

At-Home Music Activities

From Your Friends at Alfred Music



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How to Use This Resource:

We know that many of you have had to change the design of what music learning looks like and where it takes place, on very short notice. Alfred Music called upon some of our most creative writers to craft these at-home music activities just for you! Most of these can be accomplished with very simple, in-home resources, and relatively little preparation. They are intended to be flexible and adaptable for the needs of your learners, so don't be afraid to use them as a jumping-off point for your own creativity!

Note that some activities for young children may require the assistance of a proficient reader to guide primary students through an activity. What a wonderful way for parents, caregivers, and siblings alike to experience the joy of making music!



Carnival of the Animals (Bedroom Ballet)

By Andy Beck



Directions:

Experiment with movements that express the music of Camille Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*. You can find recordings of each movement (as listed below) on YouTube. If the music is smooth, move smoothly. If the music is jumpy, jump. If the music is fast, move quickly. Get the idea? Be creative and artistic. Most importantly, have fun! Do you need to do this in your bedroom? Not really. Any safe place with room to move will be great. Want to share your ballet? Ask a parent or sibling to video your performance, or plan an at-home live performance.

1. Carnival of the Animals - Aviary

An "aviary" is a large bird cage. Hold a length of colorful ribbon or a scarf in one hand. Use the ribbon or scarf to dance like birds flying overhead.

2. Carnival of the Animals - Kangaroos

Can you hop in place like a kangaroo? Now try rocking an imaginary "baby" in your arms like a mama kangaroo. Alternate between these two movements to match the music. Try this one with a stuffed toy, holding it at your belly (when you hop) and like a baby (when you rock).

3. Carnival of the Animals - Chickens and Hens

Make a shaker with a handful of rice inside a plastic Easter egg. Be sure to tape the egg closed with plenty of strong tape. As you listen, shake your egg fast or slow, matching what you hear in the music.

4. Carnival of the Animals - Tortoises

Clear a path around the room, then crawl on your hands and knees very slowly, tracing that path. How many times did you make it around during this two-minute piece? Can you go even slower, slower, slower?

5. Carnival of the Animals - Aquarium

Make a simple fish puppet by cutting a triangle slice (for a mouth) out of a paper plate, then attaching that triangle opposite the mouth (for a tail). Color your fish with beautiful designs. While you listen to the music, let your fish float gracefully around an imaginary aquarium.

6. Carnival of the Animals - Wild Donkeys

Use a donkey prop as you carefully gallop around the room, matching the music. If you don't have a hobby horse at home, you can make one by fastening a sock (decorated like a donkey's face) to the end of a wrapping paper tube, plastic baseball bat, or yard stick. Better yet, grab a clean mop or broom, and pretend it's a donkey.

7. Carnival of the Animals - The Swan

Create graceful, gentle movements with a flowing scarf. Do you have a white shirt or dress? That would be a perfect costume!

8. Carnival of the Animals - The Elephant

For the beginning and end, hold a homemade gray paper chain near your nose. Swing your "trunk" from side to side and/or in full circles in front of you, matching the music. Listen for new sounds in the middle of this song. Try something totally different, maybe some gentle tiptoeing, to show contrast.

9. Carnival of the Animals - March of the Lions

Start by pretending to be asleep, then gradually wake up, open your eyes, yawn, stretch, stand up, and place a paper crown proudly on your head at the flourish. During the fanfare, take a few royal bows to the left and right. When the music changes, grandly march forward, back, in a circle one direction, then in a circle the other. Do this a few times, and every time you hear the fanfare. If you hear a place to do a spin, do it! Maybe pretend to wave to your royal subjects. Do what the music suggests—ending with your crown lifted high overhead!

Extension:

Having fun? Wanna keep going? There are six additional movements in *Carnival of the Animals*. Search for recordings online and continue creating!



