

# Module 1 – Composition Basics

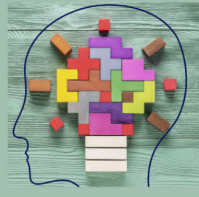
## Lesson 1 Introduction



## Lesson 2 Leveling



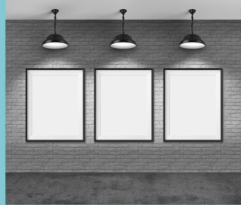
## Lesson 3 More Leveling & Concept-Based Pieces



## Lesson 4 Melodic Contour



## Lesson 5 Parameters



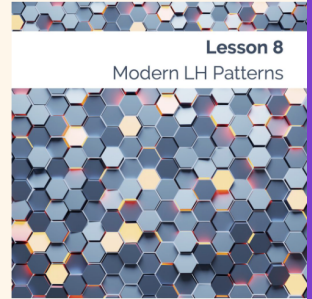
## Lesson 6 Patterns



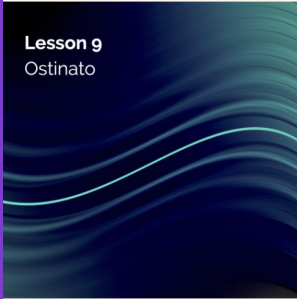
## Lesson 7 Arpeggiated Accompaniments



## Lesson 8 Modern LH Patterns



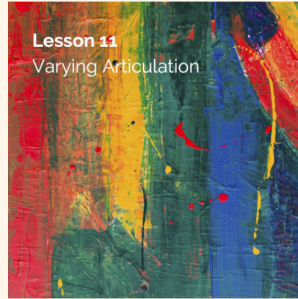
## Lesson 9 Ostinato



## Lesson 10 Melodic Variation



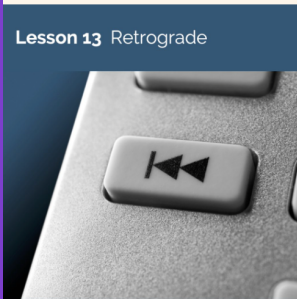
## Lesson 11 Varying Articulation



## Lesson 12 Pattern & Sequence



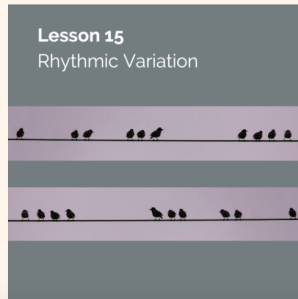
## Lesson 13 Retrograde



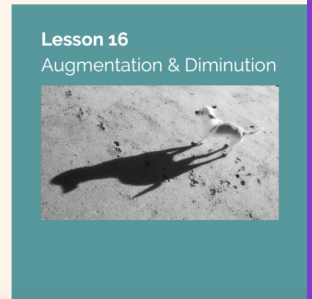
## Lesson 14 Melodic Inversion



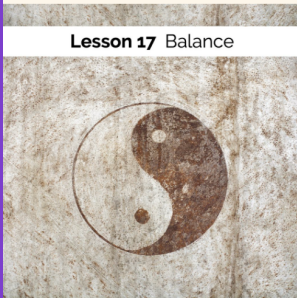
## Lesson 15 Rhythmic Variation



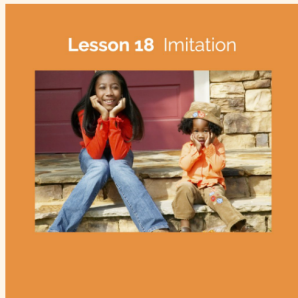
## Lesson 16 Augmentation & Diminution



## Lesson 17 Balance



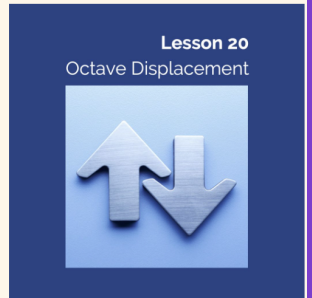
## Lesson 18 Imitation



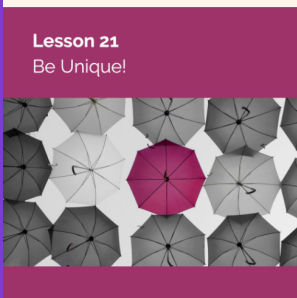
## Lesson 19 LH Melodies



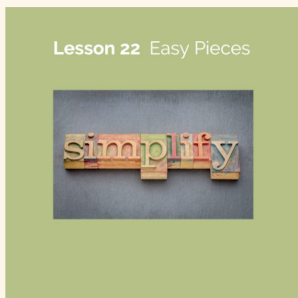
## Lesson 20 Octave Displacement



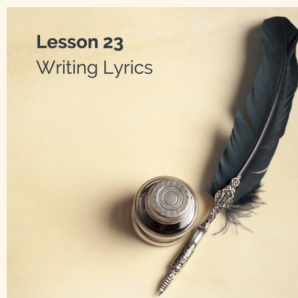
## Lesson 21 Be Unique!



## Lesson 22 Easy Pieces



## Lesson 23 Writing Lyrics



# Module 2 – Composing with Modes

## Lesson 1 Intro to Modes/Dorian



## Lesson 2 Phrygian Mode



## Lesson 3 Lydian Mode



## Lesson 4 Mixolydian Mode



## Lesson 5 Aeolian Mode



## Lesson 6 Greek Mode Review



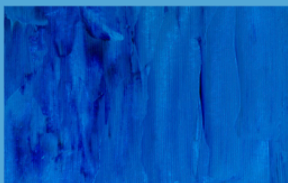
