



GRADE TWO · INTERMEDIATE

Theory Pack

Yours to print, write on and keep. Five chapters that build on Grade 1 — more keys, tidier notation, and your first real composing tasks.

There are no wrong notes, only surprising ones.



Wikimedia Commons

Ludwig van Beethoven

He filled whole notebooks reworking a single tune. Great music takes practice — and it grows from exactly these skills.

What to expect

Grade 2 builds on your Grade 1 foundations: more key signatures, tidier note grouping and beaming, simple transposition, a wider range of intervals, and your very first composing tasks — completing a rhythm or a melody.

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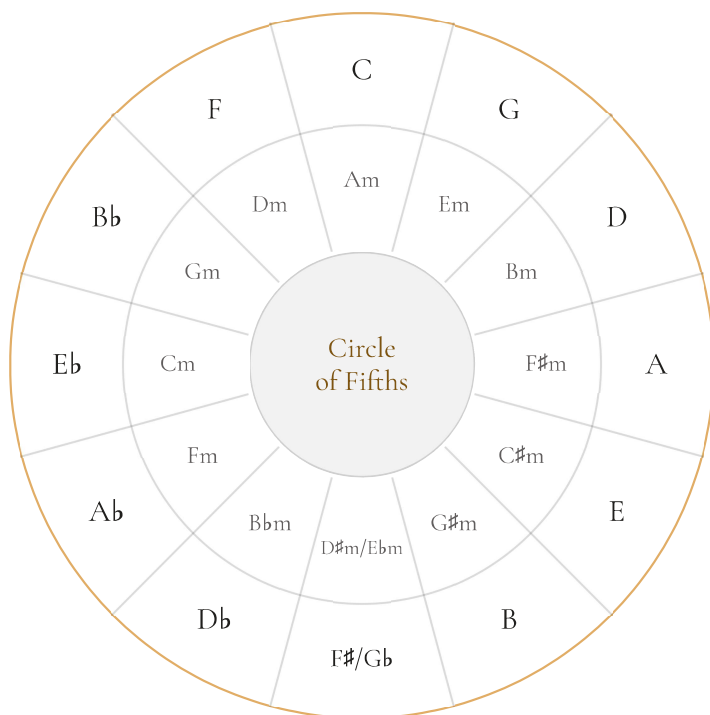
HOW TO USE THIS PACK

Read each reference sheet, then try its worksheet on paper. Tick off chapters as you go, and keep the Circle of Fifths beside you whenever you compose.

KEEP THIS ONE HANDY

The Circle of Fifths

Every key, its relative minor, and how far apart any two of them sit.



HOW IT WORKS

Clockwise from C, each key adds one sharp: C, G, D, A, E, B, F#.

Anticlockwise from C, each key adds one flat: C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db.

The inner ring is each key's relative minor — it shares the very same key signature.

Keys next to each other share nearly all their notes, so moving between them sounds smooth.

USING IT WHILE COMPOSING

Find a key signature fast — count the steps around the circle from C.

Change key smoothly — modulate to a neighbour, which shares the most notes.

Pick a relative minor for a darker version of a major-key idea.

Build progressions like I–IV–V from chords that sit close together.

More key signatures

Building on Grade 1, this chapter adds keys with two or three sharps or flats. The pattern is exactly the same as before — you are just extending further around the same system.

D Two sharps F# · C#	A Three sharps F# · C# · G#	Bb Two flats Bb · Eb	Eb Three flats Bb · Eb · Ab
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The pattern

Sharp keys add one new sharp at a time, always in the same order. Flat keys add one new flat at a time, in exactly the reverse order.

Sharps	F#	C#	G#	D#	A#	E#	B#
Flats	Bb	Ab	Db	Gb	Cb	Fb	

KEY RULES TO REMEMBER

- Sharps are always added in this order: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#.
- Flats are always added in this order: Bb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb, Fb.
- To name a sharp key: go up a semitone from the last sharp. Two sharps means the last is C#, so up a semitone is D major.
- To name a flat key: the second-last flat names the key. Three flats means Bb, Ab, Eb — second-last is Ab, so Eb major. For one flat only, it is F major.

More key signatures

Work on paper or straight onto the sheet. Use the staves at the foot where you need them.

1 How many sharps are in D major? In A major?

2 Write the order in which the first three sharps appear.

3 Draw the key signatures for D major and for B-flat major.

4 Name a major key that has two flats.

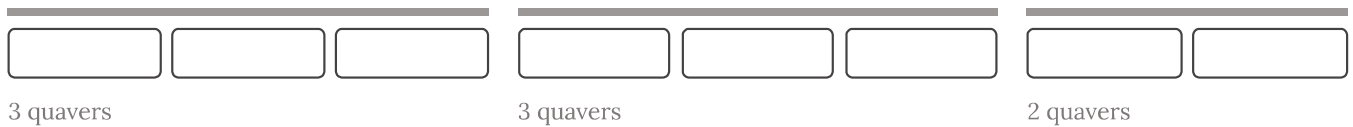
YOUR WORKING

Note grouping & beaming

Beams are the thick lines joining quavers and shorter notes. Good beaming groups notes by beat, so the beat structure of a bar is obvious at a glance — it should never hide where the beats fall.