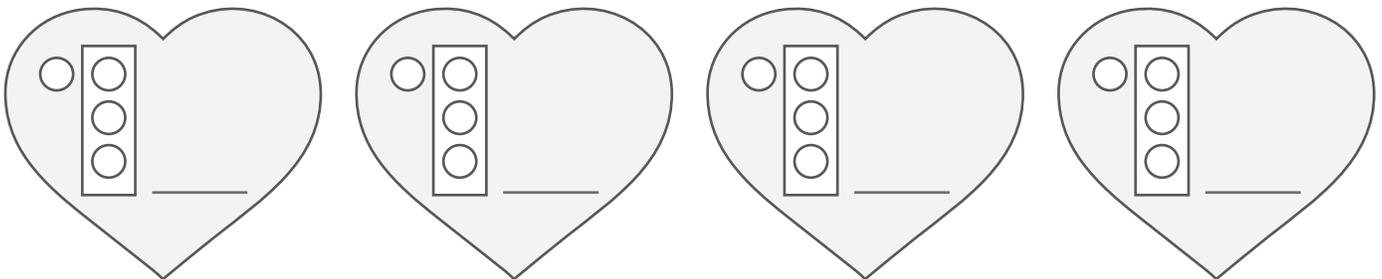
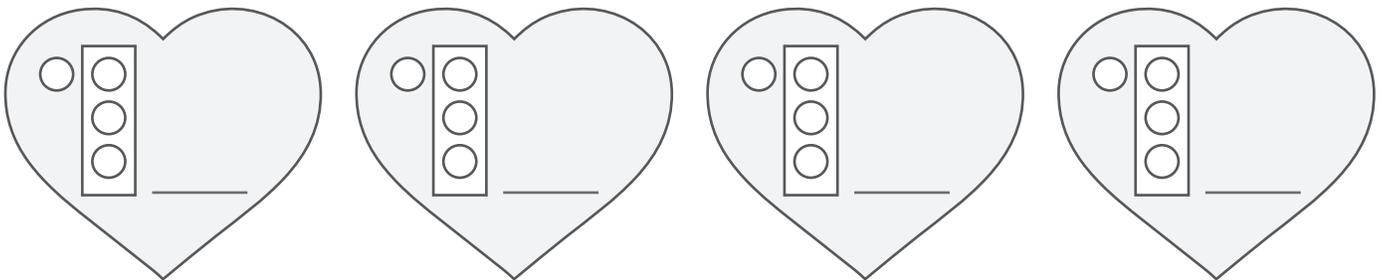
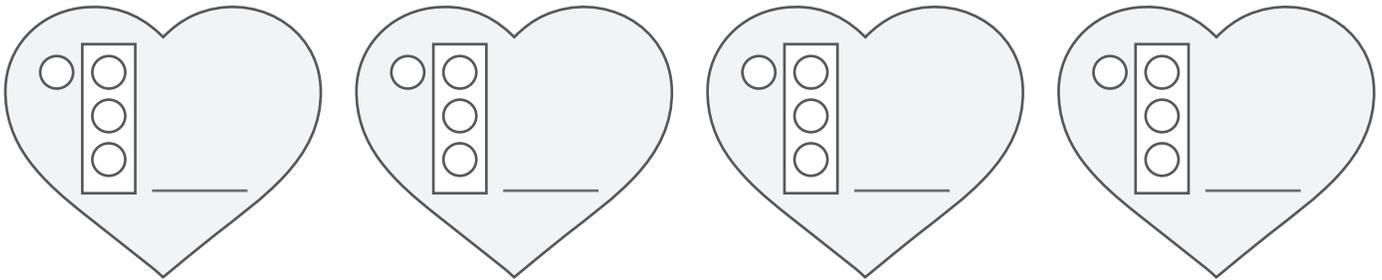
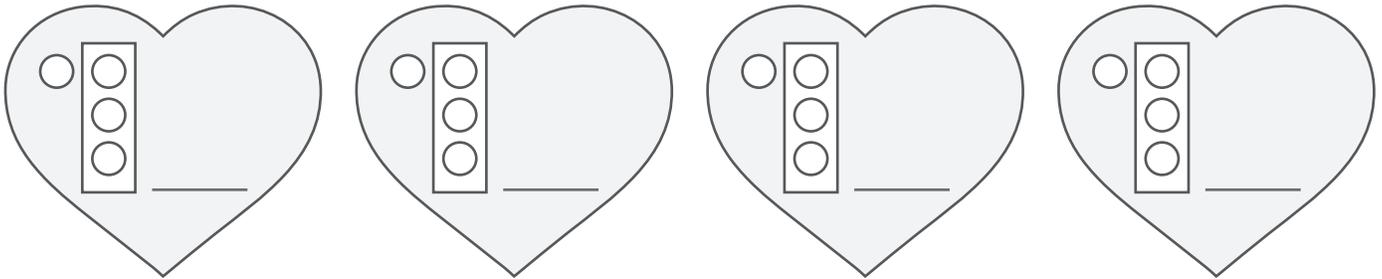
It's in the Bag! (Recorder Composition on B-A-G)

By Danielle Bayert



Directions:

1. Compose your own three note song, and then play it on your recorder.
2. Write ♪♪ ♪ or ♫ on the line in each heart.
3. When you have completed one line (four hearts), practice by clapping your rhythm.
4. Fill in the proper circles on each heart to choose B, A, or G for the left hand of your recorder.
5. Practice your composition one line (four hearts) at a time. Eventually, put it all together, then name your song!



Song Title: _____

March Time

By Joan Eckroth-Riley



Directions:

1. Find a space to march around the room or your yard.
 - a. What directions can you march? Forward, backward, sideways?
 - b. How high can you lift your knees?
 - c. Can you march slowly? How about fast?
 - d. Can you move in different pathways around the room while you are marching?
Curvy, straight, zig-zag?
2. March to beat of "Children's Marching Song" by Mitch Miller, found on YouTube. Don't forget about your different pathways and directions!
 - a. What did the old man find to keep a beat on in the song?
 - b. Can you keep the beat of this song on your thumb while you sing the song?

This old man, he played one, he played knick-knack on his thumb.

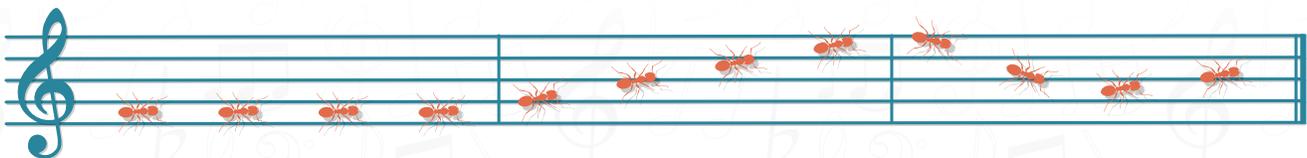
3. What can you find at your house to keep the beat with? A plastic bowl and spoon? Sticks, like the old man did for number 6? Two paper plates make great cymbals!
 - a. Can you march and play your paper plates, sticks, or bowl with this music?
 - b. Can you march and sing the song with the music?
4. Draw a pathway on a piece of paper. March to the music and move that pathway on the floor. Explore different levels: can you march on your tiptoes or down low?
5. Can you make up your own verses that rhyme with the numbers? We know that "one" rhymes with "thumb." Now make up words for two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. End with this:

This old man, he played TEN, he played knick-knack at THE END.

