



Alfred Music Submission Guidelines

For Piano

Video Overview

This brief introductory [video](#) provides an overview of the piano submission and editing process.

General Submission Guidelines

- We welcome contributions from anyone and never discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or sex.
- Submissions are to be original compositions. We are currently not accepting arrangements or methods.
- Our publications are intended for educational use, typically Pre-K–12, focusing on early-elementary to late-intermediate repertoire. Appropriate pedagogy should be considered.
- Alfred Music is to be the only publisher in current review of the manuscript.
- Please allow eight weeks for a response.

Tips for Writing Educational Piano Music for Supplemental Collections

- Music should generally sound more challenging than it is to play and include clear patterns that fit nicely in the hands. Equal attention must be given to how the music sounds, feels, and looks on the page.
- Supplemental piano repertoire should be slightly more substantial than method book pieces and consist of imaginative works ideal for student performances, such as recitals, festivals, and competitions.
- Careful consideration should be given to the musical form at each level—typically ABA, AABA, AABB, and other simple forms—to facilitate learning and memorization. Intros and codas may also be used to expand basic forms.
- Educational pieces are generally short, especially at the early levels. Early-elementary pieces typically range from 18–32 measures, while the elementary level and up can range from 24–72 measures. More expansive forms like rhapsodies can sometimes extend beyond this range at higher levels.
- Adhering to Alfred's piano leveling guidelines is crucial to creating consistency across the entire catalog. See the leveling outline below for detailed information for each level.
- When in doubt, consult similar Alfred collections at the corresponding level.

For more information, explore these articles from the Alfred Music Blog:

[Compose Yourself: Thoughts on Getting Started as a Composer](#)

[A Letter from the Editor: Getting Ready to Submit a Piece for Publication](#)

Notation Resources:

[Alfred's Essential Dictionary of Music Notation](#)

[Behind Bars: The Definitive Guide to Music Notation](#)

Supplemental Piano Leveling Overview

EARLY ELEMENTARY

- The hands stay in one five-finger position—usually C position, G position, or middle C position.
- There are few or no accidentals.
- Simple rhythms are used—quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes, whole notes.
- Eighth notes are not used.
- Simple meters are used— $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$.
- Reading range spans Low G to Treble D.
- Key signatures are not used.

ELEMENTARY

- The hands may move slightly out of fixed hand positions or have changes using different five-finger patterns (e.g., moving from C position to G position).
- There may be basic accidentals—sharps, flats, naturals (no double-sharps or double-flats).
- Eighth notes may be used.
- Simple meters are used— $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{2}{4}$.
- The reading range is the same as early elementary.
- Some key signatures may be used—usually only G major.
- Very basic pedaling—“Press damper pedal and hold to end” or very long pedaling (drawn in) with few or no pedal changes. Many students at this level cannot reach the pedals easily or at all.

LATE ELEMENTARY

- The hands change hand positions frequently.
- The hands cover a greater range than five-finger positions through the use of scales. (Finger 2 can cross over finger 1.)
- Simple meters are used.
- Rhythms may include dotted quarter notes and eighth notes.
- The reading range is extended to the entire grand staff.
- Simple pedaling—long pedal marks or pedaling that lifts during rests; simplest examples of syncopated pedaling.

EARLY INTERMEDIATE

- Early intermediate pieces are easier than standard classical repertoire, such as the Kuhlau Sonatinas.
- Compound meter may be used— $\frac{6}{8}$.
- There are few or no 16th notes.
- Ledger lines above and below the grand staff are possible.
- More key signatures are introduced—F and D major.
- Syncopated pedaling is used more frequently, although pedal changes occur regularly/predictably.

INTERMEDIATE

- Intermediate pieces are approximately the same difficulty as the Kuhlau Sonatinas.
- 16th notes may be common, as well as dotted rhythms (dotted 8th–16th rhythms).
- Key signatures may contain more sharps and flats—major sharp keys through B, B \flat major.
- Chord inversions and arpeggios are used.
- More than one voice in each hand is possible.
- Ornaments may be used.
- Pedaling becomes more complex; more instances of coordinating the pedal with hand independence.

LATE INTERMEDIATE

- Late intermediate pieces are as difficult as the middle section of “Für Elise.”
- Diminished and augmented chords may be used.
- 32nd notes may be used.
- Dotted 16th notes may be used.
- Key signatures may contain more flats—major flat keys through G \flat major.
- Pedaling becomes more complex as rhythms and hand coordination become more complex.

