying” in a shortened form for keyboard players, and stands for the way we play chords in a song with different patterns of rhythms and notes.
- 3 Go through the keyboard comping patterns one at a time making sure that the students understand the rhythm in each one. After you can see that they can play them, repeat each one four times as a group.
- 4 After students are able to play any of the patterns on this sheet (which may take more than one lesson depending on the age and ability of your students) lead them through playing all of the patterns from column A in a row.
- 5 Repeat this process for the patterns in column B which contain more complicated rhythms but don’t involve the hands playing together. Go one pattern at a time until they’ve got each one, then play the entire column in a row.
- 6 Try playing both columns without stopping.
- 7 Use the handout “Comping Patterns With Broken Chords” to repeat the same process.

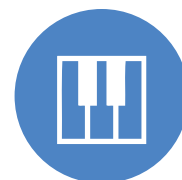
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National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.2 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation. (applies 1-4) Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: General Music MU:Pr6.1.2 a. Perform music for a specific purpose with expression and technical accuracy. (applies K-5) Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Example: Traditional and Emerging Ensembles MU:Re7.2.E.5a (Novice) Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. (structure of comping patterns instead of text)



LESSON PLAN: White Key Chord Shapes

Objective:

Students will be able to play chords anywhere on the keyboard using a chord shape.

Resources:

JAM CARD #1a (Major Chord)

Procedures:

- 1 Ask students to place Jam Card #1a on the keyboard, lining the start arrow up to the note C.
- 2 Discuss what notes the jam card points to. Lead students in a discussion of this as a “chord shape” where each note in the shape skips a white key (Figure A).
- 3 Play this chord by pushing down all three notes at the same time. Students can use any fingers they want or two hands just to hear the chord. (the finger numbers on the card are easier after doing lesson plans “2 Note Chords” and “Piano Power Chords”)
- 4 Have students play this chord shape beginning on other white keys, choosing any note and then playing a chord by skipping a white key in between each note of the chord (Figures B & C)
- 5 Construct a “chord progression” by playing the C chord 4 times and then a chord the student chooses 4 times, going back and forth between the chords.
- 6 Ask for volunteers from the class to pick another chord to go to and teach the entire class to play it. Dedicate some students to play the “bass note” of each chord by playing only the root note low on their keyboards (Figure D)
- 7 Write a song using this chord shape with choices that come from the students. Write words about a current event relevant to the students or school.

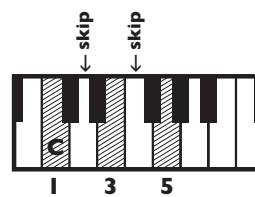
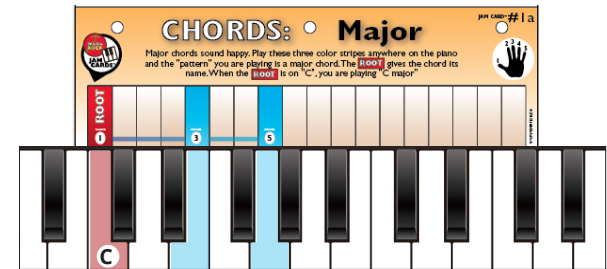


Fig. A

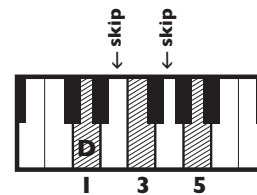


Fig. B

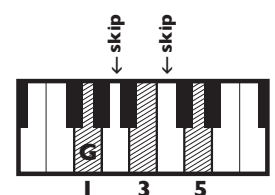


Fig. C

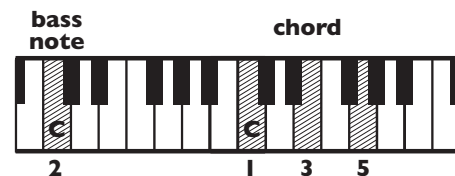


Fig. D

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Example: General Music MU:Cr2.1.6 b. Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or audio/ video recording to document personal simple rhythmic phrases, melodic phrases, and two-chord harmonic musical ideas. Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.2 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation. (applies 1-4)

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.



LESSON PLAN: Songs Using the F and G Chords

Objective:

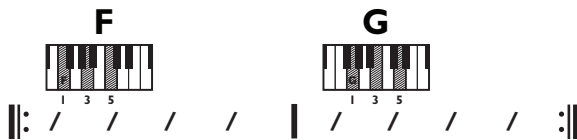
Students will be able to play several songs using two major chords

Resources:

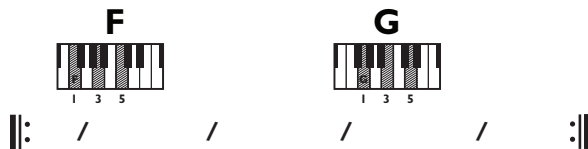
Recordings and song charts for any of the following songs: “Call me Maybe” by Carly Rae Jepsen, “Jane Says” by Jane’s Addiction, “Dreams” by Fleetwood Mac,

Procedures:

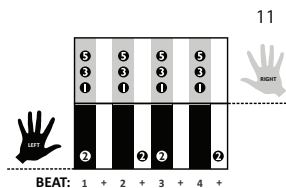
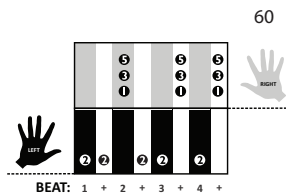
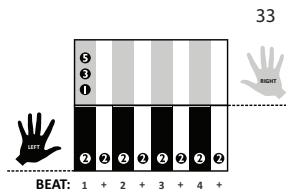
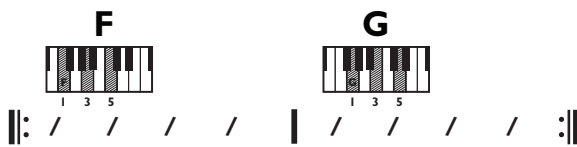
- 1 Place Jam Card #1a on the note F and play the F chord.
- 2 Move the Jam Card to the note G and play the G chord.
- 3 Practice slowly moving between these two chords without the Jam Card.
- 4 Use this comping pattern to play “Call Me Maybe”



- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Jane Says”



- 6 Use this comping pattern to play “Dreams”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Example: Traditional and Emerging Ensembles MU:Re7.2.E.5a (Novice) Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Songs Using the Ami and G Chords

Objective:

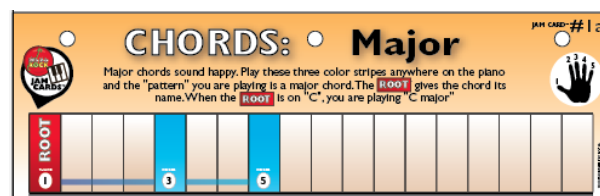
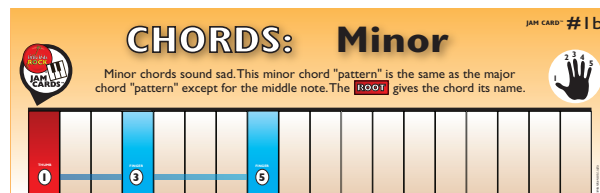
Students will be able to play several songs using a major and a minor chord

Resources:

Recordings and song charts to any of the following songs: “Somebody That I Used to Know” by Gotye, “Conga” by Miami Sound Machine, and “Break on Through” by The Doors.

Procedures:

- 1 Place Jam Card #1b on the note A and play the A minor chord.
- 2 Place Jam Card #1a on the G and play the G major chord.
- 3 Discuss the difference between major and minor—how many black and white notes are between each note in the chord? How do they sound different from each other?
- 4 Practice slowly moving between these two chords without the Jam Cards.
- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Somebody That I Used to Know”.