## Lesson 7 Major Pentatonic



## Lesson 8 Minor Pentatonic



## Lesson 9 Blues Scale



## Lesson 10 5th Mode Harmonic



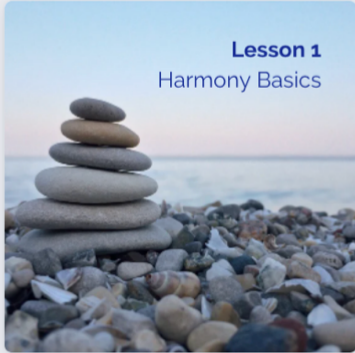
## Lesson 11 Review & Charts





# Module 3 – Harmony / Chords

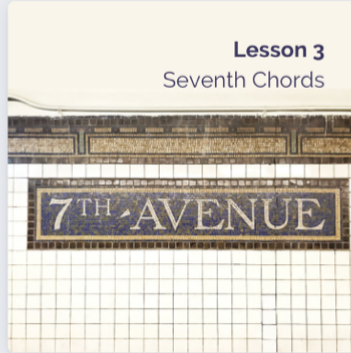
## Lesson 1 Harmony Basics



## Lesson 2 Non-Diatonic Chords



## Lesson 3 Seventh Chords



## Lesson 4 More Chords & Chord Symbols



## Lesson 5 Slash Chords



## Lesson 6 Chord Progressions



## Lesson 7 Blues & Jazz Chord Progressions



## Lesson 8 Pop & Rock Chord Progressions



## Lesson 9 Substitution



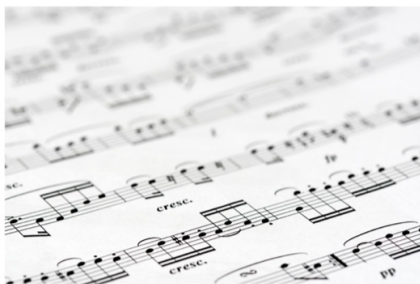
## Lesson 10 Jazz Harmony



## Lesson 11 Writing Easy Jazz & Blues



# Composition Exercises & Assignments



## Compose with Dorian

- Write a **theme and variation** using the D Dorian mode.
- For the LH part, use the LH patterns for ballads (slow pieces) that you learned in the first module, and follow the given chord symbols.
- The staff paper given here is set up for 3/4 time, but you could adapt this assignment to 4/4 if you'd like.
- For your melody, choose from the notes of the D Dorian Mode: **D E F G A B C D**
- Be sure that your melody and accompaniment have **balance between movement and non-movement**. You could write so that the hands trade off movement back and forth. Alter the LH rhythmic pattern if you like.