Extension (or on another day):

Repeat the activities above using "The Ants Go Marching One By One" from "Super Simple Songs" on YouTube.

- a. Use your stuffed animals to help you make a row of marching ants.
- b. Can you make a side-by-side row, front-to back, diagonal?



Recorder Dice Game

By Danielle Bayert

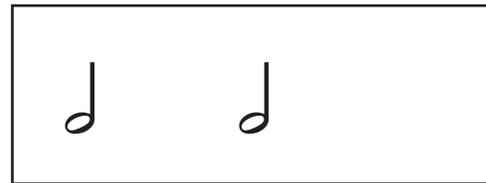
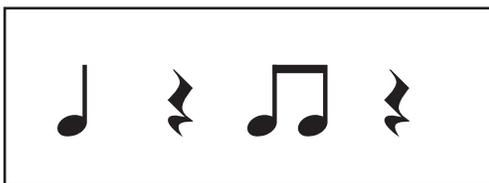
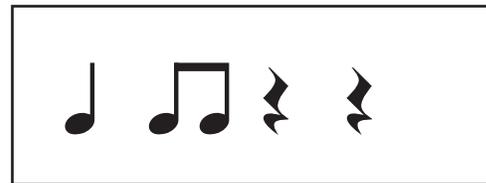
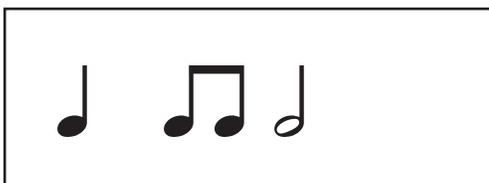
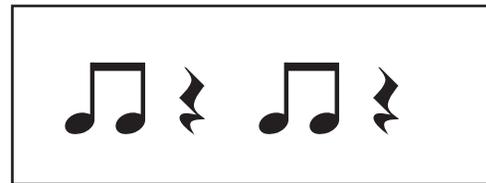
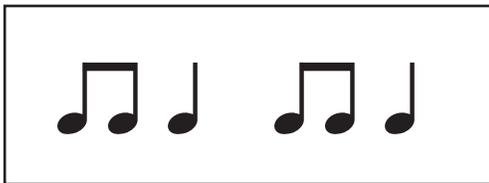
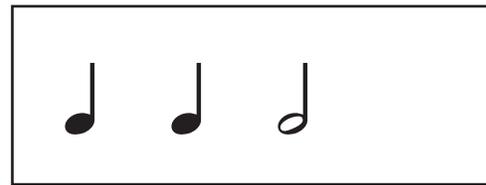
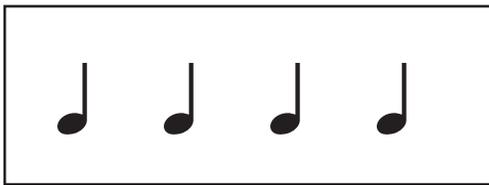


Directions:

First, print out the next page and follow directions to make your dice.

Once you have made your dice play the game below:

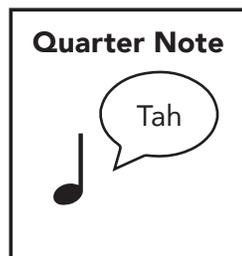
1. Choose one of the rhythms.
2. Clap and say the rhythm.
3. Roll the dice.
4. Play the rhythm using the note (B, A, or G) based on what you rolled.



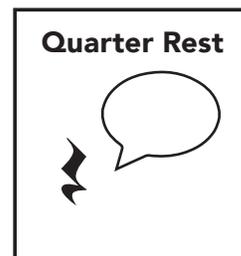
Remember the following:



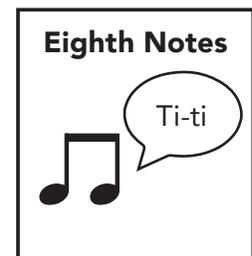
2 counts of sound



1 count of sound



1 count of silence

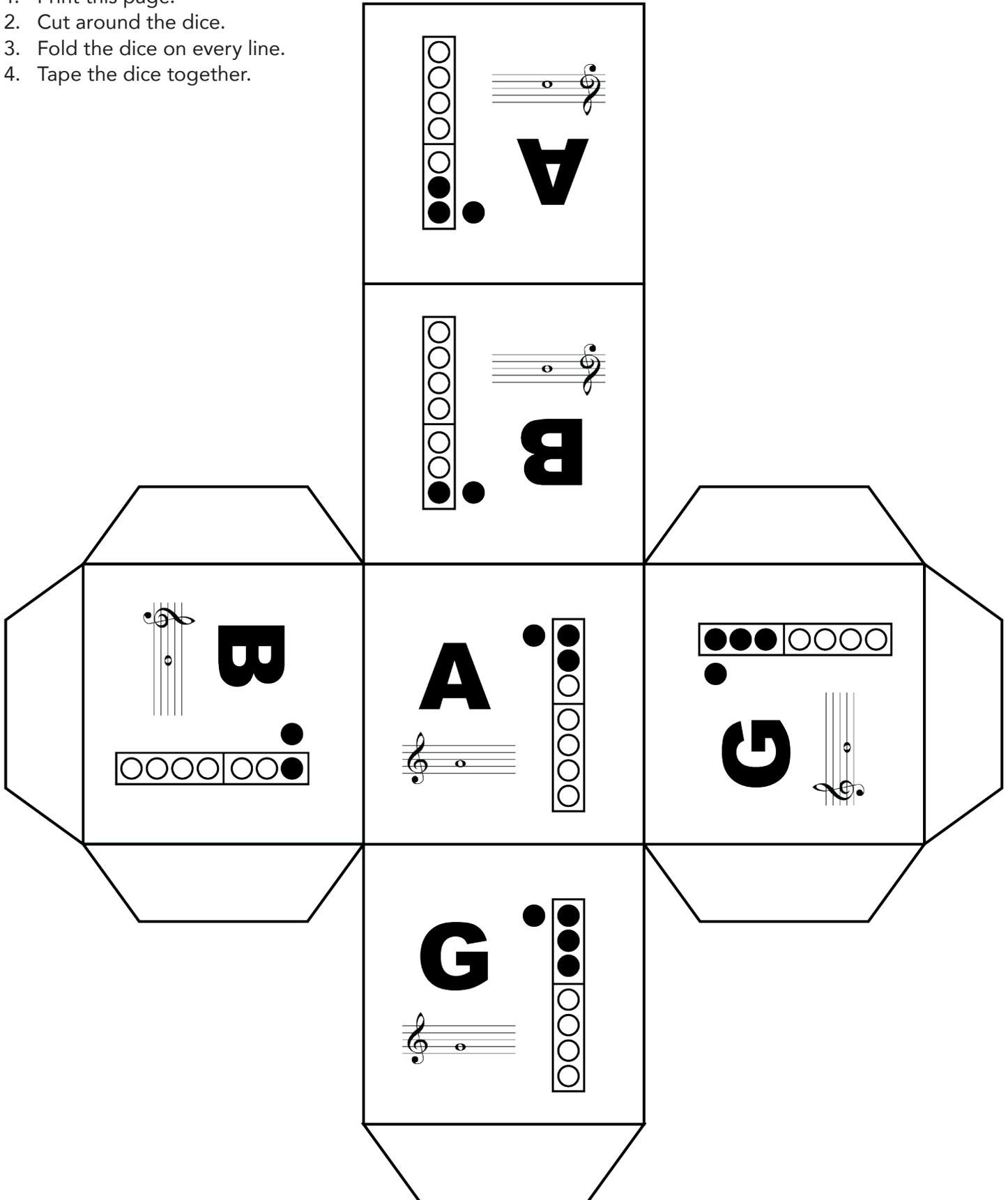


2 sounds on one count

Printable Dice

Directions:

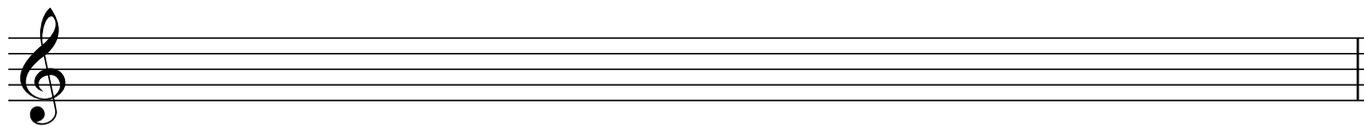
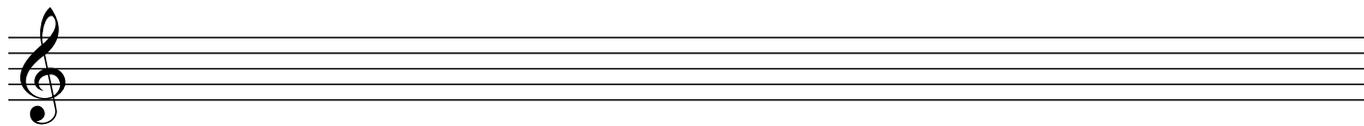
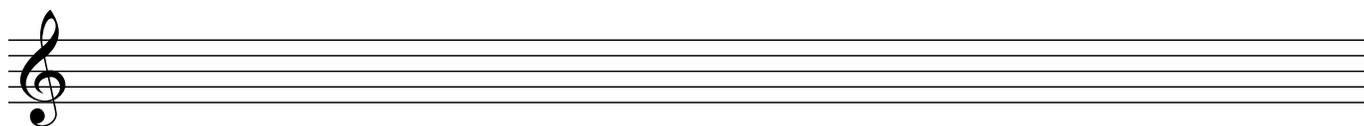
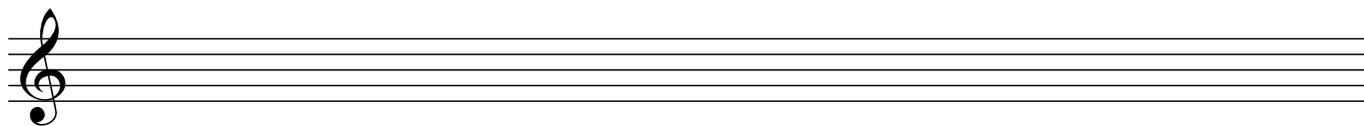
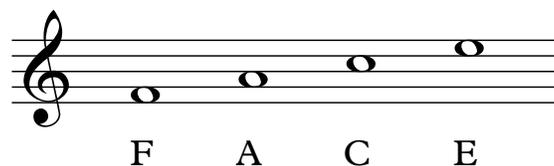
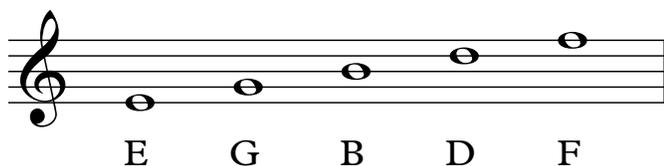
1. Print this page.
2. Cut around the dice.
3. Fold the dice on every line.
4. Tape the dice together.