63

A mi **G**

1 3 5 1 3 5

||: / / / / :||

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

65

A mi **G**

1 3 5 1 3 5

||: / / / / | / / / / :||

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

56

A mi **G**

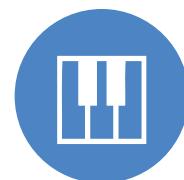
1 3 5 1 3 5

||: / / / / :||

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: General Music MU:Pr6.1.2 a. Perform music for a specific purpose with expression and technical accuracy. (applies K-5) Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Example: Traditional and Emerging Ensembles MU:Re7.2.E.5a (Novice) Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Songs Using Two Minor Chords

Objective:

Students will be able to play several songs using two minor chords

Resources:

JAM CARD 1b (Minor Chord), Recordings and song charts to any of the following songs: “Pom Poms” by The Jonas Brothers, “Grenade” by Bruno Mars, “Fallin’” by Alicia Keys

Procedures:

- 1 Place Jam Card #1b on the note A and play the A minor chord.
- 2 Move the Jam Card to the note E and play the E minor chord.
- 3 Practice slowly moving between these two chords without the Jam Card.
- 4 Use this comping pattern to play “Pom Poms”

A mi **E mi**

11

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Grenade”

A mi **A mi** **E mi** **E mi**

29

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

- 6 Use this comping pattern to play “Fallin’”

A mi **E mi**

103

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:Cr1.1.2 b. Generate musical patterns and ideas within the context of a given tonality (such as major and minor) and meter (such as duple and triple). Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Songs Using the C and F Chords

Objective:

Students will be able to play several songs using two major chords from the most famous chord progression in Rock and Roll!

Resources:

JAM CARD #1a “Major Chord”, Recordings and song charts to any of the following songs: “Ho Hey” by The Lumineers, “Home” by Phillip Phillips, “Angel of Harlem” by U2, “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” by The Rolling Stones, “Waiting in Vain” by Bob Marley



Procedures:

- 1 Place Jam Card #1a on the note C and play the C chord.
- 2 Move the Jam Card to the note F and play the F chord.
- 3 Practice slowly moving between these two chords without the Jam Card.
- 4 Use this comping pattern to play “Home”

C **F**

56

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Imagine”

C **F**

13

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

- 6 Use this comping pattern to play “Waiting in Vain”

C **F**

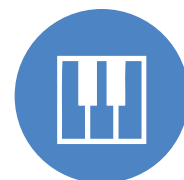
49

BEAT: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



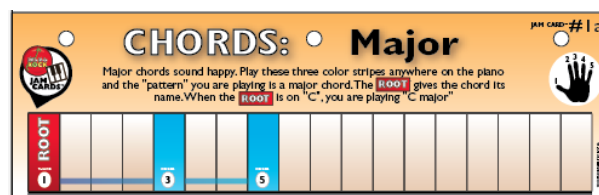
LESSON PLAN: Songs Using the C and G Chords

Objective:

Students will be able to play several songs using two major chords in a chord progression borrowed from classic New Orleans and folk songs.

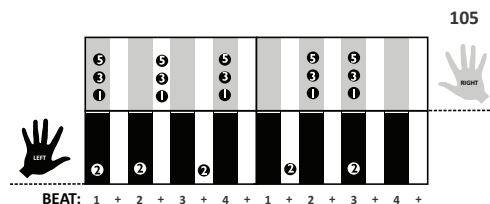
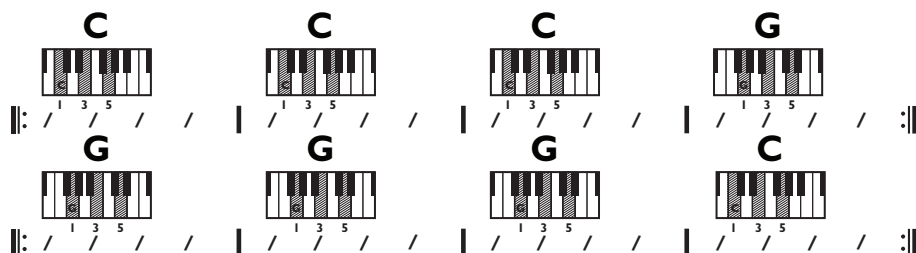
Resources:

JAM CARD #1 “Major Chord”, Recordings and song charts to any of the following songs: “Jumbalaya” by Hank Williams, “Aiko Aiko” by The Grateful Dead, “They All Asked For You” by The Meters, “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer” by Jonny Marks, “The Dreidel Song” by Samuel Grossman

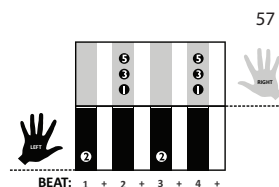
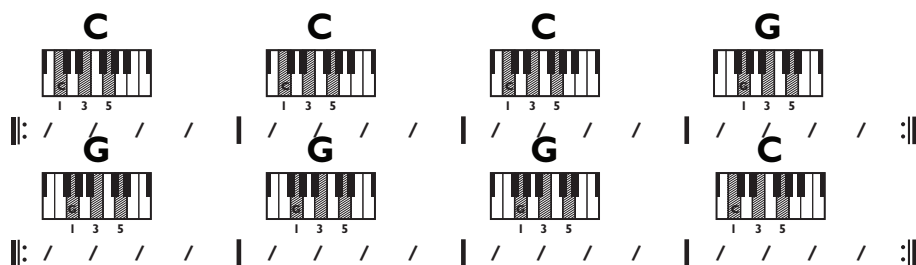


Procedures:

- 1 Place Jam Card #1a on the note C and play the C chord.
- 2 Move the Jam Card to the note G and play the G chord.
- 3 Practice slowly moving between these two chords without the Jam Card.
- 4 Use this comping pattern to play “Jumbalaya”, “Aiko Aiko”, or “They All Asked For You”



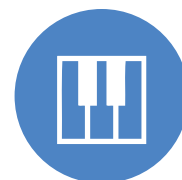
- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer” or “The Dreidel Song”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr6.1.H.5a (Novice) Perform with expression and technical accuracy in individual performances of a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, and chordal accompaniments, demonstrating understanding of the audience and the context. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: 4 Chord Songs in C Major

Objective:

Students will be able to play and identify songs that use the most common chords in popular music today.

Resources:

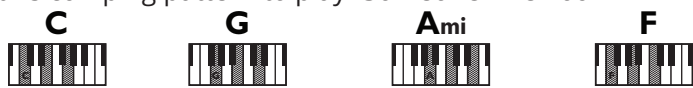
The “Axis of Awesome” 4 Chords video, recordings and song charts for “I Knew You Were Trouble” by Taylor Swift, “Someone Like You” by Adele, “Edge of Glory” by Lady GaGa, “With Or Without You” by U2, and “Don’t Stop Believing” by Journey, **JAM CARD** #6 (Scale Chords)

Procedures:

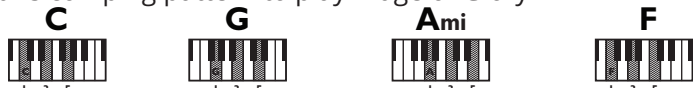
- 1 Show students the “Axis of Awesome” video from our website.
- 2 Practice finding these four chords in the key of C Major; the C chord, G chord, A minor chord, and the F chord in that order. They all use the same shape.
- 3 Add bass notes in the left hand by playing only the root of each chord down low on the keyboard at the same time you play the chord with your right hand.
- 4 Use this comping pattern to play “I Knew You Were Trouble”



- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Someone Like You”



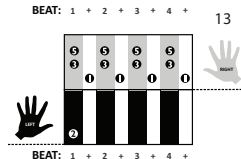
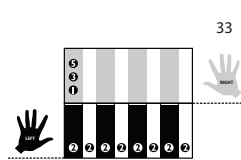
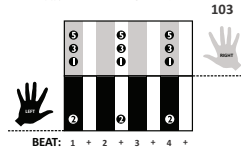
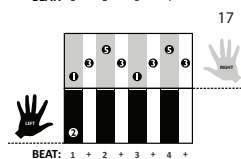
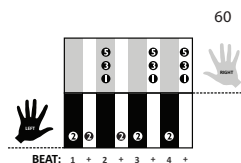
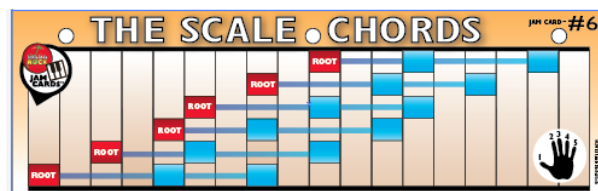
- 6 Use this comping pattern to play “Edge of Glory”



- 7 Use this comping pattern to play “With Or Without You”

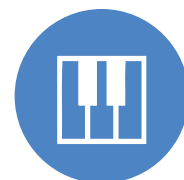


- 8 Use this comping pattern to play “Don’t Stop Believing”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.3 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.3 Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.OA.C.5 Generate a number or shape pattern that follows a given rule. Identify apparent features of the pattern that were not explicit in the rule itself.



