

The Adventures of Flat Piano

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Hello, and welcome to the Adventures of Flat Piano, a Digital Do-It-Yourself Curriculum where we will make a flat piano and travel the world with our pianos to learn children's songs and continents. My name is Hannah Snavelly, and I am a graduate student in music at the University of California, Riverside. This presentation is part of the Gluck Fellowship for Online Learning.



The piano is a popular instrument around the world and is often taught here in the United States for students who want to begin to learn music. I began learning piano when I was seven years old, and I have been playing ever since – for a total of 17 years! The piano, though, is rather large! And when I leave home and my piano, I want to keep playing. So instead, I like to make a flat piano and use that to practice. You can do this as well, and take your piano on adventures around the world. The goal of The Adventures of Flat Piano is to connect children’s songs to geography.

Format of This Curriculum:

- Current video: the basics of the piano
- How to Make your Flat Piano video
- 5 Song videos
- Accompanying pdfs for each video
- Printable flat piano, a world map to color, and a resource list for further learning

In this video, I will explain the basics of the piano. In future videos, you will learn how to make your own flat piano and play children's songs from around the world. Other elements in this Do-it-yourself curriculum include a world map so you can color continents we learn about, a flat piano template, and resources for further learning. Now, let's learn about the piano.

Grand Piano



Pianos come in many different shapes and sizes. The biggest is the grand piano. Professional pianists and university students most frequently play the grand pianos.



Upright Piano

The middle-sized one is the upright piano. These are the types of pianos that families often own, as they fit more easily into a house. Most upright pianos that I have played have also been very old.



The smallest piano is the keyboard. Beginning students and individuals typically play the keyboard the most, and they are best for people who have limited space in the home – like me!

