



Piano Basics – Essential Things Every Beginner Needs To Know About The Piano Keyboard

As a beginner once myself many years ago, and from experience of teaching people, I have put together a sheet, which is going to give you a tour of the Piano Keyboard, and explain to you everything you need to know before you start learning to play songs. This will give you an understanding about the Notes, what they mean, how to work out where Middle C is, as this is used frequently as a reference note, and some other important topics I feel should be covered:

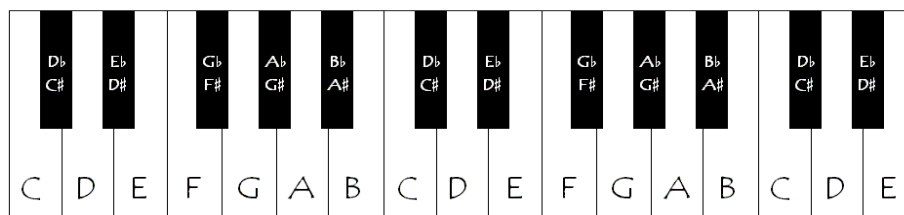
The First thing I am going to explain to you is about the repetitive note pattern that occurs on a Piano or Keyboard...

You have 7 WHITE notes which repeat all the way up the piano, so when you first look at your Keyboard you might initially think does every note on here represent a different note? Well it doesn't it just Repeats, so once you get an understanding of this, it will all become a lot easier for you to understand. The Notes on the Piano are A B C D E F G, so the first 7 notes of the Alphabet. Because of various different sized Keyboards, and how the patterns work, a good way to remember this pattern is to start it on C, so C D E F G A B C. The smaller Keyboards will start on a C as opposed to an A, and C is a common used note to refer too, so try and get it memorised this way if you can.

You then have 5 BLACK notes on the piano, which again repeat. These however may be called either a SHARP or a FLAT, depending on which direction you are travelling up the Piano and what KEY SIGNATURE your music is in. If it read as SHARPS, they will be C# D# F# G# A#, and if read as FLATS they will be Db Eb Gb Ab Bb.

If your music asks you to find a SHARP, then always remember that SHARPS are to the RIGHT of a white Note. If your music asks you to find a FLAT, then always remember that FLATS are to the LEFT of a white Note.

See Below a small keyboard, which will help you understand what I have talked about above.

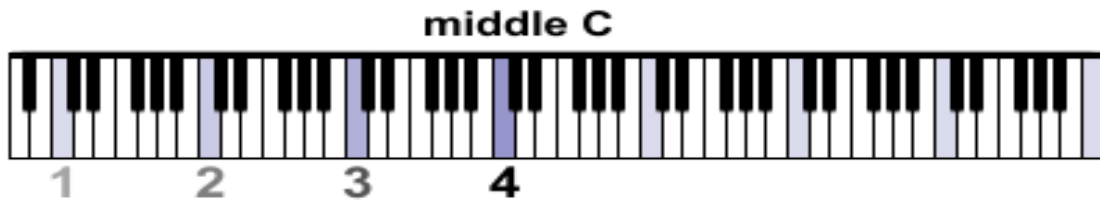


You can see from the keyboard above, how the notes repeat, and this will happen on whatever size Piano or Keyboard you may have, as you get various sizes. A way to always find a C, is to remember that it is the note below the first BLACK NOTE out of the set of TWO, and just to the left. By remembering it this way, you can then always have the NOTE C as your referral note.

You may have heard people talk about the famous MIDDLE C note, this note is commonly used as a referral note for pianists especially beginners. This note is more or less in the CENTRE of the Piano, and therefore is an easy note for pianists to come back to, as it splits the Piano down the middle.