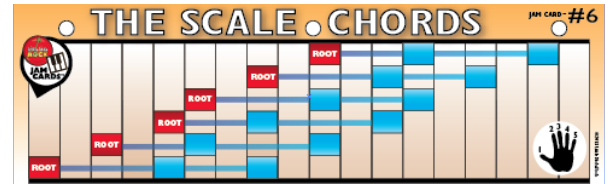
LESSON PLAN: 4 Chord Songs: “Doo Wop”

Objective:

Students will be able to play and identify songs that use a classic chord progression in popular music from the last 7 decades

Resources:

The “Ice Cream Changes” Doo-Wop progression video, recordings and song charts for “We Are Young” by FUN, “Baby” by Justin Bieber, “Fall For You”, “Crocodile Rock” by Elton John, “Octopus’s Garden” by The Beatles, “Earth Angel” by The Penguins, **JAM CARD** #6 (Scale Chords)



Procedures:

- 1 Show students the “Ice Cream Changes” video from our website.
- 2 Practice finding these four chords in the key of C Major; the C chord, A minor chord, F chord, and the G chord in that order. They all use the same shape.
- 3 Add bass notes in the left hand by playing only the root of each chord down low on the keyboard at the same time you play the chord with your right hand.
- 4 Use this comping pattern to play “Baby”



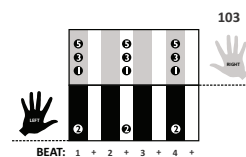
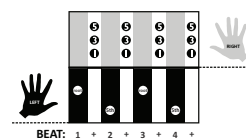
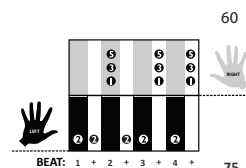
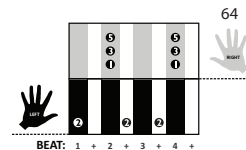
- 5 Use this comping pattern to play “Crocodile Rock”



- 6 Use this comping pattern to play “Octopus’s Garden”



- 7 Use this comping pattern to play “Earth Angel”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr6.1.H.11a (HS Accomplished) Perform with expression and technical accuracy, in individual and small group performances, a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, improvisations, and chordal accompaniments in a variety of styles, demonstrating sensitivity to the audience and an understanding of the context (social, cultural, and historical). Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Spelling Chords and Naming Notes

Objective:

Students will be able to spell chords starting on any letter of the musical alphabet while reinforcing their knowledge of the notes of the keyboard.

Resources:

Major Chord Jam Card, Minor Chord Jam Card

Procedures:

- 1 Review the musical alphabet with your students (see lesson plan “Chopsticks and Forks”). We want them also to get used to the idea that in the musical alphabet “A” comes after “G”. You can sing the “Musical Alphabet Song” with them (which sounds just like the regular alphabet song except you keep using the letters A B C D E F G over and over, never going to H). You can also sing the “Backward Musical Alphabet Song” with them singing “G F E D C B A, G F E D C B A,” etc. These songs easily teach the seven note musical alphabet and provide a fun opportunity to memorize that A comes after G.
- 2 Tell them that chords are built by skipping letters and then playing notes at the same time. Run through an example with them by writing A on the board, and then telling them to skip B and then writing C on the board above the A. Tell them that they next have to skip D and then write E on the board above the A and C. Label the top of this chord “A chord” (later in the lesson plan we’ll use Jam Cards to “discover” that it’s an A minor chord—for now it’s enough for them to understand that this process of skipping and combining letters results in some form of an “A chord”). Have them play these notes on their keyboards.
- 3 Repeat this same procedure starting on B, leading them through a discussion of the letters that would build a chord on that note (B, D, and E). Continue up through the notes of the musical alphabet, discussing and building chords on each one until you’ve built all seven (Figure A).
- 4 Ask students to go through the chords again with the “Major Chord” Jam Card and the “Minor Chord” Jam Card. Have kids play each one and line the jam card up to the start note. For example, they’ll play the chord starting on A and then see which Jam Card lines up to those notes and discover that it is a minor chord. The only one that won’t work is the chord starting on B because that chord is diminished and rarely used.

Fig. A

chord built on A	chord built on B	chord built on C	chord built on D
E	F	G	A
C	D	E	F
A	B	C	D
chord built on E	chord built on F	chord built on G	
B	C	D	
G	A	B	
E	F	G	

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.F Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.



LESSON PLAN: Using C, F and G Chords

Objective:

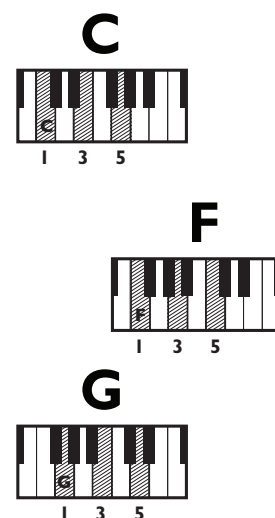
Students will be able to play the C, F, and G chords along with comping patterns to quickly play a lot of songs. Using a Jam Card they can easily see how voice leading works. This lesson further defines music as language in the way it overlaps with the keyboard lesson using the A, D, and E chords to play the

Resources:

Song charts that use the I, IV and V chords in C (the Little Kids Rock website allows you to sort songs in the keyboard songbook section by chord progression by clicking on the title of the chord progression column)

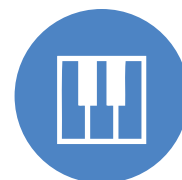
Procedures:

- 1 Demonstrate how the C, F, and G chords can be used to play lots of songs. Play selections that are familiar to them. Everything from “Twenty Two” by Taylor Swift to “You Don’t Know You’re Beautiful” by One Direction uses this classic progression.
- 2 Help students find these notes on their keyboards. Play one of the songs you’ve selected by having students use only the root of each chord. This lays an important foundation for them being able to find notes quickly without getting bogged down by trying to get their hands to play chords.
- 3 If the students are new to playing chords, have some of the students use “piano power chords” while others use “2 note chords” (see lesson plans “Piano Power Chords” and “2 Note Chords” for more info). After a few minutes have the groups switch. Playing simplified chords this way is easy for any size hand to do and builds the muscle memory required for playing a three note chord.
- 4 Have students play the chords using three fingers. The best fingering for these root position chords is to use the thumb (1), middle (3), and pinky (5) for each one. A good alternative fingering that keyboard players use depending on the situation and that is easier for beginners is thumb (1), index (2), and ring (4).
- 5 Apply the necessary comping patterns to your song selection. Most comping patterns rely on a coordination that uses two hands at the same time. If your students are double up on keyboards, you may need to divide the comping pattern so that one student plays a “bass line” while the other uses the rhythm of the chords.
- 6 After students are familiar with the idea of moving this major chord shape around the keyboard from C to F and G, try playing these same three chords with “voice leading” by using Jam Card 7a. Voice leading makes a smooth connection between chords by only moving the necessary notes. While this is a more sophisticated way to play the keyboard, it is important that it isn’t introduced until the students are capable of moving the “root position” chord shape around. Otherwise the logic of how chords work and the ear training that naturally comes along with that gets left behind.



