

# 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, Am, 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).

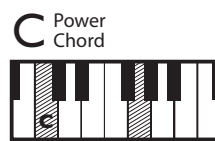


Fig. A

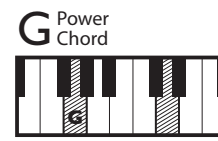


Fig. B

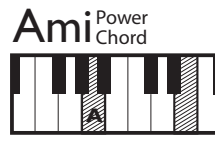


Fig. C

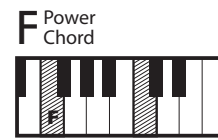


Fig. D

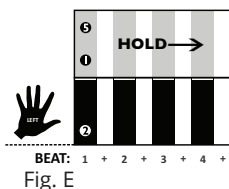


Fig. E

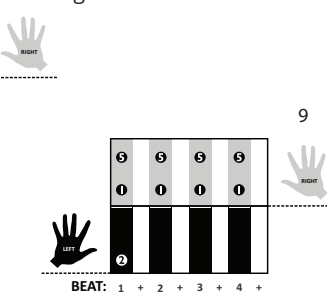


Fig. F

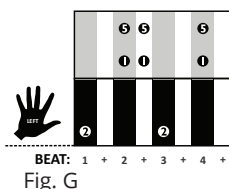


Fig. G

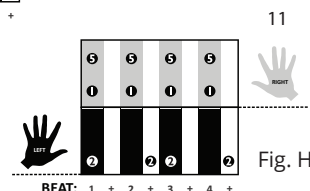


Fig. H

## 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.