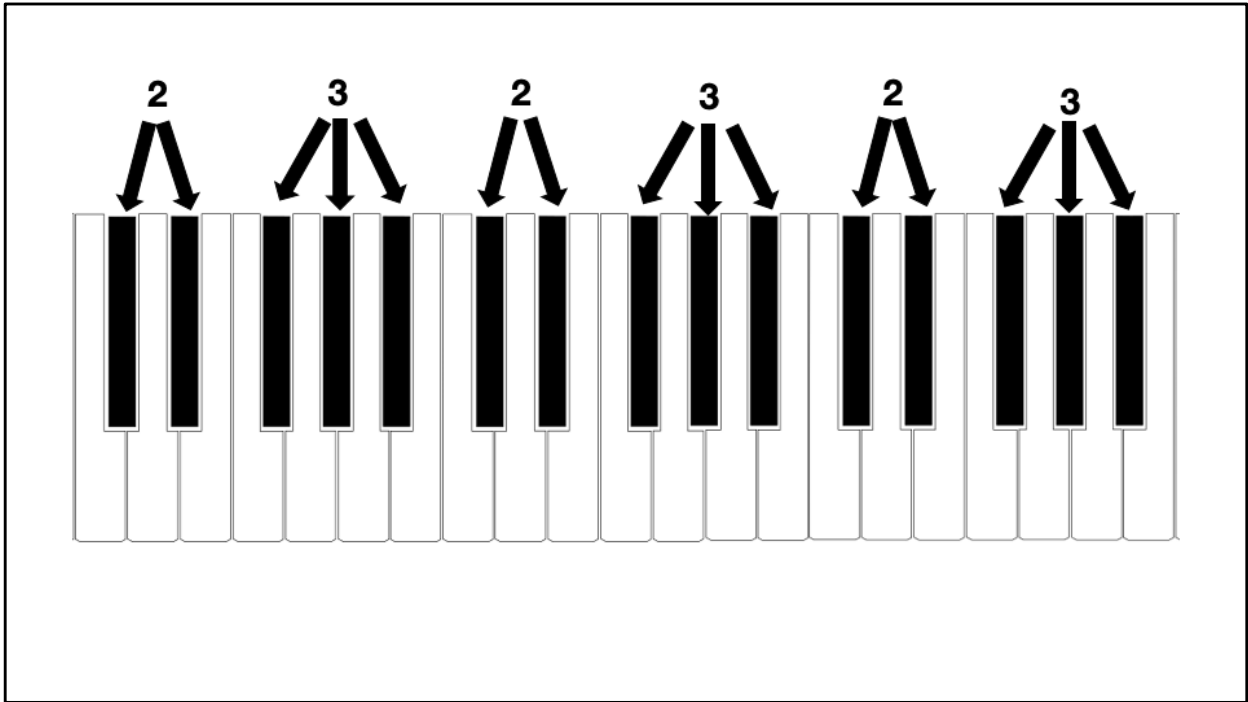


You sit on a chair to play the piano, and you make a sound by pressing your fingers down on the buttons, which are called keys.

Eighty-Eight (88) total keys!



There are eighty-eight keys in total! The piano has both white and black keys.



Black keys are in groups of 2's and 3's.

Low Sounds



Thunder
BOOM!!!!



Truck
Vroom



Bass drum
BOOM!!!!



Cat purring
Purr

The most important part about beginning to learn the piano is understanding the difference between high and low sounds. A low sound could be thunder, a truck driving by, an instrument like the bass drum, or a cat purring.

