



Level 1

First Steps

5 piano pieces for beginners

The simplest melodies using 3-5 notes. Right hand only focus.

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1. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C Major	4/4	Andante (80 BPM)	Beginner - Level 1	24

About This Piece

This beloved melody was first published as a French folk song "Ah! Vous dirai-je, Maman" around 1761. Mozart wrote twelve variations on it in 1785 (K. 265), which helped make it world-famous. The English lyrics by Jane Taylor were added in 1806. Today it is often the very first song taught to piano beginners because of its simple, stepwise melody.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4

Thumb on Middle C. On the repeated G, switch from finger 5 to 4 - the pinky is then free to play A without stretching (fingering 1-1-5-4, then 5-5-4).

Left Hand: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3 (stepwise half notes)

Five-finger C position: pinky on C3 up to thumb on G3. The bass walks by step - one finger per note, no stretches.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C4 (Middle C)	One ledger line below treble staff	White key left of two black keys, center	Thumb (1)
D4	Just below bottom line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Index (2)
E4	On the bottom line of treble staff	Right of two black keys	Middle (3)
F4	First space of treble staff	Left of three black keys	Ring (4)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between first two of three black keys	Pinky (5), then Ring (4) on the repeat
A4	Second space of treble staff	Between last two of three black keys	Pinky (5)

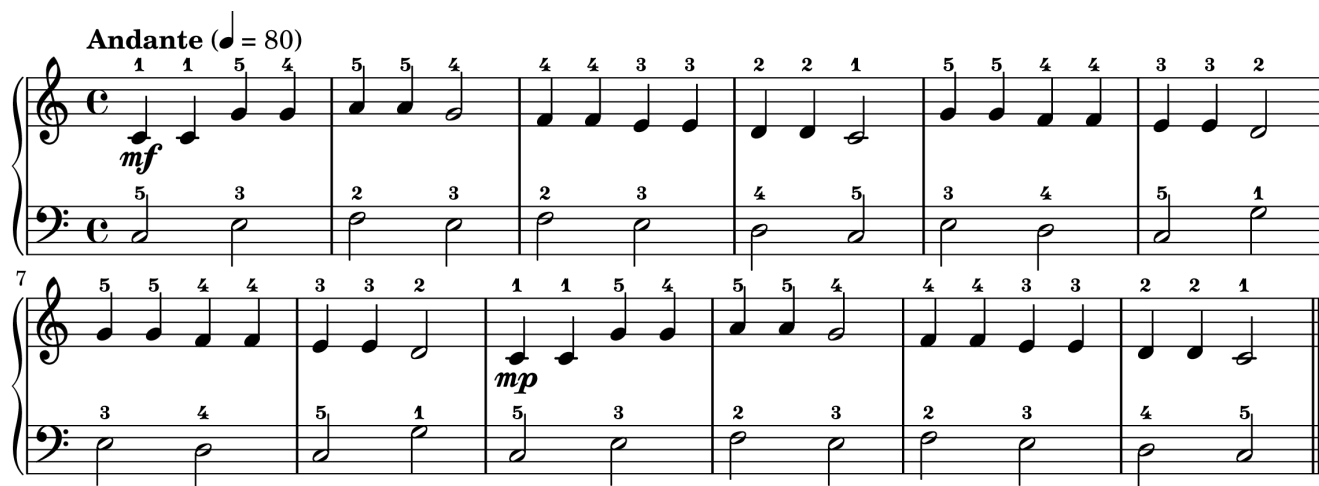
Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C3	Two ledger lines below bass staff	One octave below middle C	Pinky (5)
D3	Third line of bass staff	Between the two black keys, below middle C	Ring (4)
E3	Third space of bass staff	Right of two black keys, below middle C	Middle (3)
F3	Fourth space of bass staff	Left of three black keys, below middle C	Index (2)
G3	Top line of bass staff	Between first two of three black keys	Thumb (1)

Section A - The Main Theme (Measures 1-12)

The melody opens with the famous ascending C-C-G-G-A-A-G pattern, then descends F-F-E-E-D-D-C. This is followed by the contrasting B section with G-G-F-F-E-E-D repeated twice. The left hand plays simple half-note bass notes.