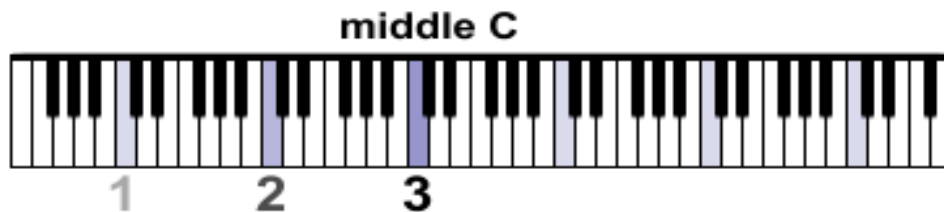
Below I am going to give you examples of the main size Pianos and Keyboards you may have, and give you some useful tips on how to work out where MIDDLE C is on them: -

Firstly I will start with a full size PIANO which has 88 keys: -



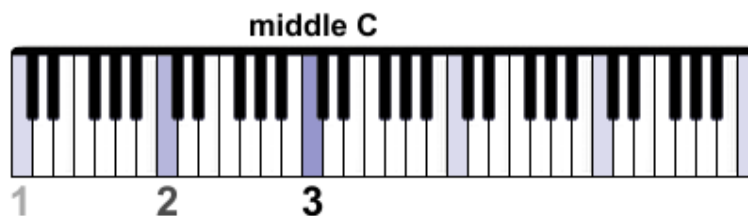
As you can see from this Piano, MIDDLE C is the FOURTH C from the LEFT. If you prefer to count the KEYS, using white notes only MIDDLE C is the 24th KEY from the first note on the Piano including this NOTE.

Below is an example of a KEYBOARD with 76 KEYS: -



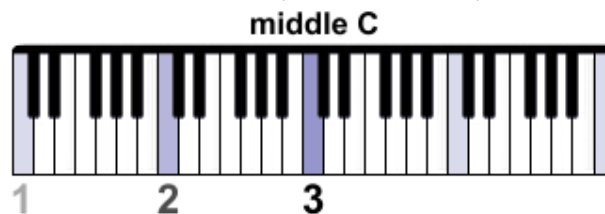
On this Keyboard, MIDDLE C is the THIRD C from the LEFT. If you prefer to count the KEYS, using the WHITE NOTES only, MIDDLE C is the 20th note from the first note on the Keyboard including this NOTE.

Below is an example of a KEYBOARD with 61 KEYS: -



On this keyboard, MIDDLE C is the THIRD C from the LEFT. If you prefer to count the KEYS, using the WHITE NOTES only, MIDDLE C is the 15th note from the first note on the keyboard including this NOTE.

The last example KEYBOARD is a small one, and it may be used more by a child, it has 49 KEYS: -



On this keyboard, MIDDLE C is the THIRD C from the LEFT. If you prefer to count the KEYS, using the WHITE NOTES only, MIDDLE C is the 15th note from the first note on the Keyboard including this NOTE.

OCTAVES:

This word is another common word you may hear when you start learning the PIANO. From my information above you have read that the NOTES repeat. Sometimes people may say to you can you take this melody up ONE OCTAVE, or this song is starting on C one OCTAVE above or below MIDDLE C. For example what they are asking is for you to TAKE it to the next C above middle C, so the pattern is C D E F G A B C, so you would start it on the C which is ONE C higher than middle C. It's another way of learning where all the notes are. You could give yourself a test to find all the C's as an example and then work through each note on the piano, going up and down in OCTAVES, so another way to help you progress.

FINGERING:

Using the correct fingering is really important when playing piano, if you end up just using a couple of fingers, you will find your music doesn't sound very fluent, and can end up be a bit messy sounding. You will also find that you run out of fingers, and you will become stuck.

As a general RULE ONE will be your THUMB, then TWO is your INDEX finger, THREE is your THIRD finger, FOUR is your FOURTH finger, and FIVE is your PINKY. On music you will often see numbers above your notes, stating which finger you should use. It is advisable to follow what they are saying on this.

HOW TO POSITION YOUR HANDS ON THE PIANO/KEYBOARD:

When you start learning you may find your hands are a little tense, so it is really important to keep your hands arms and wrists relaxed. It is good to keep your fingers slightly curled, imagine you are holding a tennis ball. Ladies it is advisable to keep your nails short, as this will help you move more easily up and down the piano.

POSTURE:

It is important to keep your back straight, and your shoulders relaxed, just imagine you have a piece of string from your head keeping your back straight, but remember not to tense your muscles, as this will make you feel uncomfortable.

Also make sure your chair is a suitable height for you. Make sure it is not too low or too high. Use cushions to adjust this if you need too.