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr6.1.H.11a (HS Accomplished) Perform with expression and technical accuracy, in individual and small group performances, a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, improvisations, and chordal accompaniments in a variety of styles, demonstrating sensitivity to the audience and an understanding of the context (social, cultural, and historical). Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



LESSON PLAN: Define The Groove

Objective:

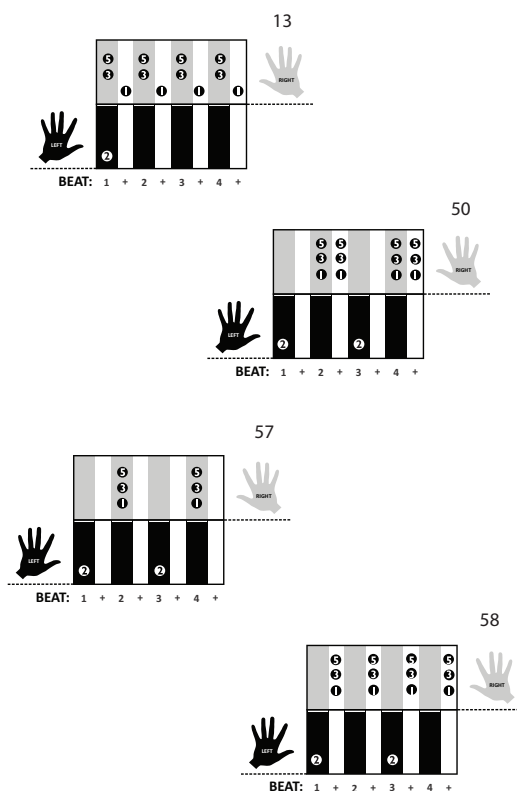
Students will be able to use comping patterns to give different songs individual personalities while using the same two chords.

Resources:

Song charts and recordings for “Home” by Phillip Phillips, “Love Me Do” by The Beatles, “Imagine” by John Lennon, and “Waiting in Vain” by Bob Marley.

Procedures:

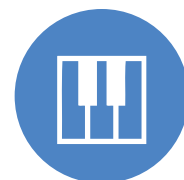
- 1 Listen to recordings of the songs listed above. Point out that although the songs each sound completely different from each other, they are based on the same chord progression and sound different because of the way they use rhythm.
- 2 Since all of the songs use two chords and the comping patterns involve both hands, make sure students know how to find the bass notes in the left hand using a “hand position” so they don’t have to look at this hand to play the notes. They’re going to want to keep their eyes on the right hand which is playing 3 notes and harder to manage. Take a moment to make sure students can find these two left hand notes with their eyes closed.
- 3 Run through the four comping patterns one at a time making sure students can manage the rhythms and chord change in each one. Stay with each individual pattern until they can play it over and over without stopping.
- 4 Sing the songs as a group and then try playing along with the singing! These songs can be performed individually or strung together in a medley.



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.F Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.



LESSON PLAN: 1, 4, 5 (I IV V) Progression with A, D, & E

Objective:

Students will be able to use the A, D, and E chords to play a 1, 4, 5 (I IV V) chord progression enabling them to play and recognize this in dozens of songs.

Resources:

Handouts for the A, D, and E chords, handout for chords in the key of A, song charts and lyrics for “You Don’t Know You’re Beautiful” by One Direction, “Twist and Shout” by The Beatles, “Hang On Sloop” by The McCosys, and “Wild Thing” by The Troggs

Procedures:

- 1 Practice being able to play and switch between the A, D, and E chords. Students who are new to doing this may want to play only on the first beat of each chord and spend the other counts getting the hand into the next position, while more experienced students can maintain the comping pattern while switching chords.
- 2 Play the 1st A, D, and E progression to the songs “You Don’t Know You’re Beautiful” and “Twist and Shout”. Since the chord progressions are the same, what makes them different is the melody and use of rhythm. The chords are represented in “root position”, each one having it’s “root” as the bottom note.
- 3 Play the 2nd A, D, and E progression to the songs “Hang On Sloop” and “Wild Thing”. This time the progression is a little bit different adding an extra D chord. Here again, the chords are the same making the only difference being the melody and rhythm.

Extensions:

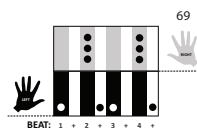
- 1 The chords are represented in “root position” which makes playing a 2 handed comping pattern a lot easier. It also helps train the ear to hear the movement of the chord. After a student is familiar with using root position chords to play this progression, try using Jam Card 7b which puts some of the chords in shapes that are easy to reach without having to move the hand.
- 2 Discuss chord progressions as numbers related to the key you are in. This chord progression is typically called a “1 4 5”



Fig. A



in the style of “You Don’t Know You’re Beautiful”



in the style of “Twist and Shout”

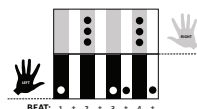
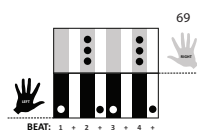


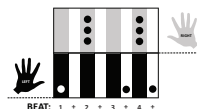
Fig. B



in the style of “Hang on Sloop”



in the style of “Wild Thing”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. (applies 1-5) Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.2 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation. Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Music Traditional and Emerging Ensembles MU:Re7.2.E.5a (Novice) Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.C Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).



LESSON PLAN: 1, 4, 1, 5 (I IV I V) Progression with A, D, & E

Objective:

Students will be able to use the A, D, and E chords to play a 1, 4, 1, 5 (I IV I V) chord progression enabling them to play and recognize this in dozens of songs.

Resources:

Major Chord Jam Card 1a, Scale Chords Jam Card 6b, Jam Card 7b, song charts and lyrics for “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” by The Tokens, “Brown Eyed Girl” by Van Morrison, “Free Falling” by Tom Petty, and “American Pie” by Don McLean

Procedures:

- 1 Use the Major Chord Jam Card to form the A, D, and E chords. Notice that each chord has a black key in the middle. Practice switching between these chords to prepare for using them in songs.
- 2 Play the 1st A, D, and E progression to the songs “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” and “Brown Eyed Girl”. Students who are new to doing this may want to play only on the first beat of each chord and spend the other counts getting the hands into the next position, while more experienced students can maintain playing the comping pattern while switching chords. Since the chord progressions are the same, what makes them different is the melody and use of rhythm.
- 3 Play the 2nd A, D, and E progression to the songs “Free Falling” and “American Pie”. This time the progression moves twice as fast spending only 2 counts on each chord. Here again, the chords are the same making the only difference being the melody and rhythm.

Extensions:

- 1 The chords are represented in “root position” which makes playing a 2 handed comping pattern a lot easier. This also helps train the ear to hear the movement of the chords and makes understanding chords a lot easier. After a student is familiar with using root position chords to play this progression, try using Jam Card 7b which puts some of the chords in other shapes (called inversions) that are easy to reach without having to move the hand.
- 2 Discuss chord progressions as numbers related to the key you are in. This chord progression is typically called a “1 4 1 5” progression by musicians because A is the 1st chord in the key, D is the 4th, and E is the 5th. Ask students to use the musical alphabet and name these three chords in different keys. “What chords would make a ‘1 4 1 5’ progression in the key of C? How about in the key of G?”