**Bonus assignment:** compose another short Dorian piece on separate staff paper. Write in ABA form (8 measures per section).

**Choose** key (G Dorian, C Dorian, etc.)  
time signature  
style of piece  
LH familiar pattern or ostinato  
harmony (chords)—I II III IV v vidim VII

**Example:** Chords in D Dorian  
Dm Em F G Am B dim. C Dm

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## Compose with Seventh-Chord Voicings

- This piece will be modeled after Erik Satie's famous "Gymnopédie No. 1." The intro and starting voicings are given, along with chord symbols.
- Add all **pedagogical elements**: phrase marks, fingering, dynamics, tempo, and pedal.



## Compose with ABA Form

Using the prompts below, compose a **Late Elem. or Early Int.** piece with **ABA form**.

### A Section (major/mostly legato)



### B Section (relative minor/use staccato)



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## Compose an Etude with Varied Articulation

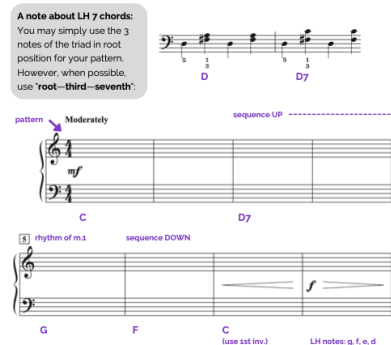
- First, write in all the LH notes. Follow the initial pattern and the given chord symbols.
- Compose the melody by choosing notes that sound good with the LH part. The small notes above each measure tell you the rhythm to use.
- The étude will be a study in staccato for the first 8 measures. The next 8 measures will emphasize legato, use slurs and pedal markings here. Feel free to make any changes you'd like—this is a framework.
- **ADD:** staccatos, slurs, phrase marks, fingering, dynamics, and pedal.



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## Write a Ragtime Piece Using Pattern & Sequence

- Write the LH notes, following the given chord symbols. Write your rag at any level of difficulty; be sure the LH part reflects your chosen level.
- Use this rhythm for your "pattern" (RH at measures 1-2):
- **ADD:** staccatos, slurs, and fingering.

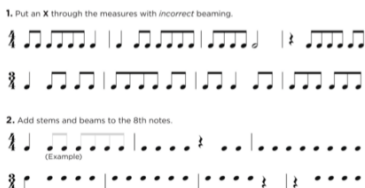
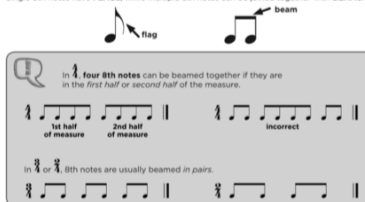


# Notation Exercises



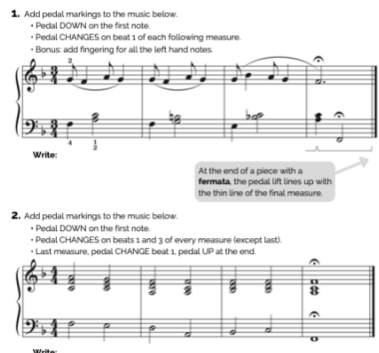
## Beaming 8th Notes

Single 8th notes have **FLAGS**, while multiple 8th notes can be joined together with **BEAMS**.