High Sounds



Whistle

Priiiiiii



Birds Chirping

Tweet Tweet



Windchimes

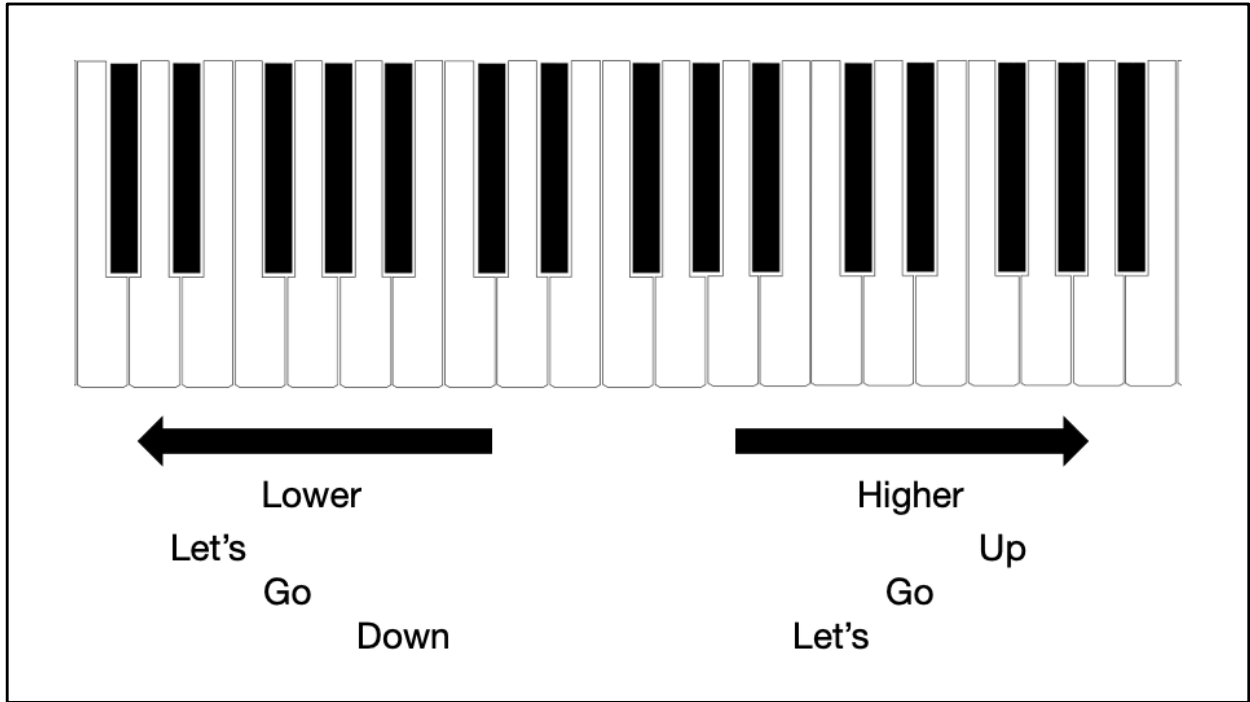
Cling Clang



Flute

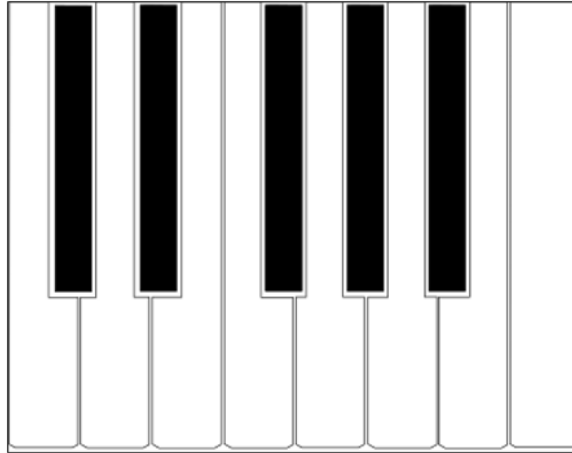
Tootle

A high sound could be a whistle, birds chirping, windchimes, or an instrument like the flute.