Fig. A

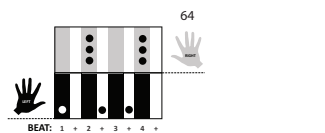
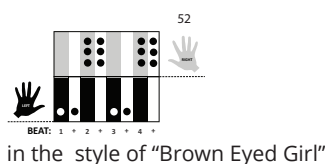
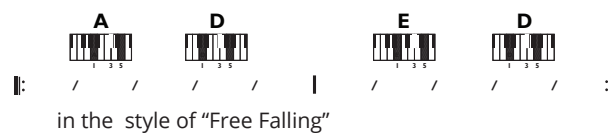
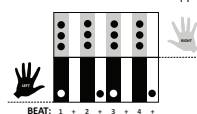


Fig. B

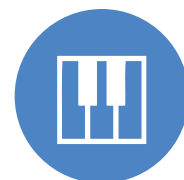


in the style of “Free Falling”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for performance. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.4 Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, parts (e.g., number of sides and vertices/“corners”) and other attributes (e.g., having sides of equal length). (Compare root position and inverted chord shapes)



LESSON PLAN: 1, 5, 4, 5 (I V IV V) Progression with A, D, & E

Objective:

Students will be able to use the A, D, and E chords to play a 1, 5, 4, 5 (I V IV V) chord progression enabling them to play and recognize this in dozens of songs.

Resources:

Major Chord Jam Card 1a, Scale Chords Jam Card 6a, Jam Card 7b, song charts and lyrics for “Twenty Two” by Taylor Swift, “Jack and Diane” by John Cougar Mellencamp, “Crimson and Clover” by The Shondells, and “My Heart Will Go On” by Celine Dion.

Procedures:

- 1 Use the Major Chord Jam Card to form the A, D, and E chords. Notice that each chord has a black key in the middle. Practice switching between these chords to prepare for using them in songs.
- 2 Play the A, D, A, E progression to all of the songs listed above. Students who are new to doing this may want to play only on the first beat of each chord and spend the other counts getting the hands into the next position, while more experienced students can maintain playing the comping pattern while switching chords. Since the chord progressions are the same, what makes them different is the melody and use of rhythm.

Extensions:

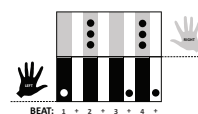
- 3 The chords are represented in “root position” which makes playing a 2 handed comping pattern a lot easier. This also helps train the ear to hear the movement of the chords and makes understanding chords a lot easier. After a student is familiar with using root position chords to play this progression, try using Jam Card 7b which puts some of the chords in other shapes (called inversions) that are easy to reach without having to move the hand.
- 4 Discuss chord progressions as numbers related to the key you are in. This chord progression is typically called a “1 5 4 5” progression by musicians because A is the 1st chord in the key, D is the 4th, and E is the 5th. Ask students to use the musical alphabet and name these three chords in different keys. “What chords would make a ‘1 5 4 5’ progression in the key of C? How about in the key of G?”



Fig. A



in the style of “Twenty Two”



in the style of “Jack and Diane”

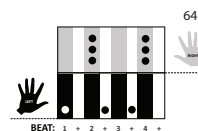
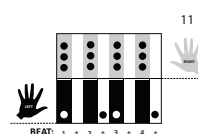


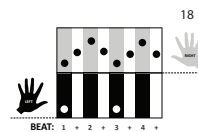
Fig. B



in the style of “Crimson and Clover”

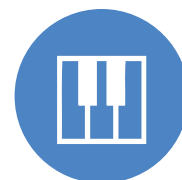


in the style of “My Heart Will Go On”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for performance. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.Math. Content.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.4 Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, parts (e.g., number of sides and vertices/“corners”) and other attributes (e.g., having sides of equal length). (Compare root position and inverted chord shapes)



LESSON PLAN: 1, 4, \flat 7, 4 (I IV \flat VII IV) Progression with A, D, & E

Objective:

Students will be able to use the E, A, and D chords to play a 1, 4, \flat 7, 4 (I IV \flat VII IV) chord progression enabling them to play and recognize this in dozens of songs.

Resources:

Major Chord Jam Card 1a, Scale Chords Jam Card 6b, song charts and lyrics for “Let’s Go Crazy” by Prince, “ROCK in the USA” by John Cougar Mellencamp, “What I Like About You” by The Romantics, and “The Tears of a Clown” by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.

Procedures:

- 1 Use the Major Chord Jam Card to form the E, A, and D chords. Notice that each chord has a black key in the middle. Practice switching between these chords to prepare for using them in songs.
- 2 Play the E, A, and D progression to all of the songs listed above. Students who are new to doing this may want to play only on the first beat of each chord and spend the other counts getting the hands into the next position, while more experienced students can maintain playing the comping pattern while switching chords. Since the chord progressions are the same, what makes them different is the melody and use of rhythm.

Extensions:

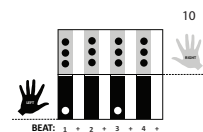
- 1 The chords are represented in “root position” which makes playing a 2 handed comping pattern a lot easier. This also helps train the ear to hear the movement of the chords and makes understanding chords a lot easier. After a student is familiar with using root position chords to play this progression, try using Jam Card 7b which puts some of the chords in other shapes (called inversions) that are easy to reach without having to move the hand. Because of the atypical \flat 7 chord, place the start arrow on A instead of E to reach all of the chords using inversions.
- 2 Discuss chord progressions as numbers related to the key you are in. This chord progression is typically called a “1 4 \flat 7 4” progression by musicians because E is the 1st chord in the key, A is the 4th, and D is the \flat 7th (D# is the normal 7th in the key of E making the D chord a “rule breaker”). Ask students to use the musical alphabet and name these chords in different keys. “What chords would make a ‘1 4 \flat 7 4’ progression in the key of G? How about in the key of D?”



Fig. A



in the style of “Let’s Go Crazy”



in the style of “Rock in the USA”

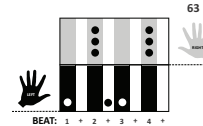
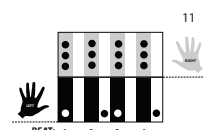


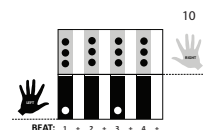
Fig. B



in the style of “What I like About You”

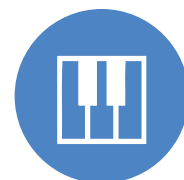


in the style of “The Tears of a Clown”



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.4 Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, parts (e.g., number of sides and vertices/“corners”) and other attributes (e.g., having sides of equal length). (Compare root position and inverted chord shapes)



LESSON PLAN: A Shortcut to Change Chords

Objective:

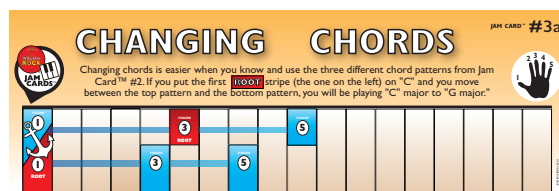
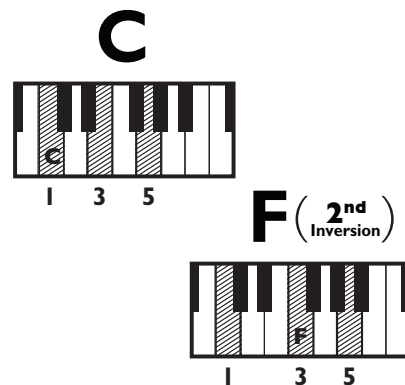
Students will be able to use a chord inversion as a “shortcut” in getting from one chord to another.

Resources:

Keyboard, **JAM CARD** 3a Changing Chords

Procedures:

- 1 Have students play the C chord. Ask them what notes are in it; by now they should be able to identify the notes on the keyboard (see lesson plan “Spelling Chords and Naming Notes”)
- 2 Next have students name the notes in the F chord. Ask them if there are any notes that both chords have in common. Guide them toward noticing that the note C occurs in both chords.
- 3 Demonstrate using the right hand to move from a C chord in root position to an F chord also in root position. Point out that this movement is easy for the brain, but hard for the body—the same chord shape on C makes a C chord and on F makes an F chord, but the arm has to move that chord shape up and down the keyboard. Next demonstrate how they can change from the C chord to the F chord without moving their thumb off of the note C and changing the E and G to the notes F and A. Changing chords this way is easy for the body and harder for the brain; the hand doesn’t have to move anywhere to change chords but it’s more difficult to understand why the 2nd chord is still called an F chord when it’s using a different shape without an F on the bottom.
- 4 Ask everyone in class to try this. They can use two hands at first if it’s easier, playing the C note with the left hand while the right hand changes the E and G to the notes F and A. Have them repeat a few times until the concept is easy. If you want to, tell them that the C chord is in “root position” because the root note C is on the bottom, while the F chord is in an “inversion”.
- 5 Have students get out the Jam Card called “Changing Chords” and line the “Anchor” up with the note C. This Jam Card will further reinforce the idea of which notes change and which note stays the same.