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## Notating Pedal



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## Writing Exercises



### Writing Familiar LH Patterns

Write these LH patterns with your choice of different chords.  
For more practice, use a separate sheet of staff paper.

**Waltz**

**Ragtime**

**Tarantella**

**Boogie**

With swing

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### Writing Chords Within Modes

Write half-note chords for each "scale degree" of the modes below.  
Then, write the chord name in the space below each one.

**D Dorian**

(Finish writing the chord then continue up the scale)

Ex: Dm

**E Phrygian**

**F Lydian**

**G Mixolydian**

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## Additional Downloads



### Lesson 6, continued

### Modes with One Black Key (or all white keys)

D Dorian = D E F G A **B** C D

G Dorian = G A B $\flat$  C D E F G

E Phrygian = E **F** G A B C D E

A Phrygian = A **B $\flat$**  C D E F G A

F Lydian = F G A **B** C D E F

C Lydian = C D E **F $\sharp$**  G A B C

G Mixolydian = G A B C D E **F** G

C Mixolydian = C D E F G A **B $\flat$**  C

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### Pop & Rock Chord Progressions

**50s Rock 'n Roll  
"Doo Wop Changes"**

I vi IV V  
C Am F G

**"Let It Be" Progression**

I V vi IV  
C G Am F

All I Have to Do is Dream (Everly Bros.)  
Teenager in Love (Dion & The Belmonts)  
Earth Angel (The Penguins)  
I Will Always Love You (Dolly Parton)  
Crocodile Rock (Elton John)

Let It Be (The Beatles)  
Take On Me (a-ha)  
Let It Go (from Disney's "Frozen")  
Someone Like You (Adele)  
Don't Stop Believin' (Journey)

### "Africa" Progression

vi IV I V  
Am F C G

Africa (Toto)  
Grenade (Bruno Mars)  
(Are You Going to) San Francisco (S. McKenzie)  
Numb (Linkin Park)  
Kids (MGMT)

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### Low Interval Limits

min 2nd maj 2nd min 3rd maj 3rd perfect 4th

aug 4th perfect 5th min 6th maj 6th min 7th

maj 7th min 9th maj 9th min 10th maj 10th

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### Chart of Melodic Variation

#### Inflection

The addition or subtraction of accidentals to vary the melody.

#### Varying Articulation

# Creativity

## Workouts & Inspirations



"A lot of great creativity comes from restrictions."

Giles Duley  
(Photographer)

Think of a fourth word that connects to the first three. Possible answers at the bottom, but other answers welcome!

Example: time/olympics/holiday /winter/

1. punk hard climb \_\_\_\_\_
2. left over bag \_\_\_\_\_
3. post supplies job \_\_\_\_\_
4. cat hold rental \_\_\_\_\_
5. dinner home rack \_\_\_\_\_
6. sheet loud box \_\_\_\_\_

Possible answers: 1. punk 2. hard 3. winter 4. cat 5. home 6. box  
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Teachers **COMPOSE** CREATIVITY  
MODULE 1  
Lesson 2  
Photography and any form of illustration are welcome

### Word Association

Making Connections

"Creativity is a habit, and the best creativity is the result of good work habits."

Twyla Tharp  
(Choreographer)

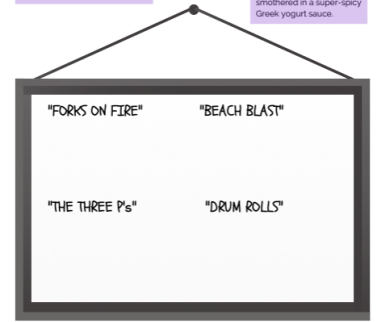
For each menu item below, write a short description of the dish.

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Lesson 3  
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### Menu Items

Making Connections

Example: "Angry Octopus"  
Freshly caught octopus smothered in a super-saucy Greek yogurt sauce



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"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."

Naya Angelou  
(Poet/Author)

Write a short story plot, a poem, or a few sentences that connect all four of the images below.



