Pre-staff reading for young pianists

The Middle Alphabet

The Keyboard Express C
Colour note reading for young pianists

A beginner piano method with coloured alphabet and pre-staff reading.

by John Keller
Play it all *staccato*

Bottom, Top, Middle
Answer quick to name each key. Each side of this black key link.

First key A and last key G. Got no time to stop and think.
In the middle of the alphabet, Next to group of two,
You’ll see three white keys named C D E, Looking back at you.
Double Keys Go Down

Double keys go down to single, In between there is this pair.
Bottom keys go up to middle, And this other pair is there.
Guiding Line

There are lines no one can see,
But they're always guiding me.

When we move away from link,
This is something that I think.
Doubles, Pairs and Singles

Doubles at the bottom, and next we have this pair, then single in the middle, and end up in the air.
Pairs for Treble Clef

All high hand

Next to two group, is this pair.

With another pair up there.

Top pair where that treble ends.

Pair where treble clef begins.

Treble clef region
Lines Are On the Outside

- Lines are on the outside,
- Space notes on the inside.

- Edgeline

- Lines are on the outside,
- Space notes on the inside.

- Edgeline

- Lines are on the outside.
- Space notes on the inside.
Safe Inside

Which is really safe inside? Line or space? Line or space?

Space notes stay inside the stave. So they're safe, but not so brave.
Outer Lines

Bottom line of treble clef, Top line of this treble clef. Is it E or is it F? Outer lines of treble clef.
Duck Below

From this first space, and this edge line, Of the treble, duck below.

From these bottoms, we duck under, Playing naturals, in a row.
From the Middle

From the middle, we can get,
To this higher alphabet.

From the middle, we can go,
To this alphabet below.
Bass and Treble Alphabets

Next to link line, first key A.
In bass alphabet we play.

Under top link, last key G.
Treble means guide number three.

Bass Alphabet
Treble Alphabet
1: Up above this D-line, We're in this upper half.
2: Down below this D-line, We're in this lower half.
1: high hand
2: low hand
Top half of this alphabet and of this three-line staff.
Bottom half of this alphabet and of this three-line staff.
3: Play hands together.
Middle G and Middle A

Middle G is the girl who is tallest of them all.
Now I think I know why she can only sing up high.

Middle A, He’s an ant, And he crawls around all day.
He sings low, ‘cause he can’t do it any other way.
This D is a Space

In treble and bass, this D is a space. It isn’t a line, so that guide we replace.
In the middle alphabet are seven notes to play. So ...

Play each hand separately at first.
Count to 4 in each bar.

... take a week and learn them all at one note every day.
Down Here In the Basement

Down here in this basement, Remember D-line’s placement!

Also where those pairs go... Pair above and pair below.
Double Keys At Edge Of Bass

Double keys at edge of bass. One’s a line and ones a space. But when lines, are these links, Then they’re space notes both, we think.
Bottom line, above, below:

Top, above, below. (Two Three Four).

Middle line, above, below,

That's where these black keys go. (Two Three Four).
Group of 3 and Group of 4

Play these natural keys once more.

Group of three and group of four.

Group of four and group of three.

Play your scale once more for me.
Link and A, link and A, Feel your way, Link and A.
Link and G, link and G, Feel your way, Link and A.
Double Naturals

Inside these, groups of threes, double naturals hide. They hug in close to link line, One on either side.

Play them on this low side, Double naturals in - side. Never can go outside, Always touch that line.
Play Notes Up, CHORD

High hand

Low hand
Fake beard and dark glasses on eyes. Even mum would never recognise me,

When I wear my secret disguise, I should be on TV!
D-lines, Treble and Bass

D-line treble, D-line bass, Pair above and pair below.

Each pair has one line, one space. Just remember where Ds go.

Hands together, here they are ... played with motion similar.
Middle, Little, Thumb

When you skip from line to line,
Skip one white key every time.

Middle, little, middle, thumb.
Three and five and three and one.
From this D-line we can show, Line above and line below.

Space above and space below. That's where pairs of naturals go.
Step and Skip

D-line, touching, moved away. Step, and skip, that’s how we play.

Line to space or line to line. Watch for steps and skips each time.

Hands together, also play. Cont’ry motion goes this way.
Single Key and Double Keys

Single key and Double keys, Inside twos, and inside threes.

Which keys go between them there?

In between goes middle pair.
White Keys Next Door

Start with doubles, Then step upwards,  
End with singles, Next door fingers.

White keys next door, One two three four,  
Line, space, line, space, In a row.
From House To Basement

From this middle house we go

To the basement down below.

In this basement don’t forget
Where they hid the alphabet.
D-line, Bottoms, Middles, Tops

All low hand

D-line, bottoms, middle, tops. Doubles at the edge of bass.

Where are pairs? Where’s their spot? Pairs are next to D-line’s place.
Extras and naturals are playing today.

Naturals and extras take turns when they play.

Extras and naturals are feeling their way.

Naturals and extras can all have their say.
In this treble alphabet, birds are flying free.