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.2 b. Rehearse, identify, and apply strategies to address interpretive, performance, and technical challenges of music.

Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.4 Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, parts (e.g., number of sides and vertices/“corners”) and other attributes (e.g., having sides of equal length). (Compare root position and inverted chord shapes)



LESSON PLAN: 1-4 Chord Shortcut Anywhere

Objective:

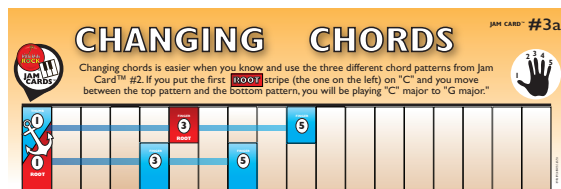
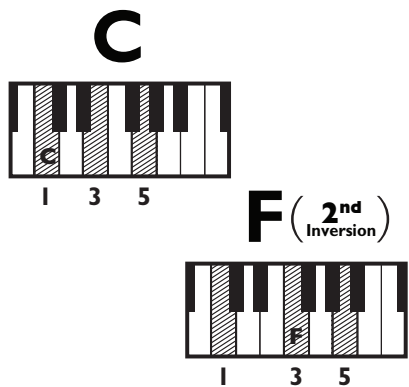
Students will be able to use play a chord progression using an inversion anywhere on the keyboard.

Resources:

Keyboard, **JAM CARD** 3a Changing Chords

Procedures:

- 1 Review lesson plan “A Shortcut to Change Chords,” in which the students changed from a C chord to an F chord using inversions.
- 2 Have students play the G chord. Ask them what notes are in it (G, B, D); by now they should be able to identify the notes on the keyboard (see lesson plan “Spelling Chords and Naming Notes”).
- 3 Next have students name the notes in the C chord (C, E, G). Ask them if there are any notes that both chords have in common. Guide them toward noticing that the note G occurs in both chords.
- 4 Demonstrate using the right hand to move from a G chord in root position to a C chord also in root position. Point out that this movement is easy for the brain, but hard for the body—the same chord shape on G makes a G chord and on C makes and C chord, but the arm has to move that chord shape up and down the keyboard. Next demonstrate how they can change from the G chord to the C chord without moving their thumb off of the note G and changing the B and D to the notes C and E. Changing chords this way is easy for the body and harder for the brain; the hand doesn’t have to move anywhere to change chords but it’s more difficult to understand why the 2nd chord is still called a C chord when it’s using a different shape without a C on the bottom.
- 5 Ask everyone in class to try this. They can use two hands at first if it’s easier, playing the G note with the left hand while the right hand changes the B and D to the notes C and E. Have them repeat a few times until the concept is easy. If you want to, tell them that the G chord is in “root position” because the root note G is on the bottom, while the C chord is in an “inversion”.
- 6 Have students get out Jam Card #3a called “Changing Chords” and line the anchor up with the note G. This Jam Card will further reinforce the idea of which notes change and which note stays the same. Try this with other chords, noting that some will include black keys (try A and D, for example).



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.2 b. Rehearse, identify, and apply strategies to address interpretive, performance, and technical challenges of music.

Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.4 Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, parts (e.g., number of sides and vertices/“corners”) and other attributes (e.g., having sides of equal length). (Compare root position and inverted chord shapes)



LESSON PLAN: Keyboard Solo on Black Keys

Objective:

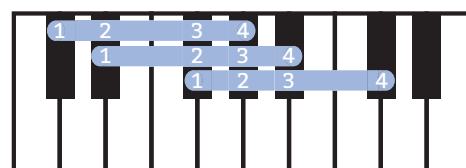
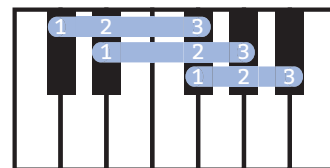
Students will be able to use the black keys on the keyboard to improvise melodies and a keyboard solo in different rhythmic styles.

Resources:

Only a keyboard!

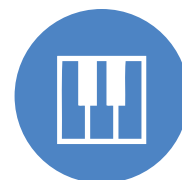
Procedures:

- 1 Make sure students are consciously aware of the visual pattern made out of the black keys. If this is their first keyboard lesson, initiate a conversation asking them if they see any patterns on the keyboard. Guide them through playing the notes in the group of two black keys and the group of 3 black keys using an awareness of low, middle and high. "Play the highest group of 3 black keys...now play the lowest", etc.
- 2 Demonstrate that the black keys can be played going up the keyboard or going down the keyboard playing one note at a time. Ask students to practice this concept.
- 3 Demonstrate that a pattern can be made out of any group of 2, 3, or 4 notes. Demonstrate playing 3 note patterns using the three black keys in a row, then three note patterns using three black keys that aren't next to each other. Demonstrate a 4 note pattern where the notes go down and back up. Demonstrate patterns that involve a repeated note, etc.
- 4 Use the metaphor of a picture of a house to explain where things are expected to be seen. Ask the students "What would we see in the lower portion of the picture? Yes! The ground, the driveway, rocks, etc. What would we see in the middle area of the picture? The house itself, the doors and windows, the trunk of a tree, etc. What would we see up high? The sun, birds, clouds, the roof of the house, etc." The point of this exercise is to point out that we expect to see certain things in certain places. Explain that the same is true in music; we expect to hear bass notes down low, notes of chords in the middle, and the notes of a solo or melody up high.
- 5 Play a groove behind the students to improvise over using the black keys. "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder is a really fun groove to use; the original recording is in Eb minor so the black keys sound great soloing on it. You can also play a blues progression in Eb to get the same effect. To have these notes sound like a solo in a major key use the "Axis of Awesome" progression in Gb. (See handout "Great Sounding Grooves For Black Key Solos")



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:CR1.1.2 a. Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr1.1.H.1a (HS Proficient) Generate melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for improvisations, compositions (forms such as theme and variation or 12-bar blues), and three-or-more-chord accompaniments in a variety of patterns (such as arpeggio, country and gallop strumming, finger picking patterns). Common Core Correlation: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.OA.C.5 Generate a number or shape pattern that follows a given rule. Identify apparent features of the pattern that were not explicit in the rule itself.



LESSON PLAN: 2 & 3 Note Solos on Keyboard

Objective:

Students will be able to improvise a keyboard solo using a step by step procedure that simplifies the process.

Resources:

JAM CARD 4a (Major Pentatonic)

Procedures:

- 1 Ask students to take Jam Card 4a and place the “start arrow” behind the note C. Have them play all of the notes that the Jam Card is pointing to.
- 2 Ask students how they can remember where those notes are located if they take the Jam Card away. They may need to compare the jam card to the keyboard several times before this becomes obvious. Lead them in a discussion about how the group of two black keys is in the center of the three white notes in a row (C, D, and E), and that the group of three black keys has the group of two white keys in it's center (G and A). (Figure A)
- 3 Using the group of 2 black keys as a marker, have them play the three white keys (C, D, and E) up and back down the keyboard in different octaves.
- 4 Demonstrate how you can use these three keys to take a solo using your own name. Make up a rhythm to saying your name as you improvise a solo. You can do this in different octaves with different rhythms if you wish.
- 5 Play a piano comping pattern over a classic progression and invite the students to do the same exercise using their own names as the basis of their three note solos.
- 6 Repeat this same process for the two white keys, G and A. Practice associating them with the group of three black keys, find them up and down the keyboard, and then make a solo out of them using a name. For fun you can use the name of their favorite athlete or movie star.
- 7 Use the group of three notes (C, D, and E) or the group of 2 notes (G and A) to improvise solos made by call and response, where you play a short melody and they make something up as an answer. Ask for volunteers from class to lead the call and response.
- 8 After students feel comfortable with the groups of notes that make this scale lead them into using all of the notes in their solos.