Andante (♩ = 80)



The musical score for Section A - The Main Theme of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 6, and the second system contains measures 7 through 12. The tempo is marked Andante with a quarter note equal to 80 beats per minute. The melody in the right hand begins with an ascending pattern (C-C-G-G-A-A-G) and then descends (F-F-E-E-D-D-C). The left hand provides a simple half-note bass line. Dynamics include mezzo-forte (mf) and mezzo-piano (mp). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above the notes.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - Section A - The Main Theme

How to Practice This Section

Learn the first 4 measures (ascending then descending) until you can play them without looking at the score. The symmetry makes it easy to memorize.

Section B - Variation and Ending (Measures 13-24)

The theme returns softer (*mp*), then builds to forte before the gentle ending. The structure mirrors Section A but with dynamic shading - notice how the repeat gets softer and more intimate at the close.

Andante (♩ = 80)



Measures 13-24 of the piece, showing the variation and ending. The score is in C major, 4/4 time, and Andante tempo (♩ = 80). The dynamics range from *mf* to *p*. The piece concludes with a fermata on the final note.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - Section B - Variation and Ending

How to Practice This Section

Focus on the dynamic changes: start *mp*, build to *f* in measure 17, then gradually soften to *p* at the final fermata.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.

Andante (♩ = 80)



Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - Traditional (arr. Mozart, 1785)

Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Learn the C-D-E-F-G-A ascending pattern at 60 BPM
2. Practice measures 1-4 (C-C-G-G-A-A-G), then 5-8 (F-F-E-E-D-D-C)
3. Notice the symmetry: measures 1-2 go up, measures 5-6 come back down
4. Chain all measures together, keeping every note perfectly even

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Five notes under five fingers: C-D-E-F-G, pinky (5) to thumb (1)
2. Practice the walking pattern C-E, F-E, F-E, D-C (fingers 5-3, 2-3, 2-3, 4-5)
3. In the middle phrases the bass answers with E-D, C-G (fingers 3-4, 5-1)

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at 50 BPM - left hand plays on beat 1, right hand plays the melody
2. Work measure by measure: play measure 1 five times before moving on
3. Once all measures are solid, increase tempo by 10 BPM at a time

4. Target tempo: 80 BPM with smooth, connected notes

2. Mary Had a Little Lamb

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C Major	4/4	Moderato (100 BPM)	Beginner - Level 1	16

About This Piece

Based on a poem by Sarah Josepha Hale published in 1830, this nursery rhyme tells the true story of a girl named Mary Sawyer who brought her pet lamb to school in Sterling, Massachusetts. Thomas Edison used it as the first audio recording ever made on his phonograph in 1877. The melody uses only three notes (E, D, C), making it ideal for absolute beginners.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: C4, D4, E4, G4

Thumb on C4, middle finger on E4. Only 3 main notes are used.

Left Hand: C3, G3

Pinky on C3, thumb on G3. Hold each note for the full measure.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C4 (Middle C)	One ledger line below treble staff	White key left of two black keys, center	Thumb (1)
D4	Just below bottom line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Index (2)
E4	On the bottom line of treble staff	Right of two black keys	Middle (3)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between first two of three black keys	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C3	Two ledger lines below bass staff	One octave below middle C	Pinky (5)

G3

Top line of bass staff

Between first two of three black keys

Thumb (1)

Section A - The Main Theme (Measures 1-8)

The three-note descent E-D-C forms the backbone of this melody. The phrase maps to E-D-C-D-E-E-E, followed by D-D-D and E-G-G. The simplicity is its strength.

Moderato (♩ = 100)



Mary Had a Little Lamb - Section A - The Main Theme

How to Practice This Section

Master the E-D-C descent (fingers 3-2-1) until it's automatic. This three-note pattern is the foundation of the entire piece.

Section B - The Return (Measures 9-16)

The second half mirrors the first but resolves differently, ending on C instead of E. This gives the piece a satisfying sense of completion.

Moderato (♩ = 100)



Mary Had a Little Lamb - Section B - The Return

How to Practice This Section

Compare measures 1-4 with 9-12 - they start the same but end differently. Practice the ending (measures 13-16) separately.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.