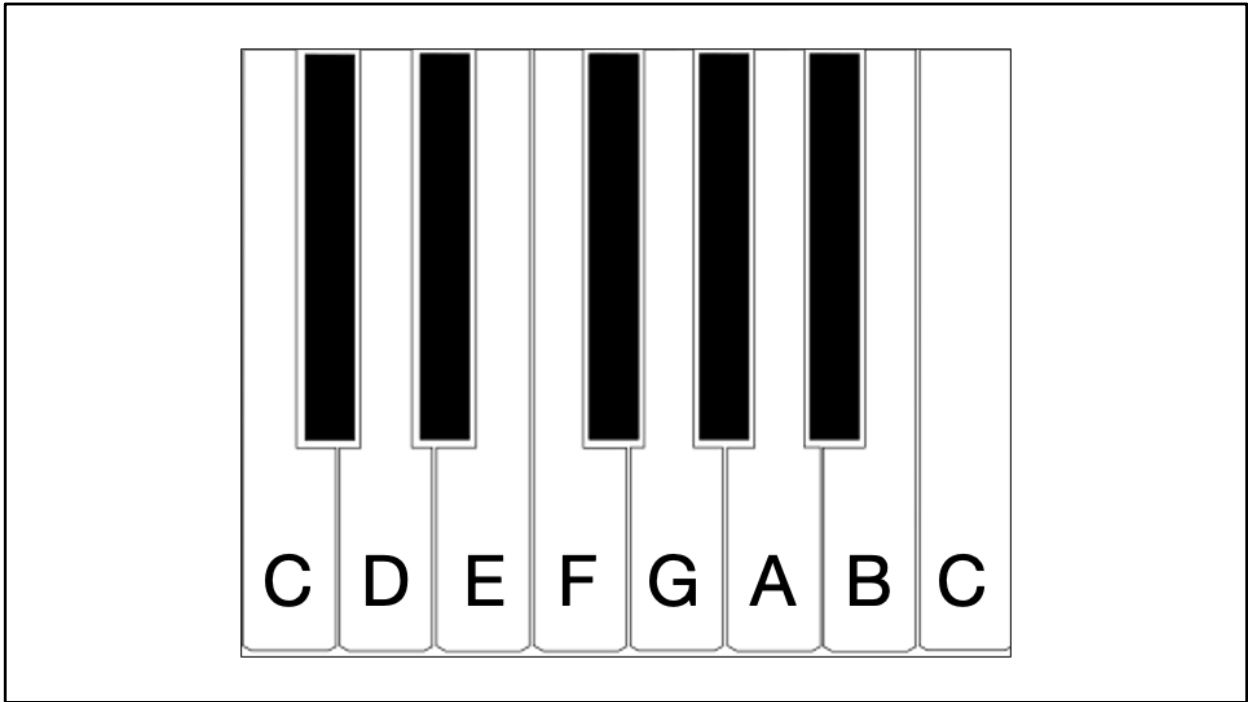


To play lower notes on the piano, move left, or down. To play higher notes on the piano, move right, or up.

8 White Keys || 5 Black Keys

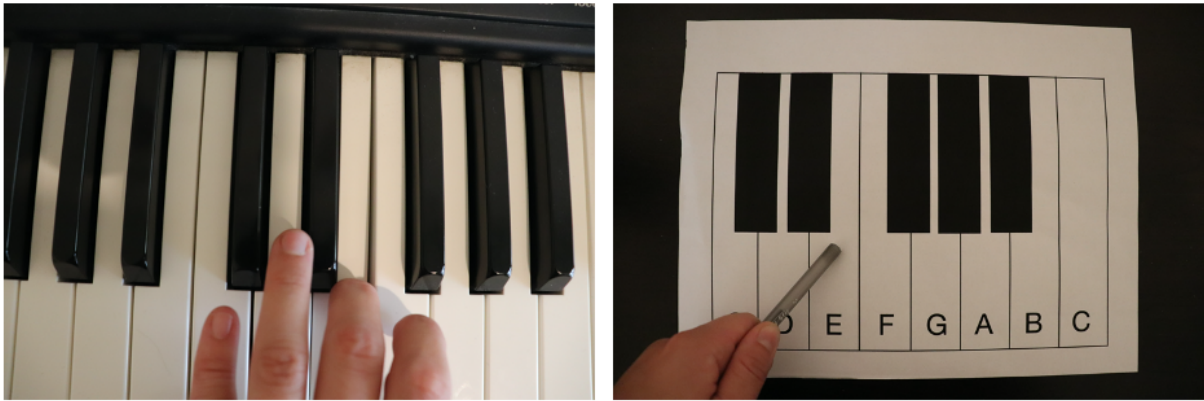


For the flat piano that we will make, you will use the hand you are most comfortable with to hit the correct keys, which will each be assigned a different letter of the alphabet. Our piano has eight white keys and five black keys – one set of two black keys, and one set of three black keys. We will only play on the white keys, but the black keys are helpful for you to remember where you are supposed to play.

