

# Grade 1

## Beginning Recorder

A Parent's Guide for Teaching  
Soprano Recorder



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# Reading Music: A Brief Introduction

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Welcome to *Beginning Recorder!* Whether you are an accomplished musician or a beginner, this book will give you the tools you need to introduce your child to a world of music. This book will lead you step by step through the process of holding the recorder, playing notes, and playing songs. If you have never played the recorder before, you will be learning right alongside your child. Making music together can be great fun, and we hope you will both enjoy your explorations into this simple, enchanting instrument.

It is helpful before you begin to have a little background in music theory. This introduction will give you the basics on reading music so that you can learn the songs in this book. This music theory section is not meant to be shared with your child. Simply read the section on your own, and practice a bit so that you know what you are doing.

You will find that after a little practice, you will begin to feel comfortable playing the recorder. At that point, you can start your child off with learning the first notes and songs. By playing with your child, you can model correct fingering, posture, breath control, and timing. Just let them imitate what you do. Soon they will know how to play many songs completely on their own, with very little effort.

In Part 1, you will learn the notes B, A, and G first, and then learn high D and C. Part 2 consists of learning songs that use all five of these notes. Each note will be introduced by showing the placement of the note on the staff and a drawing of the recorder, showing the correct fingering. The holes that are shown in orange are the holes to be covered to produce that note. Your child will be more interested in watching what you do and imitating your actions than in looking at the drawings in the book, so feel free to just set the book aside once you have memorized the song.

Enjoy the music and have fun!

Music is written on a **STAFF**. A staff is composed of five horizontal lines separated by four spaces. Each line of space represents a particular note.



The lines and spaces are always counted from the bottom up.

The staff takes on a definite character when a **CLEF** sign is placed at its beginning, at the far left. There are many clefs used in music, but the **TREBLE** (or G) **CLEF** is most commonly used for recorder and is the only one we use in this book.

A treble clef looks like this:  and is placed on a staff like this:



We use the first seven letters of the alphabet to identify the notes: **A, B, C, D, E, F, G**. Since **E** is the name of the first line on the staff, we will start there. The next space up from **E** is **F**. The next line up from **F** is **G**. The next space up from **G** is **A**, and so on, as you can see in the diagram below.

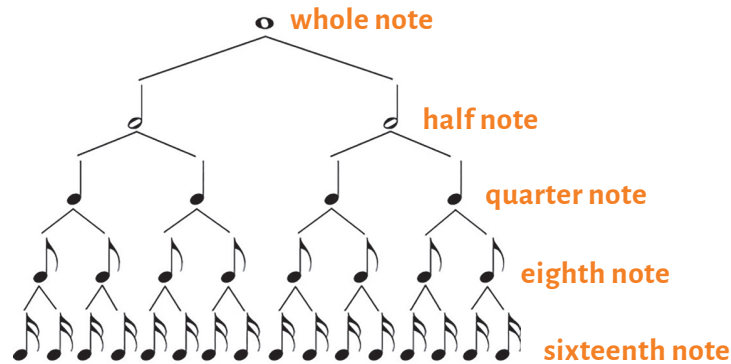


A whole note equals 2 half notes, or 4 quarter notes, or 8 eighth notes, or 16 sixteenth notes.

**NOTES** are circles, either empty or filled in, with or without stems, that are placed on the staff in a certain sequence to make a melody. Each note has a definite count, or time, indicated by its shape. Notes have a time value (the number of beats it is held for) that is relative to other notes. For instance, a **whole note** (○) is always held twice as long as a **half note**; a **half note** (◐) is always held twice as long as a **quarter note**; a **quarter note** (◑) is always held twice as long as an

**eighth note** (◒), and so on. If a quarter note is held for one beat (as it usually is), a half note is held for two beats, and a whole note is held for four beats.

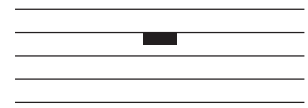
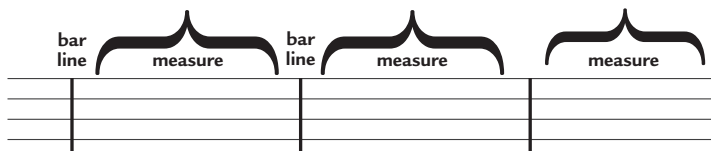
Here is a diagram that may help you to understand the relationship between the notes:



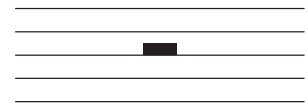
A dot placed after a note increases its time count by one-half. For example, a quarter note followed by a dot (♩.) would be held for three-eighths count (equal to a quarter note plus an eighth note) and a half note with a dot (♭.) would have a count of three-fourths (equal to a half note plus a quarter note). You will not see very many of these dotted notes in the songs in this book, so don't be too concerned with it for now.