Supplemental Leveling Detailed Quick Chart

Level	Note Range	Note Values	Meter	Intervals/ Chords	Keys	Dynamics	Symbols	Pedal	Other considerations
Early Elem. (EE)	Low G to treble D on the staff B, C, D between staves	Notes: Quarter Half Dotted half Whole Rests: Quarter Half Whole	$\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$	2nds 3rds 5ths 4ths when passing the melody between the hands	No key signatures Major C, G, F Minor a, d, g, c	<i>p, mp, mf, f</i> (some <i>pp, ff</i>) Terraced dynamics—avoid hairpins	Frequent: slur tie staccato fermata 8va repeat sign Some: accents D.C. al Fine	Used only as a continuous pedal hold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clef changes Few or no accidentals Minimal hands-together playing English tempo markings
Elem. (E)	Same as Early Elem.	Notes: 8th	$\frac{2}{4}$	4ths	Major C, F, G with key signature Minor a, d, g, c, without key signature	<i>pp to ff</i> Some hairpins	Frequent: rit. a tempo Some: sfz D.C. al Coda poco	No syncopated pedal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clef changes Some accidentals English or basic Italian tempos Hands together playing Hand shifts to new five-finger patterns Incomplete measures
Late Elem. (LE)	Entire grand staff Some easy ledger lines	Notes: Dotted quarter Rests: 8th	All simple meters	Triads (mostly keys of C, G) 6ths 7ths and octaves as melodic leaps—not blocked	Use key signatures Major C, F, G (mostly C, G) Minor a, d, e	<i>pp to ff</i> Frequent hairpins Some cresc., dim., sfz	Examples: molto caesura lines rolled chord subito glissando 15ma	Simplest syncopated pedal Simile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clef changes Hands change positions frequently English/Italian 50/50 Hands move outside five-finger patterns through use of scales Some use of very easy syncopated rhythms

Level	Note Range	Note Values	Meter	Intervals/ Chords	Keys	Dynamics	Symbols	Pedal	Other considerations
Early Inter. (EI)	Ledger lines (three above or below staff)	Notes: Few or no 16th notes Triplets Rests: Dotted quarter	$\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$	Primary chords in keys at this level, mostly root position 7ths Hand-over-hand arpeggios	Use key signatures Major C, G, F, D Minor a, e, d, g, c	Same	Can use most, within reason	Syncopated pedal that is regular, predictable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing 8ths • Easier than standard classical repertoire such as Kuhlau sonatinas • Syncopated rhythms officially introduced in Alfred methods
Inter. (I)	Some notes above three ledger lines	16th notes common Dotted rhythms	$\frac{2}{2}$ Some $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{7}{8}$	Chord inversions Some harmonic octaves (usually left hand)	Major C, G, F, D (occasionally A, E, B-flat, E-flat) Minor a, e, d, g, c, b (occasionally f)	Full dynamic palette Triple dynamics <i>ppp</i> and <i>fff</i> used sparingly	Any	More complex pedaling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately the same difficulty as the Kuhlau Sonatinas • More than one voice in each hand possible • English/Italian tempos still 50/50 but can be more complex • Ornaments may be used
Late Inter. (LI)	Any, within reason	32nd Dotted 16th	$\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{12}{8}$ Mixed meter	Dim/Aug chords Arpeggio patterns More frequent octaves	Use all key signatures, but use five or more sharps/flats sparingly	Same	Any	More complex pedaling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately as difficult as the middle section of "Für Elise."

Alfred's Basic Piano Library Method

Concept and Leveling Chart

For Developing Correlated Method Content

Level	Skills and Concepts
Level 1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-staff notation through p. 28 • Hands together playing starts on p. 42 • Note range: All pieces are in C or G position • Note values: Quarter, half, whole, dotted half • Rests: Quarter, half, whole • Accidentals: F-sharp on p. 55, B-flat on p. 56 • Keys: C and G major, G minor • Dynamics: <i>p f mf</i> • Intervals: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th • Time signatures: 4/4, 3/4 • Other concepts: Tied notes, pickup notes, staccato, legato, hairpins
Level 1B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New positions introduced: Middle C position (thumbs on C), G position with left hand starting on G3, and middle D position • Note values: Eighth • Rests: Eighth • Flats: D-flat, A-flat, G-flat • Sharps: D-sharp, G-sharp, A-sharp • Time signatures: 2/4 • Scales: C and G major octave scales divided between hands • Key signatures: C, G • Other concepts: Accent, Italian tempo markings, fermata, ritardando, a tempo, damper pedal, tetrachords (C, G, D)
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note range: Full grand staff • Note values: Dotted quarter • Dynamics: <i>pp mp ff</i> • Intervals: 6th, 7th, Octave • Scales: C octave scale with finger crossing • Chords: Triads introduced on p. 30; all white-key major and minor triads, V7 chord in "piano position," and primary chord inversions in piano position for keys of C, G, and D. • Key signatures: D • Other concepts: Finger crossing, D.C. al Fine, primary triad theory, I-IV-V Roman numerals, swing 8ths