Write:

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MODULE 1  
Lesson 5  
Photography and any form of illustration are welcome

### Tell a Story

Making Connections

"Creativity is a wild mind and a disciplined eye."

Dorothy Parker  
(Author)

Fill a jar with strips of paper containing random words. (Or you may cheat and use the ones on this page.) Use nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

Choose 2-3 words from the jar. Then, using these words, do one or more of the following activities:

- write a small poem
- make up a short story
- write a descriptive sentence

When finished, put the words back in the jar and re-draw as many times as you'd like.

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MODULE 1  
Lesson 11  
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### Jar of Words

Making Connections



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# Creativity

## Phone Wallpaper



"WHAT KEEPS LIFE FASCINATING IS THE CONSTANT CREATIVITY OF THE SOUL."



"CREATIVITY IS THE POWER TO CONNECT THE SEEMINGLY UNCONNECTED."





# Composition Course Concepts by Lesson

## MODULE 1 — Composition Basics/Melodic Development

- Lesson 1**     **Introduction**  
Supplies / Notation Software Info.
- Lesson 2**     **Leveling**  
Educational Leveling Highlights (Early Elementary–Late Elementary)  
Writing Teacher Duets
- Lesson 3**     **Writing Concept-Based Pieces**  
Educational Leveling Highlights (Early Intermediate–Intermediate)  
Concept-Based Composition
- Lesson 4**     **Melodic Contour**  
Conjunct v. Disjunct  
Phrase Repetition and Variation
- Lesson 5**     **Parameters**  
Restriction or Inspiration?  
Composing with Form
- Lesson 6**     **Patterns**  
About Patterns & Learning  
Style Pieces  
Stylistic Accompaniment Patterns
- Lesson 7**     **Arpeggiated Accompaniments**  
Alberti Bass  
Broken Cadence Chords
- Lesson 8**     **Modern LH Patterns**  
LH Ballad Patterns (Basic, Extended, Cross-Over)
- Lesson 9**     **Ostinato**  
Melodic Ostinato / Rhythmic Ostinato
- Lesson 10**    **Melodic Variation / Inflection**  
Melodic Tools, Tricks, and Inspirations  
Variation Through Inflection
- Lesson 11**    **Varying Articulation**

**Lesson 12    Pattern & Sequence**

**Lesson 13    Retrograde**

**Lesson 14    Melodic Inversion**

Inverting Intervals  
Melodic Inversion

**Lesson 15    Rhythmic Variation**

Simple Variation  
Variation via Displacement

**Lesson 16    Augmentation & Diminution**

**Lesson 17    Balance**

Rest v. Motion

**Lesson 18    Imitation**

**Lesson 19    LH Melody**

**Lesson 20    Octave Displacement**

**Lesson 21    Be Unique!**

How Can I Compose More Interesting Pieces?

**Lesson 22    Writing Easy Pieces**

Texture (Thin Versus Thick)  
5 Ways to Improve Your Piece  
Leveling Review

**Lesson 23    Writing Lyrics**

Writing to Artwork  
Abstract & Literal Inspirations  
Duple or Triple Meter  
Using Rhyming Dictionaries



## MODULE 2 — Composing with Modes

### Lesson 1 Intro to Modes / Dorian

About the “Greek Modes”

Dorian Mode

Tips for Composing with Modes

### Lesson 2 Phrygian Mode

Writing Intros / Freeform Intros (“Taximi”)

### Lesson 3 Lydian Mode

The Sound of the Lydian Mode

### Lesson 4 Mixolydian Mode

Chords Within the Mixolydian Mode

Songs Using Mixolydian Chords

### Lesson 5 Aeolian Mode

Familiar Aeolian Melodies

Songs with the “Aeolian Progression”