In some pieces of music, there are **RESTS**. They are intervals of silence during which you do not play. Like notes, they each have a specific count and are “place holders” to keep the beat, even when a note is not being played. The rests are shown at right.

A **BAR LINE** is a vertical line drawn across the staff. The space between two bar lines is called a **MEASURE**. A bar line followed immediately by a heavy bar line indicates the end of a piece of music.



*whole rest*



*half rest*



*quarter rest*



*eighth rest*



Each measure has a particular time value (number of counts) that remains consistent throughout the piece, unless a new **TIME SIGNATURE** is introduced.



A time signature will determine how many counts (or beats) the notes and rests in each measure will receive. The time signature consists of two numbers, one above the other, placed at the beginning of the piece following the clef sign.



The top number is the total number of beats in one measure and the bottom number is the kind of note that receives one beat. For our purposes, it is only the top number you will have to pay attention to, since the bottom number will always be 4.

It helps to count the beats aloud while clapping or tapping the rhythm on your leg when you are learning a new piece. This will help you get the cadence right. In a four-beat measure, you count 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, over and over. In a three-beat measure, you count 1-2-3, 1-2-3, etc.

As you count a steady 1-2-3-4 beat, clap where each notes goes. If the piece only has quarter notes, your words and claps will match up exactly. If the piece has half notes (which get held for two beats) or eighth notes (which only get half a beat), you will be clapping more or less often than the words.



In 4/4 time, there are four beats in a measure.

A quarter note or quarter rest receives one beat.

A half note or half rest receives two beats.

A whole note or whole rest receives four beats.

Whatever combination of notes or rests are used, there will always be a total of four beats per measure in 4/4 time.



In 2/4 time, there are two beats to a measure.

A quarter note or rest receives one beat.

A half note receives two beats and takes up the whole measure.



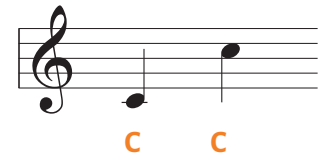
In 3/4 time, there are three beats to a measure.

A quarter note or rest receives one beat.

A quarter note plus a half note (or a dotted half note) receive three beats and take up the whole measure.



We have already learned that the placing of a note on a particular line or space on the staff gives the note its name. The higher its position on the staff, the higher its pitch, or sound. The lower its position on the staff, the lower its pitch. Therefore, you can have two notes of the same letter names on different parts of the staff, pitched an octave (eight notes) apart.

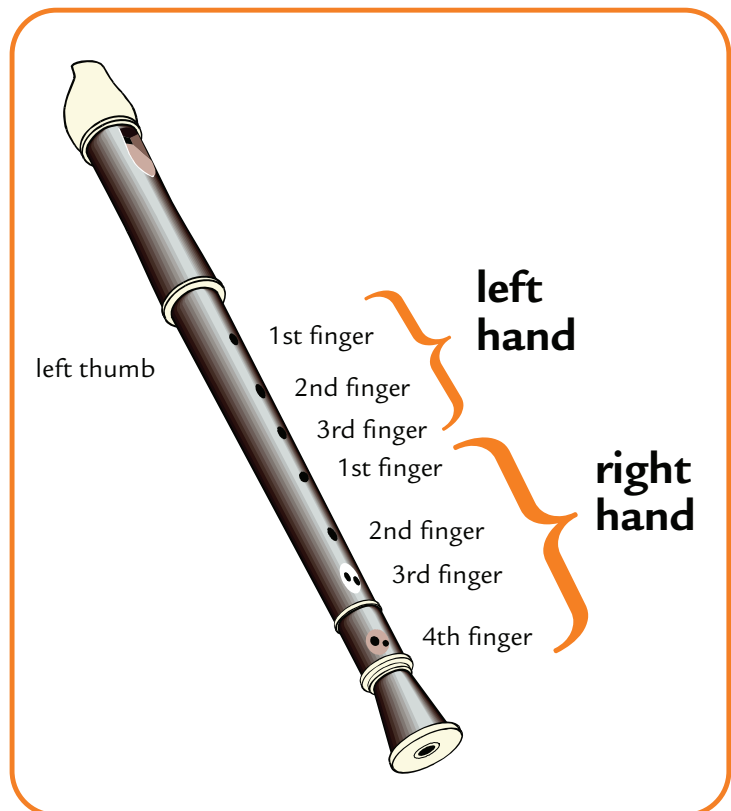


## Holding the Recorder

The recorder has eight holes, seven on the front and one in the back. It is held with the left hand closest to your mouth and the right hand lower down. The left thumb covers the hole in the back and the other fingers follow as shown in the illustration on the following page.