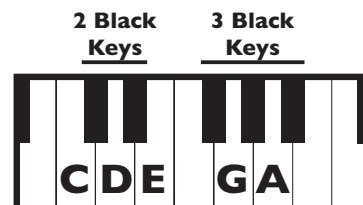
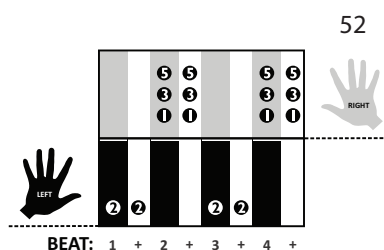
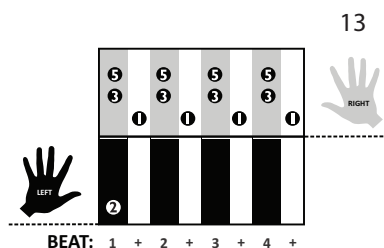
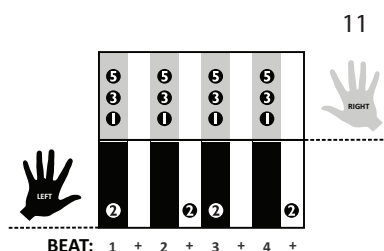
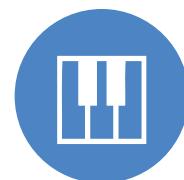


Fig. A



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:CR1.1.2 a. Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr1.1.H.1a (HS Proficient) Generate melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for improvisations, compositions (forms such as theme and variation or 12-bar blues), and three-or-more-chord accompaniments in a variety of patterns (such as arpeggio, country and gallop strumming, finger picking patterns). Common Core Correlations: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.OA.C.5 Generate a number or shape pattern that follows a given rule. Identify apparent features of the pattern that were not explicit in the rule itself. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.2 Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes). CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4 Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.



LESSON PLAN: The Blues Scale

Objective:

Students will be able to take a solo over a blues, a minor key, or a major key using a pitch collection (scale) that allows for fast fingerings and great mobility across the keyboard.

Resources:

JAM CARD 5b (Blues Scale)

Procedures:

- 1 Demonstrate how easy it is to play a C Major blues scale. Although these are the same notes used in the typical A blues scale, we recommend starting on the note C because of how easy the fingering is to explain. When this scale begins on a C it is sometimes called the “C Major Blues Scale” or the “Country Music Scale”. Unfortunately there isn’t a standard name for it when it’s used in a major key as often as this happens. Regardless, play the thumb(1) on C, index (2) on D, middle (3) on Eb, then cross the thumb under the middle finger to put it on E, followed by index (2) on G, and finally middle (3) on A. This fingering makes playing this scale REALLY FAST once you get used to it. This “C Major Blues Scale” can be played so much faster than a C pentatonic scale because of the way that having the extra note (Eb) fits under the hand. Guitarists say the exact same thing about using the blues scale on guitar—the extra note gives you more to grab on to and go faster when you want (Figure A).
- 2 Coach students on playing this scale one “finger group” at a time. In other words, have everyone play the C, D and Eb (1, 2, and 3 fingers) in different octaves of the keyboard. This way they get used to finding C in any octave and instantly know how the other fingers and notes relate to that “finger group”. Practice with this group of notes in an ascending order up the keyboard (C, D, and Eb) and then a descending order down the keyboard (Eb, D, and C using the fingering order 3, 2, and 1). Pairing students into groups to help each other is always a good idea with new skills like this (Figure B).
- 3 After the students have the first “finger group”, begin to work on the second without making any attempt to link them together yet. They’re just going to play E, G, and A with fingers 1, 2, and 3. Repeat the same procedure used in teaching the first finger group, having them play ascending and descending all over the keyboard (Figure C).
- 4 Teach the thumb crossing. This means that when they’re playing this scale in an ascending order, after the 3 finger plays the Eb the thumb will reach under the hand to play the next note E. Now the fingers are in position to play the next finger group! (see lesson plan “Teaching Thumb Crossings in scales”).
- 5 Now they’re ready to play the descending version of the scale. Play 3, 2, and 1 on A, G, and E. Next have the 3 finger cross over the thumb to play the Eb. Now the fingers are lined up to the first finger group.

Fig. A

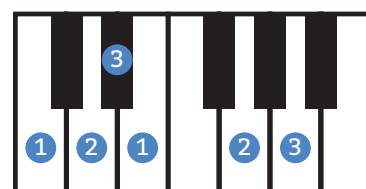


Fig. B

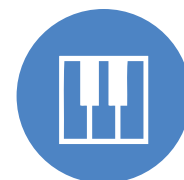


Fig. C



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:CR1.1.2 a. Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose. Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.2 b. Rehearse, identify, and apply strategies to address interpretive, performance, and technical challenges of music. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.3 Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks. Visualize relationships between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSG.GMD.B.4 Identify the shapes of two-dimensional cross-sections of three-dimensional objects, and identify three-dimensional objects generated by rotations of two-dimensional objects. (Images of piano keyboard and chord shapes)



LESSON PLAN: Thumb Crossings

Objective:

Students will be able to play scales on the keyboard easily by establishing a technique allowing this otherwise difficult skill to feel secure.

Resources:

JAM CARD 5b (Blues Scale)

Procedures:

- 1 The first step begins with a level wrist and relaxed fingers gently touching the notes they are about to play. When you play 2 the wrist comes up slightly and the thumb is directly under the 2 finger, and when you play 3 the wrist comes up slightly more while the thumb is directly under the 3 finger (Figure A). Help students get good at this basic 1st step in coordination.
- 2 The second step is just playing the thumb on the next note E. The moment this happens the wrist simultaneously comes back to being level as the fingers spread out to cover the notes they will play next, in this case 2 on G and 3 on A (Figure B) Practice this maneuver until it feels easy.
- 3 The third step is a repeat of the first step except that as you play the fingers that come after the thumb, the elbow moves away from the body to prepare for the fourth step. As you play 2 the wrist comes up slightly with the thumb underneath it and the elbow moves slightly away from the body (Figure C). The same things happens as you play 3 with the wrist coming up further with the thumb underneath it again.
- 4 The fourth and final step was prepared for in the third step as the elbow moved out to the right. The arm moved out to the right allowing the thumb to be lined up to playing C in a new octave. Now the hand is ready to repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 (Figure D). Playing a scale comfortably involves a lot of working parts; we're preparing the thumb to cross under by putting it "behind" the other fingers when they play, we're raising the wrist to make it easier for the thumb to pass under, and we're moving the elbow out as we prepare for the thumb to cross a bigger distance.
- 5 In descending right hand scales, the middle finger will have an easy feeling of draping over the thumb as it crosses to its note. This motion is so much simpler than the ascending thumb crossing that it doesn't demand much more attention than that. Remember that the most important ingredient in all of this is "modeling" for the students. Besides the resources available on this subject on the Little Kids Rock website, the global authority on all things piano technique related is the work of Dorothy Taubman. Her understanding of the physical ingredients in playing the piano are explored all over the world by master teachers and concert artists who meet annually at Princeton University to further develop their understanding (this 2 week annual seminar is called "The Golandsky Institute"). Lots of material can be viewed on YouTube for good visual examples and descriptions.



Fig. A



Fig. B



Fig. C



Fig. D

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.2 b. Rehearse, identify, and apply strategies to address interpretive, performance, and technical challenges of music. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.3 Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks.



LESSON PLAN: Call and Response (ECHO)

Objective:

Students will be able to use the notes in a hand position to do call and response, encouraging a deeper connection to music through the ears by using a combination of melodic and rhythmic ear training.