Moderato (♩ = 100)



Mary Had a Little Lamb - Traditional (Sarah Hale, 1830)

Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Learn the 3-note descent: E-D-C (fingers 3-2-1)
2. Practice the main pattern: E-D-C, E-E-E, D-D-D, E-G-G
3. Measures 5-8 mirror measures 1-4 but end on C instead of E
4. Play the complete melody at 80 BPM before speeding up

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Only 2 bass notes: C3 (pinky) and G3 (thumb)
2. Hold each note as a whole note - one note per measure
3. Practice alternating C and G every 2 measures

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at 60 BPM, hands separately for measures 1-4
2. Left hand holds steady while right hand plays the melody above
3. Once measures 1-4 are solid, add 5-8, then chain everything
4. Target tempo: 100 BPM with a singing, legato tone

3. Ode to Joy

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C Major	4/4	Allegro moderato (108 BPM)	Beginner - Level 1	16

About This Piece

The "Ode to Joy" theme comes from the final movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, completed in 1824. It sets Friedrich Schiller's poem "An die Freude" to music. Remarkably, Beethoven was almost completely deaf when he composed it. The melody has become a universal symbol of unity and was adopted as the European anthem in 1985.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4

Standard C position: thumb on C, pinky on G. The melody stays within this five-finger range.

Left Hand: C3, F3, G3

Pinky on C3, index on F3, thumb on G3. Simple half-note bass notes.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C4 (Middle C)	One ledger line below treble staff	White key left of two black keys, center	Thumb (1)
D4	Just below bottom line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Index (2)
E4	On the bottom line of treble staff	Right of two black keys	Middle (3)
F4	First space of treble staff	Left of three black keys	Ring (4)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between first two of three black keys	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C3	Two ledger lines below bass staff	One octave below middle C	Pinky (5)
F3	Fourth space of bass staff	Left of three black keys, below middle C	Index (2)
G3	Top line of bass staff	Between first two of three black keys	Thumb (1)

Section A - The Joyful Theme (Measures 1-8)

The melody begins with the stepwise ascent E-E-F-G-G-F-E-D, then descends C-C-D-E before the characteristic long E-D-D. Every note moves by step - there are no jumps. The left hand supports with gentle half-note chord roots.

Allegro moderato (♩ = 108)



mf

Ode to Joy - Section A - The Joyful Theme

How to Practice This Section

Focus on smooth connections between every note. The melody moves entirely in steps (no jumps), so aim for perfect legato.

Section B - The Resolution (Measures 9-16)

The second phrase starts identically to the first but ends differently, resolving to C instead of D. This satisfying conclusion gives the melody its triumphant character.

Allegro moderato (♩ = 108)



Ode to Joy - Section B - The Resolution

How to Practice This Section

Pay attention to measure 15-16 - the ending resolves down to C with E-D-C. Practice this ending separately until it feels natural.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.

Allegro moderato (♩ = 108)



Ode to Joy - Ludwig van Beethoven (1824)

Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Learn measures 1-2: E-E-F-G-G-F-E-D (stepwise motion only)
2. Learn measures 3-4: C-C-D-E-E-D-D (notice: line 1 ends on D, not C)
3. Measures 5-8 start the same but end differently - on C this time
4. The melody moves entirely in steps (no jumps) - focus on smooth connections

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Practice the C, F and G half-note bass notes in a loop
2. Each measure has 2 half notes: follow the chord changes C, G, F, C
3. Keep a gentle, steady bass underneath the melody

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at 60 BPM with measures 1-4 only
2. The left hand changes every 2 beats - line up carefully with the melody
3. Once measures 1-8 are solid, add 9-16 (same structure, different ending)
4. Target tempo: 108 BPM with a singing, connected tone throughout

4. Jingle Bells

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C Major	4/4	Allegro (120 BPM)	Beginner - Level 1	16

About This Piece

Originally titled "One Horse Open Sleigh," this song was written by James Lord Pierpont in 1857 for a Thanksgiving celebration at his church in Savannah, Georgia. In 1965, it became the first song broadcast from space when Gemini 6 astronauts played it on a harmonica. The chorus is built on just three notes.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4

Standard C position. The chorus mostly stays on E, with jumps to C and G.

Left Hand: C3, F3, G3

C, F, and G bass notes following the chord changes.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C4 (Middle C)	One ledger line below treble staff	White key left of two black keys, center	Thumb (1)
D4	Just below bottom line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Index (2)
E4	On the bottom line of treble staff	Right of two black keys	Middle (3)
F4	First space of treble staff	Left of three black keys	Ring (4)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between first two of three black keys	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C3	Two ledger lines below bass staff	One octave below middle C	Pinky (5)

F3	Fourth space of bass staff	Left of three black keys, below middle C	Index (2)
G3	Top line of bass staff	Between first two of three black keys	Thumb (1)

Section A - The Chorus (Measures 1-8)

The iconic chorus opens with the bouncy E-E-E, E-E-E, E-G-C-D-E pattern. The repetition of E creates the "jingle" effect, while the jump down to C and back up gives it energy.