To Whom it May Concern,

Below, I have written a secret message. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to decode the meaning using letters of the musical alphabet. Good luck!

TOP SECRET



Composer Biography

By Sally K. Albrecht



Directions:

Choose one composer whose work you have rehearsed this year, and write a one-paragraph biography about them, answering at least the following questions. Additional details are great, if you can find them!

For living composers, try checking publisher websites. Many of them will have composer biographies.

- When were they born? (For deceased composers, give both birth and death dates.)
- Where do/did they live?
- What kind of musical groups does/did this composer write for? (Choir, band, orchestra, solo voice or instrument, small ensembles?)
- Do they do anything else in addition to writing music? (Do they teach, or conduct an ensemble, or have a totally different day job?)

Listen to at least two additional pieces by the same composer. List their titles below:

1.

2.

Discuss at least one similarity or difference you hear between the piece you've rehearsed and the two new ones you've listened to. If you played all three pieces for a friend, do you think they'd know they were written by the same composer? Why or why not?

Comparing Voices

By Valeaira Luppens



Directions:

Add your favorite vocalist in the top right box, then compare them to Luciano Pavarotti by completing the chart.

Name	Luciano Pavarotti	My favorite vocalist:
Date of birth	10/12/1935	
Style of music	Italian Opera/Popular music	
Musical training	Received private operatic training	
Vocal classification	Tenor	
Does the performer read standard notation?	He claims he can read music, but cannot read orchestral scores.	
Your favorite work from this artist?	Duke in Verdi's <i>Rigoletto</i>	
Does this performer write their own songs?	No	
Performance arenas	Opera houses, concerts, television	
Nickname	King of the High C's	
Awards	Numerous awards including Primetime Emmy Awards and the GRAMMY® Legend Award	

Feelin' Blue (Write Your Own Blues Lyrics)

By Danielle Bayert



Directions:

Read through the following blues lyric examples. Take note of patterns in the form of the words. Musicians call this the "lyrical form." You may notice that *the first line of words is repeated and the ending words rhyme.*

Example 1 (from "Mean Old Bedbug Blues" by Bessie Smith):

Gals, bed bugs sure is evil, they don't mean me no good.
Yeah, bed bugs sure is evil, they don't mean me no good.
Thinks he's a woodpecker and I'm a chunk of wood.

When I lay down at night, I wonder how can a poor gal sleep.
When I lay down at night, I wonder how can a poor gal sleep.
When some is holding my hand, others eating my feet.

Example 2 (from "Saint Louis Blues" by W.C. Handy):

I hate to see that evening sun go down.
I hate to see that evening sun go down.
Cause my baby, he's gone left this town.

Feelin' tomorrow like I feel today.
If I'm feelin' tomorrow like I feel today.
I'll pack my truck and make my get-a-way.

Example 3 (from "The Broadway Blues" by Carey Morgan):

Oh, there's no use talkin' folks, I'm feelin' blue.
Oh, there's no use talkin' folks, I'm feelin' blue.
All alone in New York town and loaded down with the mean old blues.

Oh, there's no use talkin' folks, the panic's on.
Oh, there's no use talkin' folks, the panic's on.
'Cause my gal's done left me, and my sugar's gone.

Writing Assignment Directions:

1. Pick a topic for your blues song. (Hint: Something that makes you feel sad, frustrated, or upset is usually a great blues subject. Examples: "The Bratty Brother Blues," or "The Online Learning Blues")
2. Write your blues lyrics on the sheet below.
3. Be sure to follow the lyrical form as shown.

Feelin' Blue (Write Your Own Blues Lyrics)

Song Title: _____

By: _____

First Verse

Line 1:

Repeat Line 1:

Line 2 (last word must rhyme with the last word in line 1):