### Lesson 6 Greek Mode Review

Chart of Modes

Chart of Color Tones

### Lesson 7 Major Pentatonic

Familiar Major Pentatonic Melodies

Familiar Major Pentatonic Riffs

### Lesson 8 Minor Pentatonic

Familiar Minor Pentatonic Melodies

Familiar Minor Pentatonic Riffs

### Lesson 9 Blues Scale

Blues Scale in Rock/Pop

Writing Blues for Students

### Lesson 10 5th Mode Harmonic

Modes Generate from the Harmonic Minor Scale

5th Mode Harmonic Minor Scale (“Double Harmonic”)

Use of 5th Mode Harmonic

### Lesson 11 Review & Charts

Mode Review & Additional Scales

Review of Greek-Mode Color Tones

## **MODULE 3 — Harmony / Chords**

### **Lesson 1     Harmony Basics**

Polyphonic v. Homophonic  
Consonant v. Dissonant  
Tertian v. Quartal Harmony

### **Lesson 2     Non-Diatonic Chords**

Diatonic and Non-Diatonic Chords in Major Keys  
Secondary Dominants

### **Lesson 3     Seventh Chords**

Diatonic Seventh Chords  
Major 7, Minor 7, Dominant 7, Half-Diminished Chords  
Voicings for Seventh Chords

### **Lesson 4     More Chords & Chord Symbols**

Augmented, Diminished, Diminished-Seventh Chords  
Sus Chords, Add Chords, and 5 Chords

### **Lesson 5     Slash Chords**

Slash Chords Explained  
False Slash Chords  
Sus Chords with V/I Slash Chords

### **Lesson 6     Chord Progressions**

Chord Types in Popular Music (Trends from the 60s Forward)

- Early to Late Beatles, Elton John
- 1970s Songwriters and Progressions (Burt Bacharach, Carole King, et al.)
- Pop Use of Seventh Chords
- Rock and 1990s Use of Sus and 5 Chords

1–4–5 Progression  
Circle of Fifths Progression

### **Lesson 7     Blues & Jazz Chord Progressions**

Tritones Explained  
2–5–1 Voicings with Seventh Chords  
Traditional 12-Bar Blues  
With Added 2–5–1 Cadences

### **Lesson 8     Pop & Rock Chord Progressions**

Doo-Wop Changes, “Let It Be” Progression, “Africa” Progression,  
“Hey Jude” Progression, Aeolian Progression, Flamenco Progression



## **Lesson 9     Harmonic Substitution**

Reharmonization Explained  
Chord Family Substitution  
Secondary Dominant Sevenths  
Tritone (Flat-2) Substitution  
2–b2–1 Voicings with Seventh Chords

## **Lesson 10    Jazz Harmony**

Chord Extensions (9, 11, 13)  
Voicing Chords with Extensions (9 Chords, 13 Chords)  
Chords with Alterations

- Dominant Seventh Chords with Altered 9's
- Seventh Chords with Sharp 11's
- Chords with Flat 13's
- Chords with Multiple Alterations

The Altered Scale  
2–5–1 Voicings with Extensions and Alterations

## **Lesson 11    Writing Easy Jazz & Blues**

Guidelines for Composing Easy Jazz & Blues  
Writing with a Thin Texture  
Thin Texture via Implied Root Notes  
Using Familiar Jazz & Blues Patterns

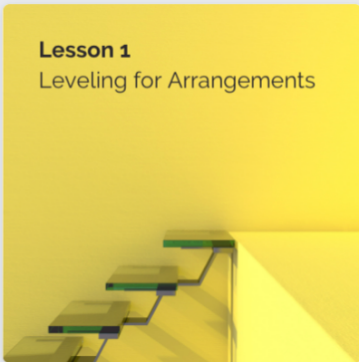
- Walking Bass Lines
- Boogie LH Patterns
- LH Comp Rhythm for Chords
- Hands-Together Chromatic Passages
- Alternating Chromatic Thirds, Grace Notes