Each finger covers only the hole assigned to it, and no other. This stays the same. The right thumb is used only to support the recorder and the left little finger is not used at all. Support the recorder with your right thumb at the back of the fourth hole from the top.

Keep your fingers and thumbs in a relaxed position when they are not covering a hole.





## Playing the Recorder

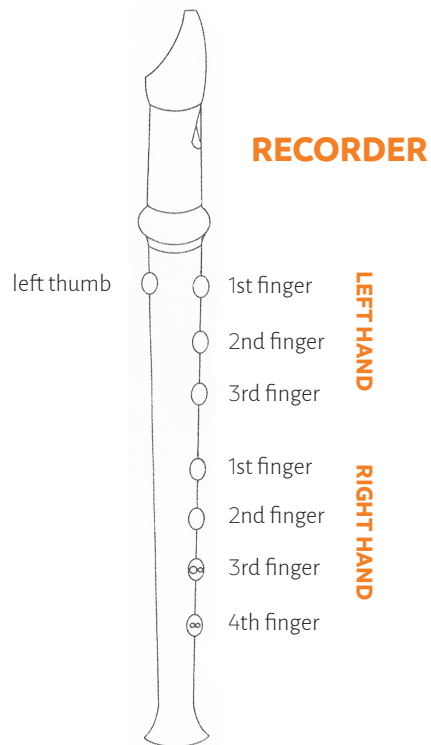
Open your mouth slightly. Put the mouthpiece of your recorder on your lower lip. Close your upper lip gently, but don't press hard. Keep the recorder away from the teeth and tongue. Sit or stand in a relaxed position and hold the recorder at a 45° angle, pointing diagonally down.

Try to use a steady, even breath when playing. You may find you need to take a breath at the end of each measure, or after every two measures, depending on how slowly you are playing. Try to learn to control your breath so you don't have to stop to breathe in the middle of a measure. Let your child breathe at his or her own rate—don't draw attention to it. As long as you model good breath control, your child will eventually learn it as well.



# Fingering Chart

A musical notation system with ten staves. The top staff shows a treble clef and ten notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5. Below each note is a diagram of a recorder with colored dots indicating finger placement: orange for fingers to be pressed down and white for fingers to be lifted. The sequence of fingerings is: 1-2-3-4 (left hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand), 1-2-3 (right hand).



## How to Use This Book

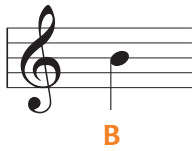
This book is designed to let you move through the lessons at your own pace. Take your time so that you and your child become very relaxed and comfortable playing each piece. As you add new pieces, go back and review the earlier ones regularly. You can use these “old favorites” to warm up each day before you explore new material.

You and your child can also take turns making up simple tunes that you each try to imitate. This can be fun and is good practice for fingering, breath control, and rhythm.

You will probably find that working together on the recorder each day for ten minutes or so is enough. You don't want to work too long, especially at first when fingers are unused to holding the recorder and playing notes, and little hands are likely to tire quickly. After spending a short time playing songs together, put the recorders away. Always end while things are going well—this will leave your child feeling satisfied and eager for more the next day.



# Introducing Notes



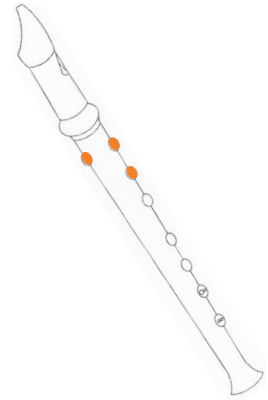
## Introducing the Note B

### 1. Exercise for B



### 2. Exercise for B





## Introducing the Note A

### 3. Exercise for A



### 4. Exercise for A



### 5. Exercise for B and A



### 6. Exercise for B and A



### The Fork and the Spoon

Shari Mueller

Notes B, A



Play me a tune said the fork to the spoon ting tong ting

