MU169 Diagnostic Exam Preparation Guide

The following skills are required to successfully pass the MU169 Diagnostic Examination and begin MU170. References are made to the textbook *Contemporary Class Piano* by Elyse Mach, sixth edition. You may self-assess and enroll in MU169 Basic Piano Skills, or if you have competency in the following areas, register for MU170 and expect to take the exam during the first class meeting.

Read and identify by playing pitches in bass and treble clefs.

(Pgs. 20-22)

Demonstrate an understanding of rhythmic notation and meter using the keyboard.

(Pgs. 25-27)

Name and play intervals.

(Pgs. 22-24)

Construct major and minor chords.

(Pgs. 119, 123-125, and 135)

Identify key signatures.

(Pgs. 36, 107, 156-157)

Play major and minor five-finger patterns in all keys.

(Pgs. 119-122, 126, 129-134)

Play several easy pieces demonstrating the following skills: reading by skips and steps, playing hands together, imitation of patterns, use of contrary and parallel motion, and observation of dynamics, slurs, and phrases.

(Pgs. 204-211)
READING NOTES

The Staff and Clefs
A staff consists of five lines and four spaces.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{5} & \text{4} & \text{3} & \text{2} & \text{1} & \text{5} \\
\end{array}
\]

A clef is added to indicate the pitches of the notes.
The treble clef is placed at the beginning of the staff and is called the G clef because it circles around the second staff line, designating that line as the note G. (The right hand usually plays the notes in the treble clef, to the right of middle C.)

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
G \\
\end{array}
\]

(middle C)

The bass clef sign is placed at the beginning of the staff and is called the F clef because the fourth staff line is enclosed by dots, designating that line as the note F. (The left hand usually plays the notes in the bass clef, to the left of middle C.)

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
F \\
\end{array}
\]

(middle C)

Grand Staff
The grand staff, also called the great staff, is made up of two staves, one with a treble clef, the other with a bass clef. The short lines above and below the staff are called leger lines. Their purpose is to extend the range of the staves when necessary.

The darkened notes (\) are landmark notes which will help you learn the notes more quickly.

In \G clef, use the C’s and G’s as landmarks.

In \F clef, use the C’s and F’s as landmarks.
Practice Strategies

1. Beginning on middle C, play and name the notes in the treble clef, moving upward to the next C and then back down again. Next, beginning with C, third space in the treble clef, play and name the notes up to the next C and then back down again.

2. Beginning with C, second space in the bass clef, play and name the bass-clef notes up to middle C and down again. Then, beginning with the lowest C given on the staff, play and name the notes up to the C, second space in the bass clef, and down again.

3. Using the graphic chart given below, practice playing and naming the notes in the spaces and then the notes cutting the lines in the treble clef. Follow the same procedure in the bass clef.
Name and play the following treble-clef notes with the given right-hand fingerings:

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

Name and play the following bass-clef notes with the given left-hand fingerings:

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

INTERVALS

Good reading habits in music are developed by learning to read notes in relationship to each other—that is, recognizing the distance between notes. This is called reading by interval.

An interval is the distance between two notes. For example: C to F is a fourth because, counting upward by letter name, C is 1 and F is 4.

Interval: second third fourth fifth
Melodic Intervals

Melodic intervals are written and played one note following the other:

Harmonic Intervals

Harmonic intervals are written and played together:

Harmonic intervals are also called blocked intervals.

Practice Strategies

Practice playing the following intervals, which are given both melodically and harmonically. First, practice hands separately, and then with both hands.
Interval Studies

Read the following intervals and then play them without looking down at the keyboard as you move from one note to the next—that is, concentrate on developing a "feel" for the distance between the various intervals.

A. Right-hand examples

```
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
```

B. Left-hand examples

```
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
15. 
16. 
17. 
18. 
19. 
20. 
```
KEEPPING TIME

Meter Signatures
At the beginning of a piece you will find a meter signature—two numbers that look something like a fraction. The top number indicates the number of beats in a measure, and the bottom number indicates the kind of note that receives one beat.

\[ \frac{2}{4} \] 2 beats to the measure
the quarter note (\(\frac{1}{4}\))
receives one beat

\[ \frac{4}{4} \] or \(\frac{4}{4}\) 4 beats to the measure
the quarter note (\(\frac{1}{4}\))
receives one beat

\[ \frac{3}{4} \] 3 beats to the measure
the quarter note (\(\frac{1}{4}\))
receives one beat

Tempo
Tempo is the rate of movement or speed. Note values are always relative, depending on the tempo. For example, a quarter note would be held longer in a slow tempo than it would in a fast tempo.

Rests
A rest represents a silence of the same length as the value of its corresponding note.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Rests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>()</td>
<td>Whole rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\frac{1}{4})</td>
<td>Half rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\frac{1}{8})</td>
<td>Quarter rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 beats or any whole measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 beats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 beat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Steadily

\[\text{Steadily}\]

\[\text{Count: 1 2 3 4}\]

2. Joyfully

\[\text{Joyfully}\]

\[\text{Count: 1 2 3 4}\]

3. Gently

\[\text{Gently}\]

\[\text{Count: 1 2 1 2}\]

4. Flowing

\[\text{Flowing}\]

\[\text{Count: 1 2 1 2}\]

5. Gracefully

\[\text{Gracefully}\]

\[\text{Count: 1 2 3 1 2 3}\]
Five-Finger Melodies for the Left Hand
Follow the same practice directions as given on page 26.