Allegro (♩ = 120)



Jingle Bells - Section A - The Chorus

How to Practice This Section

Master the repeated E notes with even rhythm first, then add the C-G jumps. Try adding staccato (short, bouncy notes) for the jingle feel.

Section B - The Verse (Measures 9-16)

The verse moves higher with F-F-F-F-E-E, introducing more variety and building towards the final resolution. The chord changes to F and G add harmonic interest.

Allegro (♩ = 120)



Jingle Bells - Section B - The Verse

How to Practice This Section

The F-G bass change in measures 13-16 is the trickiest coordination. Isolate these 4 measures and practice them separately.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.

Allegro (♩ = 120)



Measures 1-8 of the Jingle Bells score. The right hand starts with a forte (f) dynamic and features a melody with triplets and single notes. The left hand plays a bass line with chords, starting with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The tempo is marked Allegro at 120 beats per minute.

Jingle Bells - James Lord Pierpont (1857)

Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Start with the chorus: E-E-E, E-E-E, E-G-C-D-E (measures 1-4)
2. Practice the jump from E down to C and back up to G
3. Learn measures 5-8: F-F-F-F-E-E, then E-D-D-E-D-G
4. Try adding staccato (short, bouncy notes) for the jingle feel

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Learn the 3 bass notes: C (pinky), F (index), G (thumb)
2. The chord changes every 2 measures: C, C, F, G
3. Practice the changes in a loop until automatic

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at 80 BPM with just the chorus (measures 1-4)
2. Left hand plays on beat 1, hold while right hand plays the melody
3. The hardest part is the F-G chord change in measures 5-8 - isolate this
4. Target tempo: 120 BPM with energy and bounce

5. Hot Cross Buns

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C Major	4/4	Andante (80 BPM)	Beginner - Level 1	8

About This Piece

This English nursery rhyme dates back to at least 1798 and refers to the spiced sweet buns traditionally eaten on Good Friday. Street vendors would sing this cry to advertise their buns. With only 3 notes (E, D, C) and a descending pattern, it is one of the simplest melodies in existence.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: C4, D4, E4

Thumb on C, index on D, middle finger on E. Just 3 notes!

Left Hand: C3, F3, G3

Pinky on C3, index on F3, thumb on G3. One single bass note at a time.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C4 (Middle C)	One ledger line below treble staff	White key left of two black keys, center	Thumb (1)
D4	Just below bottom line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Index (2)
E4	On the bottom line of treble staff	Right of two black keys	Middle (3)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C3	Two ledger lines below bass staff	One octave below middle C	Pinky (5)

Section A - The Call (Measures 1-4)

The descending E-D-C pattern is repeated twice with rests between, creating the "Hot cross buns!" call. Each descent is followed by a pause, giving the student time to reset.

Andante (♩ = 80)



Hot Cross Buns - Section A - The Call

How to Practice This Section

The three-note descent E-D-C (fingers 3-2-1) is the entire foundation. Play it 20 times until it's completely automatic.

Section B - The Running Notes (Measures 5-8)

The second half introduces faster quarter notes: C-C-D-D-E-D-C, adding rhythmic interest. The piece ends with the original E-D-C descent.

Andante (♩ = 80)



Hot Cross Buns - Section B - The Running Notes

How to Practice This Section

The running notes in measures 5-6 are faster than Section A. Count evenly: 1-2-3-4 with one note per beat.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.

Andante (♩ = 80)



Hot Cross Buns - Traditional English (ca. 1798)

Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Only 3 notes: E-D-C (fingers 3-2-1) - learn this descending pattern
2. The structure is: E-D-C (pause), E-D-C (pause), C-C-D-D-E-D-C
3. Practice the fast notes in measures 5-6 separately until even
4. Once comfortable, try starting on different notes (G-F-E, A-G-F)

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Almost one note: C3 held as a whole note, plus a single F-G walk in phrase 3
2. Focus on keeping a steady, gentle bass tone throughout
3. This is one of the simplest left hand parts in the entire book

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at 60 BPM - left hand holds C while right hand plays the pattern
2. The coordination is easy here: focus on keeping the rhythm steady
3. Use a metronome from the very first attempt
4. Target tempo: 80 BPM - keep it simple and clean

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