Episode 8
The Musical Alphabet
The ABC’s of notes

OVERVIEW
Musical notation is based on the musical alphabet using the letters A to G. Repairman comes to the rescue when Quaver’s PianoWriter repeatedly prints Middle C. The resolution leads Quaver to introduce the musical alphabet, explore why there are no H notes, and relate notes on the treble clef with keyboard keys with the help of his trusty trampoline. This lesson focuses the notes above Middle C, up to F on the top line.

LESSON OBJECTIVES
Students will learn:
- The musical notes going upwards from Middle C in the treble clef.
- The reason there are only seven letters, A-G, in the musical alphabet.
- The relationship between piano keys and staff notes.
- The reading of music opens up new musical opportunities.

Vocabulary
Musical alphabet
Treble clef
Bass clef
Staff
Notes
A-G
Ostinato*
**MUSIC STANDARDS IN LESSON**

1. Singing alone and with others *
2. Playing instruments *
3. Reading and notating music
4. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
5. Evaluating music and music performance
6. Understanding the relationship between music and the other arts

Complete details at [QuaverMusic.com](http://QuaverMusic.com)

**Key Scenes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What they teach</th>
<th>Music Standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Repairs the Piano Writer’s repeating Middle C</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Octaves on the giant piano with Mrs. Miggins</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Phone box adventures with Perfect-Pitch Jamey</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quaver uses the trampoline to relate piano keys to staff notes</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Song: <em>When You Can Read the Music</em></td>
<td>1, 6</td>
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**LESSON INTRO** Introducing the episode

Ask how many letters are in the alphabet. For younger students, it might be helpful to lead them in singing *The Alphabet Song* and have them count on their fingers. If a piano is available, play the music as well with students gathered around it.

Sing and play it again but abruptly stop after singing the G. Ask if they can suggest any reason for stopping at that point. Explain that while the alphabet for writing goes from A-Z, the musical alphabet goes only from A-G. Play the notes A-G through several octaves, calling out the names of the notes.

Tell students they are about to learn of an amazing alphabet that has been used for centuries to write music.

* concepts included in the Teacher Guide, but not in the DVD
Discussion Points

- Where are the only two types of locations on the staff that the musical notes can be placed? **lines and spaces**
- Why does the musical alphabet only go from A-G? **because after eight notes, the note is the same but higher; it's called an octave**
- What is perfect pitch? **the ability to accurately identify the pitch of a note without referencing an instrument**
- Where are notes above Middle C placed? **on the treble clef staff**

3 PLAY EPISODE

Music Alphabet Round

**Purpose:** Introducing the musical alphabet

With students sitting in a circle, establish a repeated rhythm or ostinato (an eighth-eighth quarter rhythm such as Queen’s *We Will Rock You*). Go around the circle with each student saying a letter of the music alphabet to the beat. Students who miss a letter or go past G must sit out a round. To make it exciting, increase the tempo each time.

4 CLASS ACTIVITIES

**Materials Needed**
- Masking tape
- 2 cardboard boxes

**Music Alphabet Round**
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**My Melody**
**Purpose:** Showing the connection between music symbols and playing music

Distribute the worksheet depicting a treble clef staff and a keyboard. If a piano or keyboard is available, play Middle C, the D above it, and the notes on the treble clef.

Ask students to select notes and place them in measures of four on the staff to create a melody. Have them practice on their paper keyboard. Play their tunes on a real keyboard if possible. If students don’t like the sound, invite them to change some notes and play the tune again for them.
**Musical Twister**

*Purpose: Reinforcing the note names and placement on the staff*

Using masking tape, create five parallel lines on the floor one foot apart. Have two boxes, one with note names from A - G and the other with left foot, right foot, left hand and right hand. Draw from each box and have a student place their hand or leg in the correct position on the staff, like Twister. Allow two or three students to participate, and encourage the watching students to help them place their legs and hands in the correct positions on the staff.