Flat-9 Interval Rule  
Low-Interval-Limits  
Upper Structure Triads

FOR  
**Teachers**  
WHO  
WANT  
TO ARRANGE



**Lesson 1**  
Leveling for Arrangements



**Lesson 2**  
Distributing Elements



**Lesson 3**  
Adaptation



**Lesson 4**  
Texture



**Lesson 5**  
Chord Voicings



**Lesson 6**  
Capturing the Essence



**Lesson 7**  
Pop & Rock Form





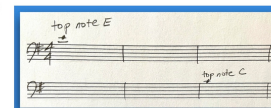
# Writing Exercises



## Writing Teacher Duets

### REVIEW:

1. Write the student part first. Be sure to put "Student plays one octave higher," etc.
2. Sketch-out blank measures on staff paper to match the student part.
3. Identify the LOWEST NOTES in the STUDENT LH and indicate your possible RH TOP NOTES on the blank measures:



4. Proofread for overlaps or hand "bumps" between teacher RH and student LH.

The following pages have an **Elementary**-level student part written on the staff.  
**Arrange a teacher duet** for this music.

- Write both hands on a single **bass staff**.
- RH notes are upstem, LH notes are downstem.
- You may use a **key signature** for the duet part, even if the student part uses accidentals.

Follow the cues in the score for the "**possible top notes**" for the teacher's RH.

## Writing Chord Symbols

1. Write chord symbols for each example below. Answers are upside-down at the bottom of the page. (The exercises continue on the next page!)



Row 1: Csus2, Fmaj7, G6, D (add2), Em7. Row 2: Gsus4, F+, Bbsus2, Am7, Dsus4.  
Row 3: Dmaj7, F (add2), Cm7, B5, G6. Row 4: G7sus4, F+, Bbsus2, Am7, Dsus4.

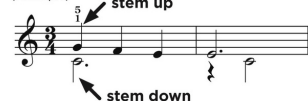
## Two Voices in One Hand

When filling-in the harmony of your arrangement, you will often need to write two **voices** (separate parts) in one hand.

When writing two voices in one hand on the same staff:

- ✓ the **UPPER VOICE** notes have stems going up
- ✓ the **LOWER VOICE** notes have stems going down

(Example)



Each voice has a full set of beats in each measure.

1. Add **upper voice** notes to the music below. You may choose any notes and rhythms you like, as long as you can play both voices with only your RH.

(Example)



2. Add **lower voice** notes to the music below. You may choose any notes and rhythms you like, as long as you can play both voices with only your LH.



(Example)

# Arranging Exercises & Assignments



## Arrange an Elementary Piece with Teacher Duet

Arrange an Early-Elementary or Elementary piece with a **teacher duet part**.

This is a "5-Finger" arrangement, meaning the **melody is divided between the hands**. Choose your piece by making sure it fits the following:

- **avoid 8th notes** for now (notation can be tricky between hands).
- musical concepts are **level-appropriate** (see leveling charts)
- a melody that approximately fits the **span of an octave** (or less)
- a melody that fits under the student's hands easily (adjust the key signature accordingly—no thumbs on black keys, etc.) **Keys of F and G work well with students' thumbs on/near "Middle C" 5-finger pattern.**
- Try to limit to 32 measures.

Blank measures are given for you on the following pages. Use as many measures as you need; you may use separate staff paper.

Be sure that the student and teacher have the same number of measures on each page!

### AFTER arranging the student part, write a teacher duet !

Remember to go through the student part and mark the possible "top notes" for the duet's RH, to avoid overlaps and hand bumps.

You may use a key sig. for the teacher duet, but write accidentals for the student.

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## Add the Harmony

Finish arranging the **Early Intermediate** piece on the following pages ("The First Noel"). The melody and chord symbols are given.

**First, sketch a LH part—then, fill in the harmony** between your LH part and the melody. You may decide to change some things in the LH as you add the harmony.