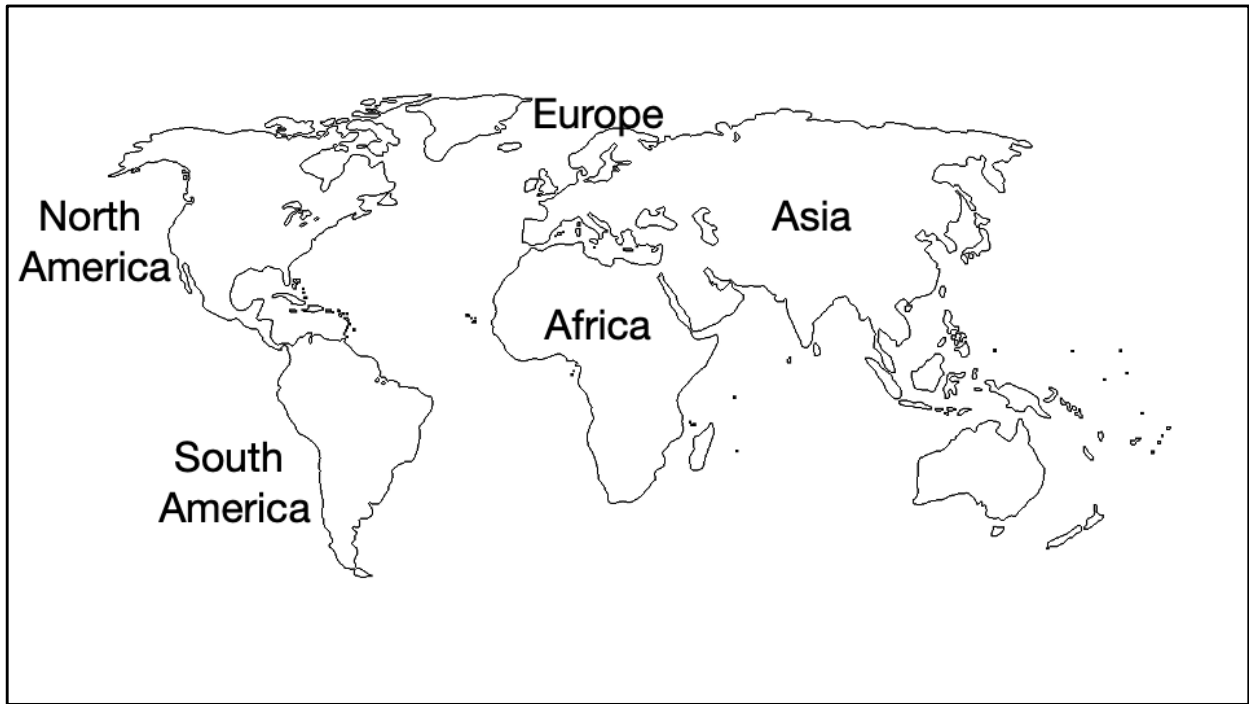


Each white key has a different letter of the alphabet: C D E F G A B and C. C is the name for both the lowest sounding key and the highest sounding key. The C on the left is the lowest, and as we move right, each key sounds higher.

Play Along on Your Flat Piano



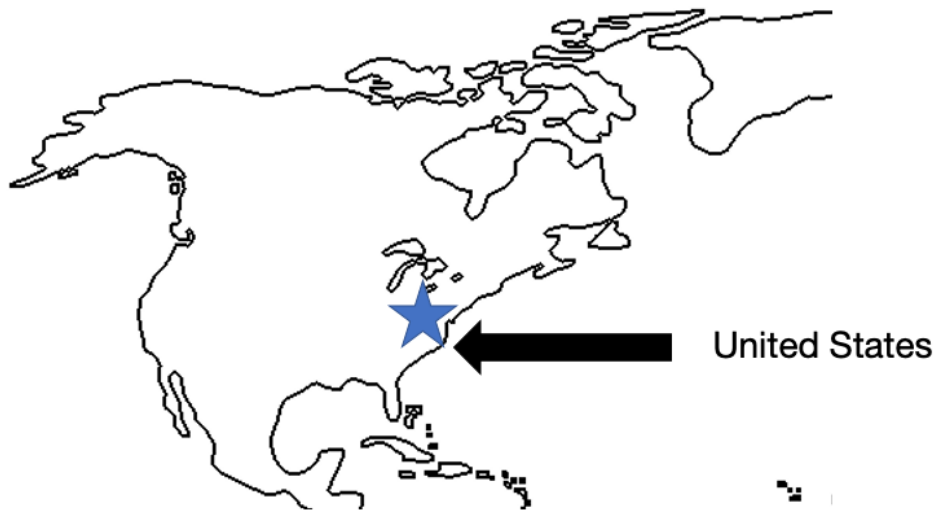
When learning music for this video series, I will play the piece on the piano and you can play along with your flat piano. I will also provide instructions for playing each song on the video PDF so that you can follow along there.