1. Steadily

   \( \text{\textit{mf}} \)
   
   count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

2. Flowing

   \( \text{\textit{mf}} \)
   
   count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

3. Steadily

   \( \text{\textit{f}} \)
   
   count: 1 2 1 2

4. Lively

   \( \text{\textit{p}} \text{ \textit{mp}} \text{ \textit{mf}} \text{ \textit{mp}} \)
   
   count: 1 2 3 1 2 3

5. With spirit

   \( \text{\textit{f}} \)
   
   count: 1 2 3 1 2 3
**Five-Finger Notation**

*Love Somebody* uses the five-finger pattern in G:

Middle C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G Major Five-Finger Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LH 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RH 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY SIGNATURE**

Since *Love Somebody* uses the five-finger pattern constructed on G, we can say that it is written in the key of G. G is our tonic or key note.

The key signature appears after the clef signs and indicates the notes that should be played as sharps or flats throughout a piece—that is, the key signature helps to indicate the key of a piece.

**Identifying Sharp Key Signatures**

Major keys using sharp key signatures can be identified by taking the last sharp, in this case F♯, then moving up one half step higher to the next letter name, which would be G.

![F♯ and G notes](image)

Note that although the F♯ is not used in the five-finger pattern of G, the F♯ must be written after the clef signs to indicate the key of G. All F's are to be played as F♯. It is necessary to use an F♯ in the key of G because with the introduction of the major scales on page 241, the five-finger pattern is extended to eight tones, and these tones must conform to a specific pattern of whole steps and half steps.

The G major scale is given below to illustrate where the F♯ is used.

![G Major Scale](image)
IDENTIFYING FLAT KEY SIGNATURES

Major flat key signatures are identified by taking the name of the next to the last flat (always the second flat to the left).

WARM-UP STUDY IN G♭ MAJOR

Moderato
MAJOR TRIADS

A triad consists of three tones—the root, so called because it is the tone on which the triad is constructed; the third; and the fifth. A triad is also called a chord.

Major triads are formed by taking the first (root), third, and fifth tones of the major five-finger patterns and sounding them together.

C major chord (I chord)

FIVE-FINGER STUDIES AND TRIADS IN MAJOR

Practice the following major five-finger patterns and the major triads formed from them in the keys shown. You will be moving up in half steps, or chromatically, as you start each five-finger pattern followed by the major triad. Remember to use the whole step, whole step, half step, whole step formula in building each of the major five-finger patterns.
Major Triad Groups

Another way of learning the major triads and their spellings is to categorize them in like groups as follows.

The chord group of C, F, and G triads uses only the white keys.

Practice this three-chord grouping and the others below, first with the right hand, then with the left, and then with both hands. Learn to develop a "feel" for each chord and the movement from one chord to the next. Look for tones that repeat—common tones—to help you when moving from one chord to another.

The chord group of D, E, and A uses only white keys in the open fifth with the third a sharped black key.

The chord group of D♭ (C♯), E♭, and A♭ uses only black keys in the open fifth with the third a white key.
The G♭ (F♯) triad uses only black keys.

The B and B♭ major triads use the following arrangements:

Practice Strategies

Triads without their thirds are called open fifths. Playing open fifths in half-step progressions is good preparation for playing major and later the minor triads. Using both hands, construct open fifths starting on C and play them both upward and downward as illustrated next.

Notice that if the lower tone of the fifth is a white key, the upper tone will also be a white key. If the lower tone is black, the upper tone will also be black. The only two exceptions are the fifths B♭-F (black-white) and B-F♯ (white-black).
Play the following major triads with each hand separately, then with both hands, first upward, then downward.

Practice playing major triads, one at a time, in various registers, as well. For example:
THE MINOR FIVE-FINGER PATTERN

The minor five-finger pattern (also called a minor pentachord or minor pentascale) can be constructed on any of the twelve tones. The minor five-finger pattern is constructed as follows:

```
Tonic:  1  2  3  4  5
      WHOLE STEP  HALF STEP  WHOLE STEP  WHOLE STEP
```

Five-Finger Notation

Here is the five-finger pattern in D minor:

```
D MINOR
FIVE-FINGER
PATTERN
```

```
LH  5 4 3 2 1  1 1 1
1  1/2 1
RH  1  1/2 1 1
```

An easy way to play the minor five-finger pattern is to begin with the major five-finger pattern and lower the third tone one half step:
FIVE-FINGER STUDIES AND TRIADS IN MAJOR AND MINOR

Practice all major and minor five-finger patterns along with all major and minor triads as shown.

*The small "m" stands for minor.*
Practice Strategies

Play the major-minor-major progression below chromatically upward and downward starting with C. Practice playing these chords in various registers.

C\n\n3 \n5 \nD♭\n\n3 \n5 \n1 \nD\n\n3 \n5 \n1

etc.

M \n3 \n5 \nm \n3 \nM

Next, play the minor triads with each hand separately, then with both hands. Practice playing minor triads, one at a time, in various registers, as well. The ♭ denotes a double flat, which lowers a tone two half steps, or the equivalent of one whole step.