**Basic chord symbols are in bold.** However, see the **non-bold harmony cues** I've added to the chord symbols—mostly bass-note movement by using **slash chords**. This makes a more interesting arrangement than if the basic chords were used.

When adding harmony, you will need to flip some **stems** in RH; just scribble over the written melody. Later, you can create a clean copy by hand or on a software program.

Remember to write with a **thin texture**:

- delete the 5th of the chord
- delete unnecessary doubled notes
- pare down to the essential notes: melody, 3rd, and 7th

Add **fingering**, **tempo markings**, and **dynamics**. Adding pedal and lyrics is optional.

Be sure there's **balance** between movement and non-movement as it relates to the melody and accompaniment.

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## Lesson 5, page 2

## The First Noel

Chord symbols: D, A/C#, G/B, D/A, G, A/G, G, D/F#, G, A, Bm, A7/C#, D, D, A/C#, G/B.

# Additional Downloads



## 3 Ways to Thin Texture

### 1. Delete the 5th of the chord.

(D7 = D F# A C) (Em7 = E G B D) (Fm7 = F Ab C Eb)  
1 3 5 b7 1 3 5 b7 1 3 5 b7

### 2. Delete unnecessary doubled notes.

del. 5 del. doubled C  
(C7 = C E G Bb)  
1 3 5 b7

### 3. Pare down to the essential notes: melody, 3rd, and 7th.

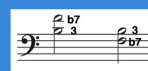


Tritone = 3 whole steps = augmented 4th (#4)

### G7



The "tritone" of a G7 chord is B to F or F to B.



## Lesson 1, page 2

## Leveling for Arrangements

### Early Elementary ("5-Finger")

- Uses notes on staff from Bass C to G above Mid C
- Avoids 8th notes
- Sharps and flats are written as accidentals (no key signature used)
- No or minimal hands-together

Add lyrics

Teacher duets highly recommended at this level for arrangements.

Quickly  
Spin, spin, I was in a bath, long a-bout a...  
Duet Part (Student plays one octave higher)  
Quickly, in two

### Elementary

- Notes on staff from Bass G to Treble G
- Sharps and flats mostly written as accidentals (can use Keys of G and F)
- Emphasizes legato and staccato touches
- Root-position triads and intervals up to 5th
- Simple 8th-note rhythms
- More hands-together
- Use of 1st/2nd endings
- Pick-up measure (upbeat)

Smoothly  
Let us see how we can...  
Duet Part (Student plays one octave higher)



# **“For Teachers Who Want to Arrange”—Course Concepts by Lesson**

## **Lesson 1     Leveling for Arrangements**

Educational Leveling Review  
Writing Teacher Duets  
Pop Leveling  
Copyright and Licensing Information  
Public Domain Explained

## **Lesson 2     Distributing Elements**

Melodic Distribution Between Hands  
The Arranging Process: Working in Layers  
Six Arranging Steps  
Balance  
Common LH Pop Patterns and Bass Lines  
Fill Harmony Using Two Voices in One Hand

## **Lesson 3     Adaptation**

Rhythmic Adaptation  
Shorten the Roadmap  
Approximate the Groove and Feel  
Considerations for Adding Pedagogical Elements

## **Lesson 4     Texture**

Writing with a Thin Texture  
Three Ways to Thin-Out Texture

## **Lesson 5     Chord Voicings**

Common Chord Voicings  
Two Important Arranging Rules

- Flat-9 Intervals
- Low-Interval-Limits

## **Lesson 6     Capturing the Essence**

Essential Riffs  
Instrumental Parts  
Bass Lines  
Capture Pop and Rock Features  
Simulating Guitar Picking and Strumming  
Sus Chords, Add Chords, 5 Chords  
Writing Accurate Chord Symbols  
Slash Chords

## **Lesson 7     Pop & Rock Form**

The Arranging Process: Mapping Out the Form  
Rules for Writing Lyrics in the Score