Next, let's discover all the places we will travel with our flat pianos! We will travel to five different continents, or groups of countries:

- North America
- South America
- Europe
- Africa
- Asia

North America - Mary Had a Little Lamb



I would like to briefly introduce you to each of the songs, and provide some information about them. As a note, in the diagram you will see an arrow, which points to the country the song is from, while the entire image is the continent. We will begin right here in the United States, which is part of North America, with a song that is hopefully familiar to many of you. It is called “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” The words were written over 200 years ago, and the song comes from Massachusetts, which is a small state on the East coast of the United States.

Europe - Ah, vous dirai-je, maman



Next, we will travel across the Atlantic Ocean to France, which is in Europe, and learn the song “Ah, vous dirai-je, maman,” which you may know as well.

Europe - Ah, vous dirai-je, maman

Melody – the keys you will play on your piano. Lower and higher sounds played in order to create a song.

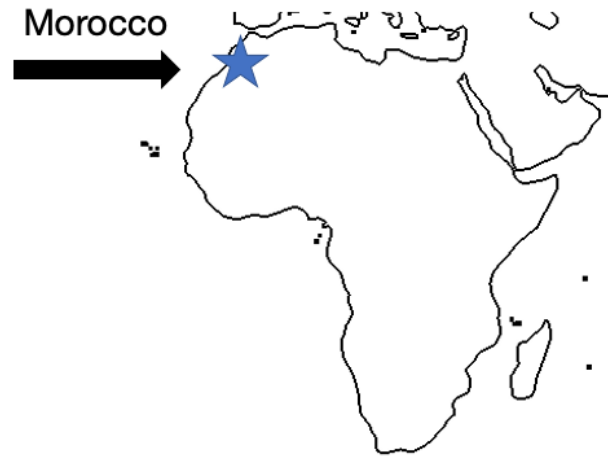
The melody, or the different keys you will play on your piano, is from France, but you perhaps know this song best as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”

South America - Caballito Blanco



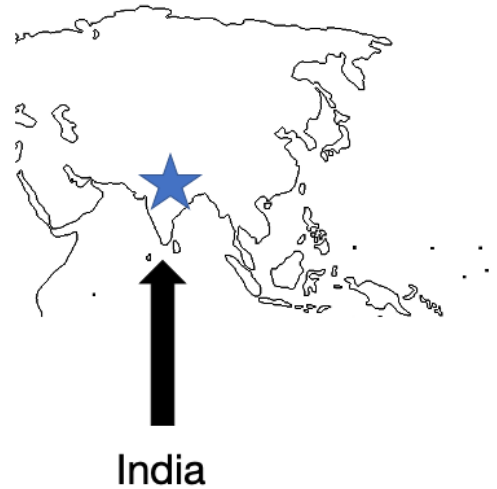
After that, our adventure takes us to South America, to the long, thin, country of Chile, where we will learn the song “Caballito Blanco,” or “Little White Horse.” This song is sung in other countries throughout South America as well – for example, I have heard this song sung in both Chile and Mexico - and it is a little more difficult to play than the first two. The singer is talking to a white horse, asking it to take her back to the town where she was born.

Africa - Aram Sam Sam



The fourth song, “Aram Sam Sam,” comes from Morocco, which is a country in the northern part of Africa. I learned this song at a summer camp I went to as a child, but in English. The original words, though, are in Arabic, which is the official language of Morocco. The song is actually a game, and most of the lyrics mean nothing, although one of the words means “friend.” Please note that we will only learn the first half of the song, because the second half is a bit difficult for beginner piano players.

Asia - Anile, Anile



Finally, we will end our travels in Asia, and specifically the country of India, with the song “Anile, Anile,” or “Chipmunk, Chipmunk.” This song talks about a chipmunk, telling it to climb a tree and bring fruit back to the singer. “Anile” is sung in the Tamil language, which is spoken in the southern part of India.

This presentation demonstrated the basics of the piano so that you can travel with your flat piano and play with confidence, and it introduced the five songs we will learn together. Now, let's make our pianos and begin our adventure around the world! To make your flat piano, move on to the video titled "How to Make Your Flat Piano."