

Learning the Names of Notes

another **Radical Theory Music Learning Sheet**

By: Dr. Ken Mahood

Preface:

Don't miss this chance to learn the "Language of Music". Use one of the rhymes listed below to remember the names of the notes. It's easy, fun----and it's important! In fact, it's the single most important issue for pianists--no matter what their age or level.

If you don't like the rhymes you see here, you can make your own unique rhyme as long as it starts with the correct name of a note in the bass or treble clef. Dr. Ken actually gets a number of new ideas from students each year---for example, from an adult student (several years ago) for the Treble Clef Line Notes: "Elvis-Goes-Bopping-Down-Freeways". Of course, I never said whether the items we receive are examples of good grammar---but if it works for you---use it!

So----now's the time for "all good friends" to Learn Notes!

---Dr. Ken Mahood

F A C E

Every Empty Good Garbage Boy Before Dad Deserves Fun Flips

Alternate Rhyme-

For Country folks--> A_{ll} C_{ows} E_{at} G_{ass}
 For City Folks-> All Cars Eat Gas

Treat Bug Dreams for America!

My personal favorite!

For those persons seeking additional data on this subject:

As a music educator with nearly 40 years of experience (I started teaching at age 16), I must interject this observation: the most successful means of learning the notes has been using the same kind of rhymes and acronyms as are listed above as well as experiential learning, in which the same note is presented over and over again to be filled in with the correct letter name.

If you are a teacher of any musical instrument or a student attempting to learn the names of the notes, you may be finding this part of learning to play a bit frustrating. For those in such a situation I would recommend the following:

1. Purchase a wonderful little workbook (still in print) entitled, "Schaum's Keynote Speller, Primer Level". This short workbook was formerly published by John W. Schaum Music (#02-11) and now through Warner Brothers, Inc. This is the ONLY book which not only helps the student learn the names of the notes as seen on a music page, but also contains a small diagram of a keyboard under each question. The student must actually draw a line from the note to its proper place right on the keyboard picture. In other words, it not only teaches the names of the notes but it also teaches the student where each note is located on a piano keyboard itself. I have had such success with this book, I also reviewed for Amazon.com. It certainly does earn a "five star rating".

2. Purchase (or make yourself) a set of music "flashcards" on which the note is actually drawn on the music paper. The reverse of the card can show the actual letter name of the note along with its proper placement on a keyboard.

Finally, a short footnote about the various rhymes listed. The best learning sometimes requires a 'personal touch'. Do not fault any student who may perhaps use an unorthodox method, but whose results are completely accurate. As long as a student learns the name and placement of the note, the end does justify the means in this one area. A case in point: Students have always had difficulty in using the traditional rhyme for the bass line notes. The so-called "traditional rhyme" is: "Good Boys Deserve Fun Always". You should see the problem immediately. Using the words "Good" and "Boys" not only for this, but for the LINE notes in the treble clef as well (ie: "Every Good Boy Does Fine or similar)--- this presents a very confusing program of learning. The student already is taxed to remember "Four" different kinds of notes. Inserting the same descriptive words simply causes more problems for the learner. The wonderful and patriotic rhyme, "Great Big Dreams For America", always elicits positive comments and actually is easy to remember. For my dear Canadian friends, just remember you are still part of (north) america~!

My thanks for downloading this short treatise on the name of notes. Enjoy!



-Ken Mahood, Ph.D., Ed.D.