Second Verse

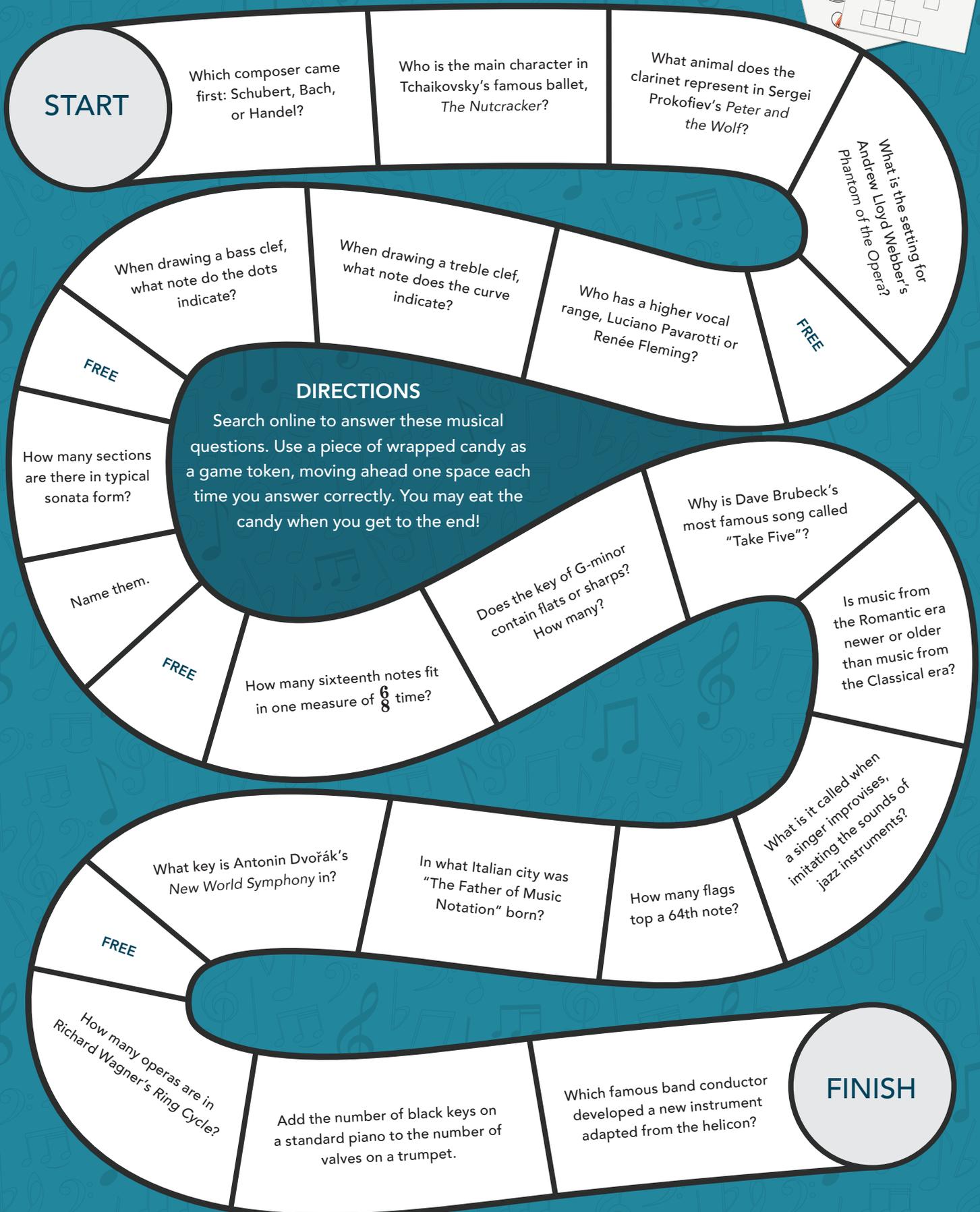
Line 3:

Repeat Line 3:

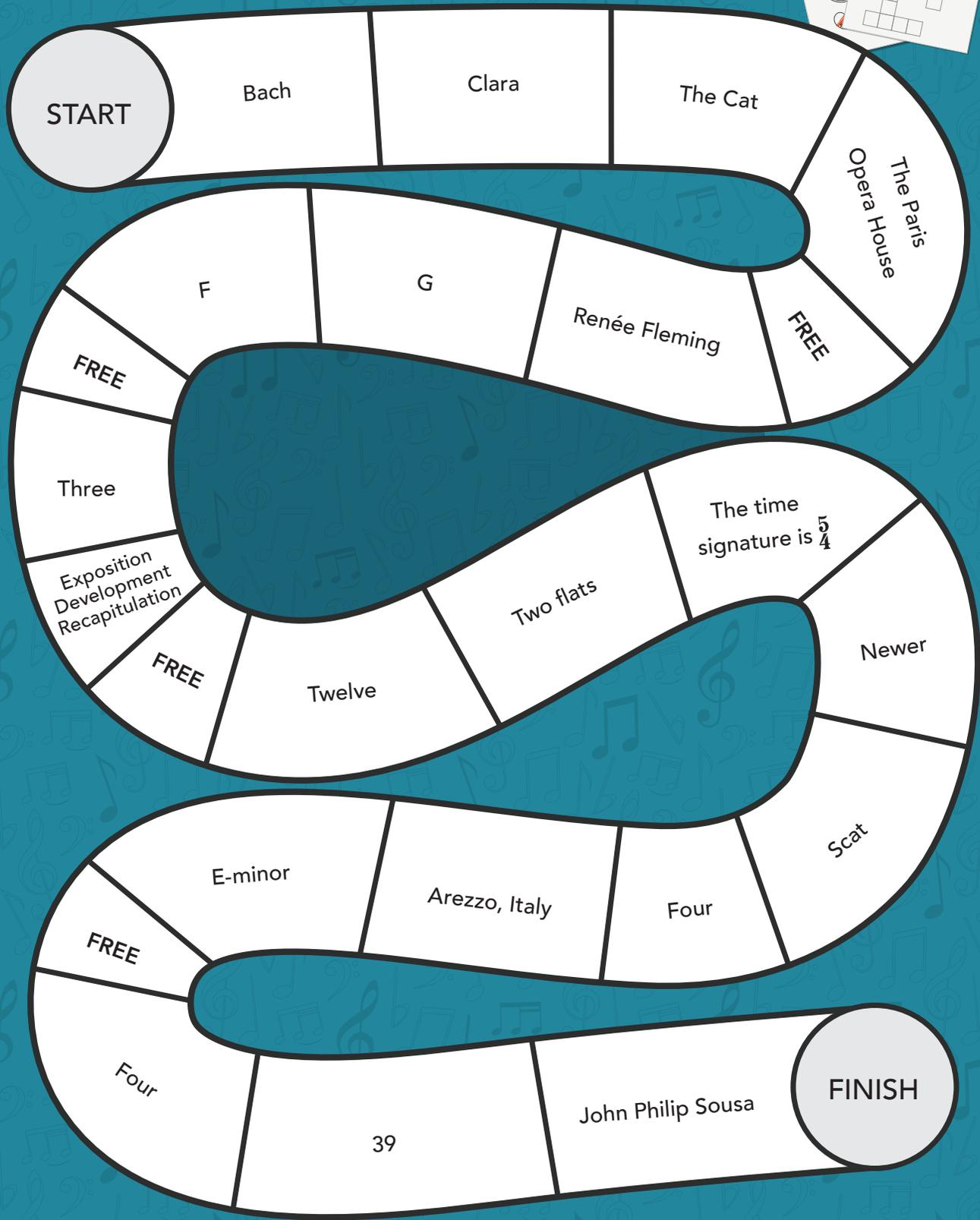
Line 4 (last word must rhyme with the last word in line 3):