Do you know what “treble” means? Multiply by three!

1: Lower Alphabet 2: Middle Alphabet 3: Treble Alphabet
It's a race!
My timings:
Next To This D-line

Next to this D line, Pair of keys above. Next to this D line, Pair of keys below.

Next to this D line, Line notes moved away. Easy play easy play.. Secret lines, where are they?

Space notes touching D,
The Extras and the Naturals

The extras and the naturals, They get along so well.

They don’t sound any different, As far as I can tell.
Rain Rain Go Away

Rain rain go away.
Come again some other day.

Rain on Monday, that's OK.
But let it be fine today.
Link Line, Link Line

Link line, Link line, D-line, eyes. Find these keys and win your prize.

Bottom top and middle keys. In these groups of twos and threes.
Under D line is this pair, And the other pair is there.
Over D and down below, That’s where pairs of naturals go.
Double keys at edge of bass. One’s a line and one’s a space. Single key is middle line, And this bass clef looks real fine with all their notes in place.
Line and Space

Line and space, Line and space. Which is higher in each pair?

Bottom pair, Middle pair, At the top they swap up there.
Bottom and Top

Bottom and top of bass. Double keys, line and space.

Edges of treble clef, Pairs of socks, E and F.

1. Low hand
2. High hand

bass clef region

doubles
doubles

pair
pair
treble clef region

The Odd Finger Numbers

On - ly play 1 3 5 fin - gers to - day.

Down in the bass on three spa - ces they play.

Move up your hand so they each play a line.

Move up a - gain so the end - ing sounds fine.
Don’t Let Go!

Don’t let go, Cling on tight, Ev’ry time you stop.

While you think, What comes next, Stick to what you’ve got!

First play each hand separately. Then play hands together, but just the first notes in each bar.
Stepping

Step - ping from the line note to the space next door.

Duck Under

Next to ev' ry space note there's a line for sure.
Duck Under

(G) Duck under treble clef now, Duck under top stave.

Re-mem-ber, Take a breath now, Duck un-der that wave, Al-to-ge-ther now: wave, quick!
Question we get asked a lot, Does it touch that line or not?

Know which natural key to play, Close to link or moved away.
The top line of this bass clef, and notes on top of tops.
Those notes which move away are fine so long as they get leger lines.

bottoms

doubles
tops
on top of the tops
tops
on top of tops
D - line, touching, moved away.

D - line, touching, moved away.

Natural chords we all can play.
Bassline Boogie Song

One two three four, One two three four, Bass-line Boo-gie Song...

Pairs of socks, on the line. One pair’s yours, one pair’s mine.

In the middle, one more pair. Someone else left them there.

If you lose one sock then hey, Throw the other sock away!
Bird clef shows this note for B,
At the edge of black keys three.

On that line no one can see,
Second bottom letter B.
All D-lines

It’s a race!
My timings:
Touch This Line

Touch this D line, break away. Skip across this line today.

In this hand that we call low, fingers go the other way.

If you play together now, everyone will shout hooray!
Frog clef shows this note for F. Second top note in this clef.
In this guide that’s on the left, Bass clef also shows us F.
Which Are Lines, Space

Natural notes below this link, Which are line notes, which are space?

Tell us what those people think. Put that smile back on her face.
Jingle Bells

Jingle bells, jingle bells, Jingle all the way. Oh what fun it is to ride

In a one horse open sleigh, Hey!

repeat

In a one horse open sleigh, Hey!
I and J have dots on top. Dots on top is what they’ve got.

Do you know the reason why? So they both can have an eye!
I can tap dance, I can tap dance, It makes people grin, Coz the problem I get, Is my shoes get all wet!

I can rap dance, I can rap dance, And on my head spin, But the problem is that, I forget to unwrap.
We are brave and we are strong. Always know what's right and wrong.
Fight for justice all day long. We are super-heroes.
Outside and Inside Guide

Outside and Inside Guide

Outside guide and inside guide. Play between these border lines.

Please can these kids play outside?

Only when the weather’s fine.
It's a race!
My timings:

middle of keyboard
Pat your head and rub your tummy, That is very hard to do.

I think you look very funny When you try to do it too.
Treble D-line and Pairs

Treble D-line, 4th line up. On each side what have we got?

Middle pair and pair on top. Space notes touch but lines do not.
Tell me note positions for pairs within the bass. Relative to D-line it’s how we name each place.

Space below, Line above, Line below, Space above. Down below and up above and whether line or space.
Bottom of the Treble Clef

Which key is the edge line?

Which key is the first space?

Which one ducks below?
Down Below

Down below this bottom pair, Do you know which notes go there?

One note ducks below just fine, But one note needs that ledger line.
Middle Bass clef notes are usually played by the left hand.

Middle A bites into the top of the bass.

Middle C is below the treble, on a leger line.

Middle D just "ducks" under the treble clef.

Middle B rolls around the top of the bass.

Middle C can also be written above the bass (for left hand).

Treble clef notes are usually played by the right hand.