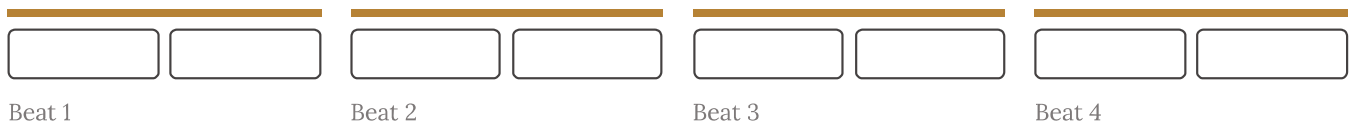
Avoid — beaming that crosses the beat

Groups fight the pulse



Better — beaming that shows the beat

One group per beat



KEY RULES TO REMEMBER

- In simple time — 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 — beam notes in groups that add up to one full beat at a time.
- Never let a beam obscure the beat. A reader should see where each beat starts from the beaming alone.
- A single note on its own beat, like a crotchet, is not beamed to anything either side.
- This matters even more in compound time, coming in Grade 3, where notes group in threes rather than twos or fours.

Note grouping & beaming

Work on paper or straight onto the sheet. Use the staves at the foot where you need them.

- 1 Re-write four separate quavers as two beamed groups.

- 2 In 4/4, how many beamed quavers make up one beat?

- 3 Copy a rhythm onto the stave below, beaming the quavers by the beat.

- 4 Write a one-bar rhythm using beamed quavers in 4/4.

YOUR WORKING

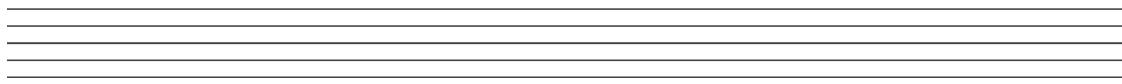
Simple transposition

Transposing means moving a melody to a different pitch level while keeping the pattern of intervals between the notes exactly the same — every note shifts by the same distance, so the shape survives intact.

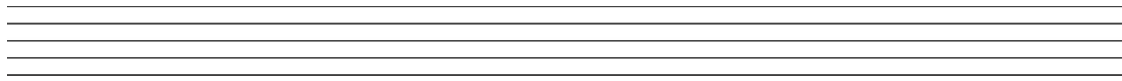
Example — transposing up a tone

Every note has moved up by the same distance, and the key signature has changed to match. The shape of the melody is identical.

Original · C
major



Up a tone · D
major



How to transpose a melody

- 1 Decide the interval you are transposing by — up a tone, down a 3rd.
- 2 Move every single note by that same interval — no exceptions.
- 3 Update the key signature to match the new key.
- 4 Check the pattern of steps and leaps is unchanged from the original.

KEY RULES TO REMEMBER

- Transposition preserves the melodic shape exactly — only the starting pitch, and therefore the key, changes.
- At Grade 2 you will be asked for a simple interval like a tone or a 3rd, not a distant key.
- The common mistake is moving most notes correctly and missing one — always check every note against the original.

Simple transposition

Work on paper or straight onto the sheet. Use the staves at the foot where you need them.

- 1 Transpose the two-note idea C–D up a major 2nd.

- 2 Transpose a short melody up a perfect 4th.

- 3 Write C–D–E starting on G instead, keeping the same shape.

- 4 Transpose your melody back down a major 2nd.

YOUR WORKING

Building on intervals

Grade 1 counted intervals by number only. Grade 2 introduces *quality* — whether a common interval sounds major or minor. That is the first step toward the full quality system in Grade 3.

Major 3rd

C – E

4 semitones

Minor 3rd

D – F

3 semitones

Major 6th

C – A

9 semitones

Minor 6th

E – C

8 semitones

Listening for the difference

A major 3rd sounds bright and open; a minor 3rd sounds darker and more closed-in. Training your ear to hear this difference is just as useful as counting semitones on paper — and far quicker once it sticks.

KEY RULES TO REMEMBER

- A major 3rd spans 4 semitones; a minor 3rd spans 3.
- A major 6th spans 9 semitones; a minor 6th spans 8.
- The number — 3rd, 6th and so on — comes from counting letter names, as in Grade 1. Quality comes from counting semitones.
- This groundwork leads directly into full interval quality in Grade 3, including perfect, diminished and augmented.

Building on intervals

Work on paper or straight onto the sheet. Use the staves at the foot where you need them.

1 Name these intervals above the note: a 6th above C, a 7th above D.

2 Which is larger, a 5th or a 6th? By how many steps?

3 Label the number of each interval marked on the stave.

4 Write a pair of notes forming a 6th, and another forming a 7th.

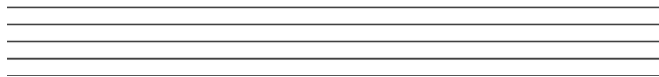
YOUR WORKING

Completing a rhythm or melody

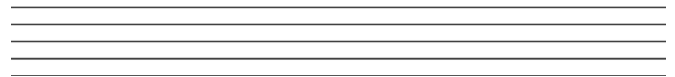
Your first taste of composition in the syllabus: given the opening of a rhythm or melody, continue it so it makes musical sense. This is less about being correct than about being consistent.

The given opening

A two-bar idea on the tonic triad



Bar 1 – given



Bar 2 – your answer

A simple approach

- 1 Look at what is already there – which key, which notes, which rhythm pattern?
- 2 Keep using notes from the same key signature, unless asked for something chromatic.
- 3 Match the rhythm style already established – don't introduce a new note value out of nowhere.
- 4 Aim for a sense of arrival by the end – usually by stepping back toward the tonic.

KEY RULES TO REMEMBER

- Consistency matters more than originality here – stay within the established key and rhythm.
- A safe, musical choice is to answer a rising phrase with a falling one, or the reverse, for a balanced shape.
- Ending on the tonic note, or the tonic triad, gives the strongest sense of completion.

Completing a rhythm or melody

Work on paper or straight onto the sheet. Use the staves at the foot where you need them.

- 1 Complete the final bar so the rhythm balances to four beats.

- 2 Finish the melody so that it ends on the tonic.

- 3 Add a final note so the phrase ends on beat one.

- 4 Compose a four-bar answering phrase to the question given.

YOUR WORKING