Game of Tones (A Musical Board Game)

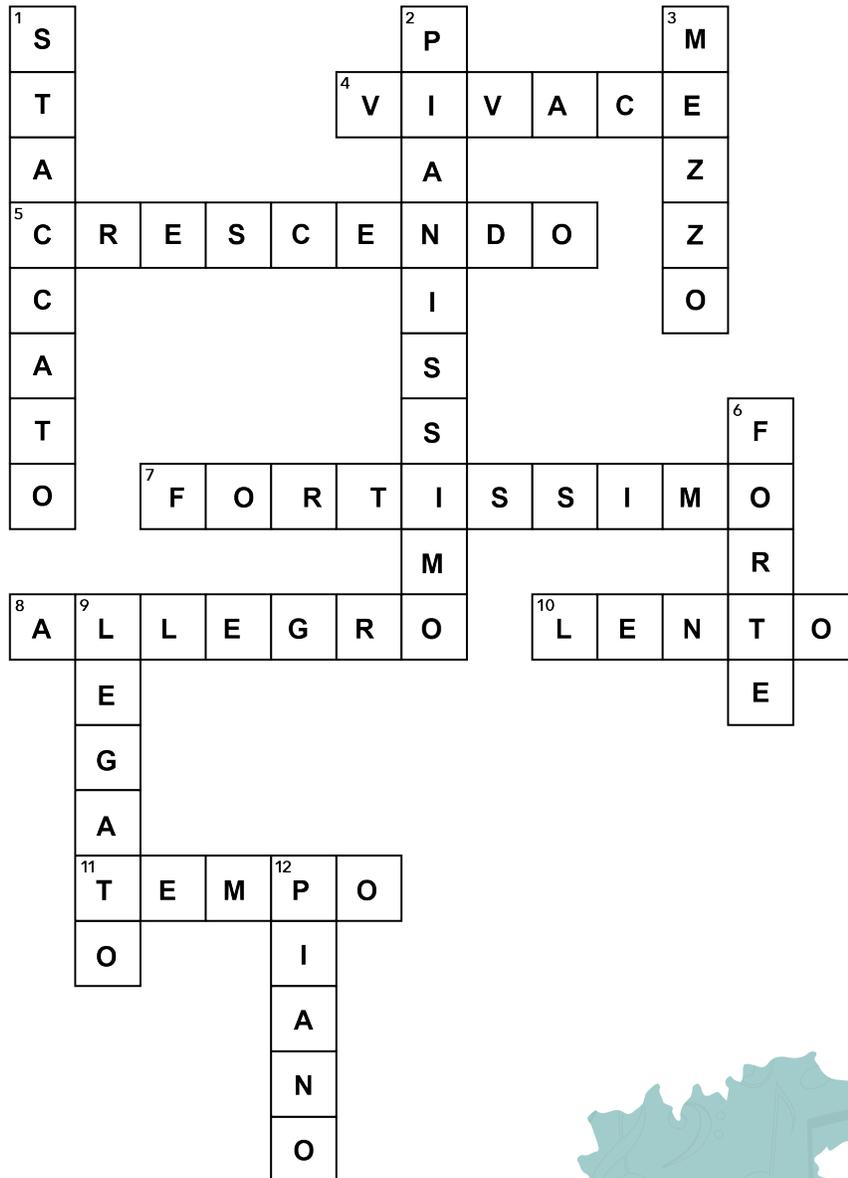
By Andy Beck



Game of Tones (Answer Key)



That's Italian! (Answer Key)



Italians were the first musicians to write music down. It became traditional to use their language for musical terms.



Analyze This!

By Sally K. Albrecht



Directions:

Write an in-depth analysis of one of your favorite pieces by answering the following questions.

Title:

Composer:

Lyricist (If it's the composer, write their name down again.):

Are the words taken from a famous source? (A poem, a quote?) If so, what is it, and when was it first written?