Alfred's Basic Piano Library Method

Concept and Leveling Chart

For Developing Correlated Method Content

Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note range: Ledger lines above and below the staff • Time signatures: 3/8, 6/8 • Scales: D and F major; chromatic; relative A and D minor (all forms introduced) • Chords: Primary chords in piano position for F major. Minor triads C, D, E, F, G, A, B and primary triads in piano position for A minor. Roman numerals i, iv, V. • Key signatures: F major; A and D minor • Other concepts: moving beyond five-finger positions, overlapping pedal
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythms: eighth-note triplet, eighth-quarter syncopation, sixteenth, dotted eighth • Time signatures: Common time • Chords: Consecutive inversions introduced. Triads in all positions for C and G. All white-key seventh chords. All inversions of 7th chords with 5ths omitted. Primary chords in E and G minor and B-flat major. • Scales: E and G minor (all forms); B-flat major • Key signatures: E minor, G minor • Other concepts: Arpeggiated chords, D.S. al Fine, two parts in one hand
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keys: B and C minor; A and E-flat major • Other concepts: grace notes, trills, sonata form
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time signatures: 8/4 • Note values: Thirty second, dotted sixteenth • Chords: Diminished triads, diminished 7th chords, augmented triads • Keys: F-sharp and C-sharp minor, E and A-flat major • Other concepts: atonal and polytonal music

Alfred Piano Submission Checklist

Before submitting your composition for editing and engraving, please use the checklist below to thoroughly review your work. This helps ensure a smoother editing process and reduces delays during production. By following these guidelines closely, you'll help us prepare your notation file efficiently—bringing your music one step closer to print.

File Formats

Alfred currently accepts Sibelius and Dorico files. Musescore is not accepted, and Finale is being phased out. Please submit both a PDF and notation file for each composition

Leveling

Ensure the following elements are appropriate for the level based on the provided leveling chart:

- Accidentals
- Articulations
- Dynamics
- Chords
- Clef changes
- Hands together playing
- Intervals
- Key signature
- Note range
- Note values
- Ornamentation
- Pedaling
- Rhythms
- Swing 8ths
- Syncopation
- Tempo markings (English vs. Italian)
- Time signature

Title and Header Guidelines

Formatting for Titles That Include Totality, Key, Opus, and Number:

Example: Fantasy in C-sharp Minor, Op. 38, No. 10

General Title Guidelines

Articles and prepositions are not capitalized.

Composer Credit

Do not include "by" in front of the composer name. List your name exactly as you would like it to appear.

Score Preparation Checklist

To ensure the highest level of accuracy, carefully review your composition one item at a time using this checklist. This step-by-step approach is an industry best practice—it increases the likelihood of catching errors and helps reduce the editorial load later in the process.

Accidentals

- Courtesy accidentals added if occurring within a few measures after the alteration.
- Courtesy accidentals should be formatted without parentheses.
- Chromatic passages—generally, sharps ascending and flats descending.
- Accidentals are appropriate—key signature, harmony, and voice-leading.

Articulations

- Accents — compare similar sections. Are the same used in repeat measures/sections?
- Staccato — compare similar sections.

- Tenuto — compare similar sections.
- Slurs — compare similar sections.
- Other articulations — compare similar sections.

Barlines

- D.C. al Fine needs a thin double barline.
- Key changes need a thin double barline.
- Thin double barlines are acceptable for section changes, such as after an intro but are not required.

Clefs Changes

- Do not use in early-elementary or elementary repertoire.
- Avoid octave signs between the staves if at all possible.

Dynamics

- The piece includes a starting dynamic.
- There are enough dynamics for a musically compelling interpretation of the work.
- The same dynamic has not been repeated unnecessarily in a section.
- The dynamic scheme is logical from beginning to end, and there are no places where the dynamic markings would be unclear (e.g. hairpins terminating without dynamics in larger sections).
- Musical elements are clear of hairpins and have not been placed within hairpins.
- Abbreviations cresc. and dim. have been used if the passage is tight/cluttered or longer than around three measures.
- Hairpins do not cross the barline when terminating on the downbeat of the next measure.
- The beginnings and endings of dynamic hairpins have been placed intentionally, and consistently.
- Hairpins leading to a new dynamic on the downbeat of the next measure should be taken close to the barline.
- Hairpins that indicate musical shaping do not have to be taken close to the barline.