Middle E and F are the bottom pair (line and space) of the treble.

Middle G is the 2nd line of the treble clef (in the curl).

Middle C is below the treble, on a leger line.

Bass clef notes are usually played by the left hand.
1: When we change this middle stave
In - to tre - ble clef with bass,
But they swap each line and space.

2: Mid - dle notes all come a - live,
This tie is the way they make notes hold on. With tied notes they say, you hold extra long.

At least once a day, you'll have to decide which notes to play and which to be tied.
Ode To Joy by Beethoven

Play each hand separately at first.
Count 4 beats in each bar.

At the start of every bar we play with hands together.
That's because the strongest beat is first in every measure.
Steppin Up, Skip Up

Stepping up, skip up. Stepping up, skip up.

Stepping up, skip up. Stepping back down.
There are five lines in bass clef. They're all white keys on the left.

When you play each line in bass, then you skip across each space.
Ly - ing by some shady stream, While soft breezes blow,
Where the air is crisp and clean, Where the orchids grow.

In my space-ship high above ... Earth and Moon and Mars.
Find-ing out the sec-rets of ... Strange and differ-ent stars.
Up above, down below. Do you know where space notes go?

Space notes on this high side, Space notes on this low side.
At the Edge, Double Keys

At the edge, double keys.
In this three line keyboard guide.
Outside lines, Inside threes,
D-line and those pairs beside.
There’s a girl that I once knew, Lil Liza Jane. Hair of gold and eyes of blue, Lil Liza Jane.

Oh Lil Liza, Lil Liza Jane, Oh Lil Liza, Lil Liza Jane.
Three Line Guides

B-clef (bird)

Three line guide on right hand side. Find out where those birds all hide.

Left hand side that’s where frogs hop. Bottom, middle, middle, top.

F-clef (frog)

centre
Change this middle alphabet, into children, toys and pets. Seven notes we won’t forget.
1: Learn about the piano, Its full name piano- forte.

2: Pianos were invented by Mister Cristo- for- ti.

Piano means play softly, and forte means play loud.

When you play the piano, you'll always draw a crowd!
Down By the Station

Down by the station, early in the morning,
See the little engines, standing in a row.

Up comes the driver,
pulls a little lever,
Toot toot, toot toot,
Off they go.
Top and Middle Pairs

Top and middle pairs in place, Notes on lines and notes in space.

What is in between each pair? That’s the treble D line there.
See this natural group of four.

They look all squashed in, I think.

Double keys live right next door,
Space notes one each side of link.

In Express Stave notation, the ‘doubles’ are next-door naturals that are both space notes.

In traditional 5-line staves, next-door naturals are always one line and one space note.
When you catch a Pokemon

When you catch a pokemon, Hold him tight and just cling on.

Only let go later on, When you get the next one.
Thumb and Pointer

Thumb and pointer, three two one. Playing twister, having fun.

Playing on these double keys, safe inside this group of threes.
Three Note Chords

High Hand

Low Hand
The *top* line is for 3 group.

*Bottom* line is for 3 group.

*Middle* line is for 2 group.

**Left, Then Right Hand**
Higher and Lower Alphabets

In this higher alphabet, See which letters you can get.
Down below the same as bass, Can you name each line and space.

Bass Alphabet

Treble Alphabet
Thumb and pointer, playing twister. On these doubles inside three.

Ev'rybody let's play twister. Come and twist around with me.
Line for twos, Line for threes. Next line is next group of keys. Threes are big, Twos are small. Read these notes and find them all.
Change Express Stave Into Bass

Change Express Stave into Bass. Let those secret lines appear.

All notes inside stay in place but outside lines must move to here.

In bass clef, all five lines are for naturals, so the Link lines at the edge have to be moved outwards to the next white keys.

Number the five lines in the bass stave.
The trouble with the treble, is D-line’s number 4. It isn’t in the middle, but that’s not all, there’s more. It's very hard to draw!
Identifying and Drawing Middle Notes
Spaceships and Submarines

Space-ships go up in-to space

Sub-ma-rines go down to bass

As-tro-nauts in space are we

Scu-ba di-vers in the sea.
Skip On Line Notes

Edge line, next line, Edge line, legerline. Just play line notes. Skip each space.

Top line, next line, Top line, legerline. Skip on line notes in the bass.
The First Black Key Invented

The first black key invented was just below note B. They added one more letter, but just in Germany.
Simply Hum a Song

Simply hum a song, And the work won’t seem so long. Cut these common bars in half and simply hum a song now.

Simp - ly hum a tune and the work gets done so soon. Cut these common bars in quarters, while you hum a tune.
Mystery Faces

Mystery faces, secret hiding places, lines and spaces in bass or treble clef.

If you can find them, then you can chase them, down in the bass, then up in the treble clef.
Treble and Bass Wider Apart
- so you can easily tell which hand to use.

In this middle alphabet keyboard guide, middle A, C, E and G are line notes.

line notes:
Colour-in A, E and G.
But leave Cs white.