What is the form of the piece? (For example: Verse 1, Verse 2, Chorus, Verse 3, Chorus, Coda.)

Extension:

Take the form from above, and write it out with measure numbers and additional information about which voice part or instrument is doing what.

Example:

Measures 1-4: piano introduction

Measures 5-12: Verse 1. Sopranos and Altos sing in unison

Etc.

At-Home Practice Log

By Anna Wentlent



Directions:

Below is a list of suggested activities that may be used to complete your at-home practice log for middle school or high school chorus. You may want to set a specific goal for yourself (memorize all of your chorus music, master four chords on the ukulele, etc.), mix and match with a different activity from this sheet every day, or come up with a completely different idea of your own! What is something that you've always wanted to do? Now is the time to do it!

- Choose two specific passages from your chorus music to practice for 15–20 minutes
- Record a short video (45 seconds or less) of what you worked on and share it with your choir family on Instagram
- Practice a new vocal skill: vocal percussion, singing in falsetto, belting, etc.
- Learn and memorize a new song (classical, pop, or musical theater), so that you're ready to go for future auditions
- Spend some time browsing through choral music online and send suggestions to your choir director for future concerts
- Read this [Alfred.com article](#) about how to balance a program, then make up your own program for a choir concert
- Work on your sight-singing using a free trial on [SmartMusic.com](#)
- Complete the music theory lessons on [MusicTheory.net](#)
- Try writing an eight-measure composition using the Compose feature at [SmartMusic.com](#)
- Learn about how the human voice works on [VoiceScienceWorks.org](#)
- FaceTime a friend and sing a duet together
- Call one of your grandparents and ask them to teach you one of their favorite songs over the phone
- Perform a mini-concert for your siblings, pets, or stuffed animals
- Write and mail an actual fan letter to your favorite performer
- Clean out your music folder
- Use YouTube tutorials to learn a new instrument: piano, guitar, ukulele, etc.
- Watch the WGBH choir competition series *[Sing That Thing!](#)*
- Watch the PBS high school musical theater competition series *[Broadway or Bust](#)*
- Watch a filmed Broadway production on Netflix, Amazon Prime or BroadwayHD

Daily Practice / Activity Log

Name:

Week:

Date	Start Time	Today, I ...	Next time, I might ...	End Time

SINGO (At-Home Choir Bingo)

By Krista Hart



Directions:

Choose one musical activity to complete each day and cross it off after it's done. Can you get SINGO by completing five activities in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line by the end of week?

CHOIR				
S	I	N	G	O
Watch a video of a professional choir performing live	Compose an 8-measure song using the Compose tool in SmartMusic	Interview someone in your family about their experiences with music	Pick a decade (1950s, 1980s, etc) and listen to three hit songs from that era	Create a percussion instrument using only items found under your bed
Compose new lyrics to "Over the Rainbow"	Learn sign language to a song	Write out the solfège syllables for a familiar song	Complete two "Sing at First Sight" exercises in SmartMusic	Ask an adult what their favorite album is—then listen to it
Create a choir meme	Find a YouTube performance of one of the pieces you sang in choir this year	FREE SPACE	Write a paragraph describing good concert etiquette	Sing a song to your pet
Create a playlist of five choral songs you would like to sing	Record a video of yourself conducting a choral piece	Write a note to a singer in a section other than your own that you admire	Sing a song with a friend online	Watch a movie musical
Watch a YouTube video of another choir singing a piece you know	Research your favorite musician	Sing your part from a choral piece from memory	Design a poster to encourage students to join choir	Invent your own choral-warmup and sing it

Think Like an Arranger!

By Katie O'Connor-Ballantyne



Directions:

Arrangers, like composers, make a number of musical decisions when creating a new arrangement of an existing piece of music. Some arrangements are extremely faithful to the original song, while others use wildly different instrumentation, tempo, or musical styles to change the sound and feeling of a song. Three of my favorite groups that specialize in covers are **Postmodern Jukebox** (period jazz covers of contemporary pop songs), **Walk Off the Earth** (uses really unusual instrument combinations and techniques), and **Pomplamoose** (uses a wide variety of pop musical styles). All three can be easily found on YouTube.

Listen to an original song, then the cover version. Take notes about the similarities and differences between the two versions. Lastly, tell us a little about how YOU might choose to arrange this song!

THINK LIKE AN ARRANGER!		
Song Title:		
Recording Artist:	Original	Cover
YouTube Link:		
Name three ways that the cover is similar to the original:	1. 2. 3.	
Name three ways that the cover is different from the original:	1. 2. 3.	
Tell us a little bit about what YOUR arrangement of this song might sound like:	Instrumentation: Musical Style: Tempo:	

Think Like a Composer!

By Katie O'Connor-Ballantyne



Directions:

Choose two choral pieces that use the same text or poem and fill in the links below. Pieces in Latin are often interesting to compare, because so many composers across many different time periods have used the same set of words. Or, choose a well-known poem, such as Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," and find a setting by a living composer and a deceased one.

Use the chart to compare and contrast different musical elements of each setting. Make note of any musical choices that really grab your attention!

THINK LIKE A COMPOSER!		
Song Title:		
Composer:		
YouTube Link:		
Briefly describe the meaning of the text:		
Voices used:		
Accompaniment:		
Tempo:		
Musical Texture:		
Text Painting:		
Name one thing you heard in the piece that expressed the meaning of the text. Why do you think it was effective?		