Fermatas

- Fermatas have been included over opposite-hand rests when only one hand holds.
- Fermatas have been included for all voices. (If a passage contains more than two parts with opposing stem directions, each part should also have a fermata.)
- Would your piece benefit from an ending fermata? These often get missed.

Fingering

- Always include a starting fingering.
- Include fingering for all notes of chords.
- Chord fingering is stacked in the correct order.
- Fingering above for RH/below for LH (outside staff).
- Fingering is used sparingly to establish a pattern or hand position.
- For hands sharing a single staff, the fingering for the RH is above, and LH is below. RH and LH symbols can be added for clarity.

Grace Notes

- A small slur connects the grace note to the main note.
- Two consecutive grace notes are written as 16th notes.
- Three and four grace notes can be either 16th or 32nd notes. Larger groupings are usually beamed as 32nd notes.

- Appoggiatura = no slash and on the beat. Grace note = with slash and before the beat.

Grouping and Beaming

Triple Meter (e.g., 3/4)

- Do not use half rests in place of two quarter rests.
- Beam to reflect three distinct beats per measure.
- Avoid beaming in a way that suggests compound meter (e.g., 6/8).

Duple & Quadruple Meter (e.g., 2/4, 4/4)

- Do not beam across the midpoint of the measure; maintain clear beat divisions.
- In 4/4, use half rests only on beats 1 or 3—not beat 2.

Compound Meter (e.g., 6/8, 9/8, 12/8)

- Use compound beaming (group by dotted quarter pulses), not simple.
- Only use rests equal to or smaller than the pulse value, except for a full-measure rest (use a whole rest).
- A dotted quarter rest may appear only on the pulse.
- Quarter rests (2/3 of a pulse) may also appear only on the pulse.
- Do not combine rests that fall off the pulse.
- In 12/8, avoid using a dotted half rest mid-measure.

Hand Movement

- For hand crossing in educational music, “LH over” is placed below staff and “RH over” is placed above staff.
- Solid diagonal lines can be used to show hand movement from one staff to another.

Key Signature

- Has been correctly assigned.

Octave Signs

- All 8va signs have been started exactly on the first note of each passage affected.
- The 8va sign is not used between two staves of the grand staff (if at all possible).
- The 8va dotted line and bracket ends close to the last note affected, not at the bar line.
- loco is not used in our style

Ornaments

- Complex or ambiguous ornaments have been written out above the staff or as footnotes (this mostly applies to classical collections).

Pedal Signs

- Pedaling is appropriate and follows best musical practices (generally follows harmony and avoids blurring).
- Pedal ending on a staccato note has the up bracket centered with the staccato.
- For “touch pedal,” the pedaling continues just past the note, and the pedal-up mark will not attach to a note.
- Pedal ending a piece extends to the thin line of the double bar.

Phrasing

- Compare similar sections for consistency (this is a common oversight).
- Slurs primarily indicate legato playing. Avoid slurring over rests or notes with staccato articulation, as this can create conflicting instructions.
- Phrasing has been thoughtfully applied to reflect short motives, musical gestures, or longer lyrical lines.

Pickup Measures

- Beats are often—but not always—subtracted from the last measure if there is a pick-up. For longer multi-section works, subtraction from the last measure may be disregarded.

Redistributions

- L-shaped brackets can be used to show redistributions.

Repeats

- No repeat signs are missing.
- Heading numbers and lines, such as first and second endings, are accurately placed.
- Misc. symbols have been accurately placed (Coda, D.S., D.C., Fine, etc).

Simile

- A simile sign occurs after a pattern has been clearly established for 2–3 measures.
- Avoid placing similes at the beginning of a line. Mid-line placement is more noticeable and less surprising.

Slurs

- Slurs generally go on the notehead side.
- Slurs extend to the second note in tied-note pairs.
- When stems are going both directions, slurs go above.
- The slur may be placed over if a phrase is substantially long, regardless of stem direction.
- If the space between staves is limited, slurs may be placed outside the staff.
- Avoid double slurs (slurs under larger slurs).

Tempo

- Tempo head is included with metronome marking and/or character terms.
- Traditional metronome numbers have been used (60, 63, 66, 69, 72, 76, 80, 84, 88, 92, 96, 100, 104, 108, 112, 114, 116, 120, 126, 132, 138, 144, 152, 160, 168, 176, 184, 192, 200, 208)
- Metronome ranges and approximations can be included (e.g., 108–120 or ca. 120)
- Swing notation, if needed.
- Check rit., rall., molto rit., accel., a tempo. Use abbreviations rather than spelled out.
- Play through and check metronome marks.
- Generally, a tempo is placed above the measure in our style.

Ties

- Avoid using tied notes within a beamed grouping. The unit should be broken where the tie is placed or combined into a larger note value.