Resources:

Only a keyboard!

Procedures:

- 1 Have students place their right hand in a C position (this lesson plan can be applied to any 5 finger position you're currently teaching students to use in the future). Have them warm up by playing each note in the position with each finger going up a couple of times and then going down (Figures A & B)
- 2 Have students play just fingers 1 and 5 (thumb and pinky) on C and G back and forth. These will be the only notes used at first in this exercise, the same notes used in the lesson plan "Piano Power Chords".
- 3 Tell students you're going to play a pattern for them using only these two notes, C and G and that you want them to try and only use the fingers that are on these notes to play them. After you play the pattern you want them to play it back to you. Demonstrate a couple of easy examples; play C C C G (Figure C) and then tell the students what you played and that they would play that back to them. Give three or four examples using only these two notes in very simple quarter and half note rhythms (Figures D, E, & F)
- 4 Ask students to try playing back to you exactly what you play for them, but have them do it as a group so that no-one gets singled out for being wrong. This exercise encourages everyone to reach out with their ears. You'll quickly be amazed at how well students are able to make these distinctions. Keep a slow steady beat as you play each example so they keep time with you in their responses. At first use lots of repeated notes and slow rhythms.
- 5 When it becomes obvious to you that they're able to repeat any pattern you play for them, add another note in the hand position that will be easy to hear and manage. I recommend going next to the 2 finger (index), so for the next several "call and response" patterns they will hear patterns made out of C, D, and G. Keep expanding the exercise to include other fingers as they get good at it. Rhythms can also become faster or more complex as the exercise progresses (Figures G, H, & I)
- 6 When you feel they are ready, do the same thing for a hand position in the left hand using bass notes. This helps them pay attention to notes in different frequency ranges, allowing them to more clearly hear what a bass player is doing versus the vocal or guitar part in music they listen to.

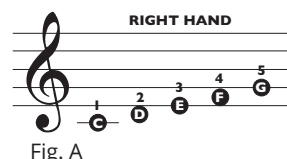


Fig. A

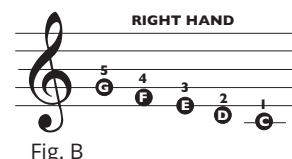


Fig. B

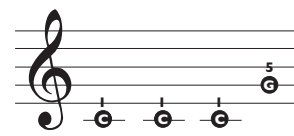


Fig. A

Fig. C



Fig. D



Fig. E



Fig. F

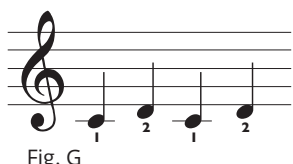


Fig. G



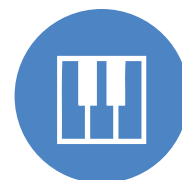
Fig. H



Fig. I

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.5 a. Apply teacher-provided and established criteria and feedback to evaluate the accuracy and expressiveness of ensemble and personal performances. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1.B Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges. (simple musical conversation)



LESSON PLAN: Hearing Beats With Chords

Objective:

Students will be able to understand rhythm and beat position by using an ear training activity that helps them focus on this musical fundamental.

Resources:

JAM CARD 5a (Major Scale)

Procedures:

- 1 Have students manufacture a back beat for you (Figure A), either using the kick and snare sounds on their keyboards or using their right foot and left hand (see lesson plan "Classroom as Drumset"), or even on a drumset!
- 2 While the beat continues, play a C chord on one of the beats. Do it at least two times in a row, asking students afterward what beat you played the chord on.
- 3 Continue the activity playing your chord on different beats until you're confident they can recognize when the chord is played on any one of the four beats in a measure. After you're confident they have it, ask other students to play a chord on one of the beats for the rest of the class to guess. Have them do it two times in a row before allowing anyone to answer to make sure that they're choosing a beat on purpose.
- 4 After it is obvious that they can hear when a chord is played on any beat, talk about playing a chord on the "up beat" with them. Demonstrate several times what it would be like to play a chord on the "and" of 3 (Figure D), or the "and" of 1 (Figure E), etc.
- 5 Get the back beat going again, and this time your chord can happen on a beat or on the "and" in between beats. As before, invite other students to participate by playing their chords on beats or up beats if they choose while the rest of the class guesses.

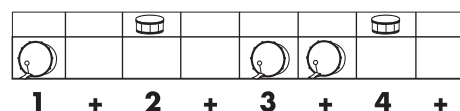


Fig. A

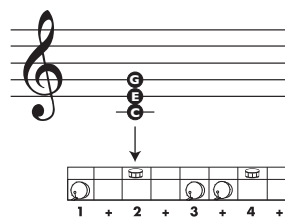


Fig. B

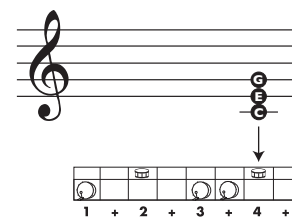


Fig. C

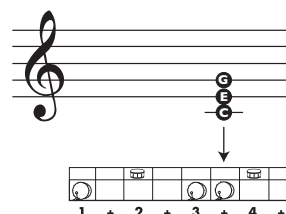


Fig. D

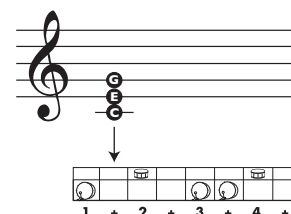
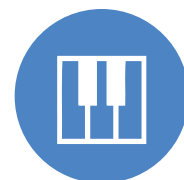


Fig. E

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.Math.Content.3.NF.A.1 Understand a fraction $1/b$ as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into b equal parts; understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a parts of size $1/b$. (division of the beat into equal parts; division of a measure into four beats)



LESSON PLAN: Playing By Ear

Objective:

Students will be able to play by hear after being exposed to a step by step approach to focused listening using chords.

Resources:

Only a keyboard!

Procedures:

- 1 Play the 7 chords in the key of C for the students. Name them as you play them “1 chord (C), 2 chord (Dmi), 3 chord (Emi), 4 chord (F), 5 chord (G), and 6 chord (Ami)”. Explain that the 1, 4, and 5 chords have a major or happy sound and that the 2, 3, and 6 chords have a sad or serious sound because they’re minor.
- 2 Next you are going to play a chord for them and have them tell you which one you played. Ask the class to answer together so that no one is singled out for being wrong; you’ll quickly see how easy this is for them to do. Tell them that there are only two choices, the “1 chord” (C) and the “2 chord” (Dmi). Play either of these chords in root position in the middle of your keyboard and ask “which chord was that?” They will excitedly answer “1!” or “2!” Encourage them for their correct answers. Pretend to trick them by doing the same chord over and over. This is providing them with a valuable ear training opportunity.
- 3 After you feel certain that they all understand how to hear the difference between the 1 chord and the 2 chord, add the 3 chord to the set of choices after telling the students that the game is getting more challenging. Play any one of these chords. After each answer right or wrong, play all the chords in order from the 1 chord to affirm the correct answer. For example, if you play the 3 chord, after everyone shouts the answer play the 1 chord, 2 chord, and finally the 3 chord to affirm that was the choice. Playing these other chords that lead up to what the answer was helps students build a “listening structure” in their imaginations that we call the “inner ear”. It gives them a way to compare sounds in their minds allowing them to play by ear successfully.
- 4 Continue building the exercise, eventually adding the 4, 5, and 6 chords. This is an excellent exercise to do with students as a warm up, at the end of class, or as a break between other activities. This will help them be able to identify the chord progressions used in their favorite songs. It also increases their authentic love of music as they find ways to make what they’re hearing more concrete and meaningful to them.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Re7.2.C.1a (HS Proficient) Analyze aurally the elements of music (including form) of musical works, relating them to style, mood, and context, and describe how the analysis provides models for personal growth as composer, performer, and/or listener. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.