As a variation, give students three- or four-letter words that they have to “spell” with their hands & feet on the keyboard (CAB, BEAD, etc).

**VIDEO REPLAY**

*The Musical Alphabet*

*Purpose: Showing accurate placement of notes on the treble staff*

View the musical alphabet animation again. Look at how Middle C starts, then is followed by D, E, F, G, and starts over at A again. Instruct students to draw a staff with a treble clef, then all the notes from Middle C up to F ending on the top line. Lead them in singing the notes going up and down.

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**WEB ACTIVITIES**

**QComposer**

Encourage students to experiment with going both above and below Middle C to craft melodies and songs. QComposer allows students to use whole, half, quarter and eighth notes to create a song. They can also add chords to their melodies using Chord Helper.

**EarIQ**

In the Pitch Game, students can listen to two pitches and decide which one is higher or lower. As students begin to write music, it is vital for them to hear which notes are higher and lower so they can write them on the staff appropriately.
6 HOMEWORK

Scale brush
Purpose: Listening to and singing scales
Play students a scale starting from middle C to the C above it and have them practice singing the scale. Ask them to sing the scale everyday at home just before they brush their teeth to get into the habit of singing scales.

Notice the Notes Around You
Purpose: Listening to simple melodies in the world around
Assign students to listen for simple note patterns in the world around us. For example, instruct them to pay attention to cellphone rings, video game music, door bell chimes, and church bells. Have students list where they heard simple melodies. If possible, ask them to bring in a recording of the sounds or bring in the item that makes the melody.

7 ASSESSMENT

What’s the Next Note? Tracks 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 Worksheet # 2
As students carefully listen to the following tracks, ask them to write on their worksheets the note(s) that follow Middle C. Each set of notes will repeat three times

Track 1 (C, D)
Track 2 (C, D, E)
Track 3 (C, D, C)
Track 4 (C, D, E, D, C)
Track 5 (C, C, D, D, E)

You may want to pause between tracks for discussion of whether the note goes up, down, or stays the same.

Note: Notes only move up or down one step in the musical alphabet.
CROSS-CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

Math
Worksheet # 3
Following the directions found in the worksheet, use heavyweight butcher paper and chalk to create a giant piano like Quaver has in his studio. Divide students into groups and assign various tasks. For example, one group could work exclusively on measuring white keys and another measuring black keys.

When the keyboard is completed, allow students to take turns jumping and stepping out tunes. Use a keyboard, tuned bells, or Orff instruments to sound corresponding notes.

Note: students could mark out the keyboard on a playground using chalk, the size of the keys can be enormous and could be photographed out of the first floor window of your school for added effect!!

Language Arts
Ask students to draw a staff and the notes as circles going up from Middle C to F on the top line. Challenge them to write a sentence with each word starting with the letters of the music alphabet in order. Extra points if they have something to do with music!

Example:
Can Dragons Eat French Gladiators? All Brave Clever Dragons Eat French Gladiators!

Materials Needed
- Butcher paper
- Chalk
- Yard sticks

The next episode is about notes on the lines and spaces. Provide a preview of what’s to come by talking about the positions of the notes on the staff.
Going Up and Down
Purpose: Familiarity with the bass clef
On the board or IWB, draw a grand staff with Middle C suspended between the two clefs. Instead of going up the musical alphabet into the treble clef, challenge students to come to the board and add the next letter in the descending scale. Ask them if they see any similarities or differences between the notes in the treble clef and bass clef. Challenge them to then find the notes on the piano.

Playing Patterns
Purpose: Putting simple musical ideas together to form a classroom piece
Divide students into groups of two or three, with each group having a keyboard, tuned bells, or an Orff instrument. Guide students through the instructions found in the worksheet.

Let each group perform their written pattern. Establish a steady beat, and as the conductor, bring in all the groups one by one to play together. Ask students to suggest changes that might improve the piece.
TEACHER NOTES

Featured Instruments

- Tuned Bells
- Orff Instruments
- Keyboard
- Voice