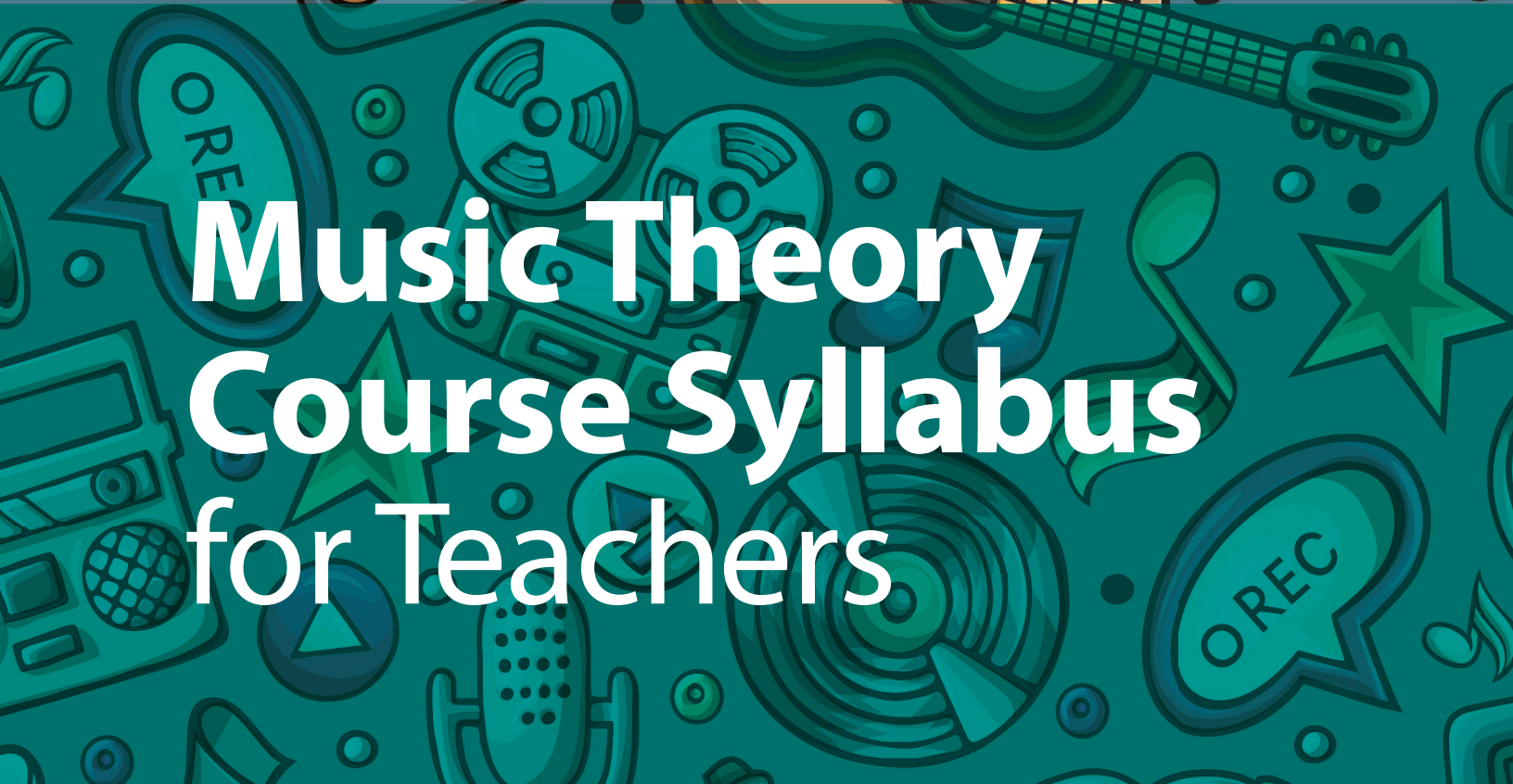




Music Theory Course Syllabus for Teachers





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This course is intended for use in-class with students, for flipped-classroom activities, or as substitute plans. Each lesson can be used as pre-instructional information or as reinforcement. Most of the assessments are self-grading.

Before assigning lessons, tasks, and assessments:

- Preview all content. If you find glitches or errors, please report them to **support@musicfirst.com**.
- Many lessons contain links outside of MusicFirst. All links have been tested but cannot be guaranteed for functionality.
- PLEASE customize the content for your students! Add, delete or simplify as appropriate for your learners.

You can change the content and activities easily by editing the text and uploading images of different examples tailored to student needs. For best results, use png or jpeg formats. Add links to other resources and embed quality tutorial videos.

If you need help learning to modify lessons, tasks, or assessments, please contact **support@musicfirst.com**.

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Music Theory Unit 1

Simple Rhythms; Treble, Bass, and Alto Clefs

This introductory unit is designed to provide instruction, review, or reinforcement for beginning and intermediate level musicians. Feel free to assign the lessons that best meet your students' needs.

This is the **first** of eight units that cover the first year of introductory theory. Lessons, activities (tasks) and assessments (quizzes) are applicable to all music students from middle school through high school, and beyond. Choose from the list below as best meets the needs of your students, then adapt the lessons and activities to suit their age, experience, and learning goals.

- **Music Theory Lesson 1.1:** Reading (Counting and Performing) Whole, Half, Quarter and Eighth Notes and Rests in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.2:** Naming the Notes on the Piano Keyboard
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.3:** Reading Notes on Lines and Spaces of Treble Clef
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.4:** Reading Notes on Lines and Spaces of Bass Clef
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.5:** Reading Notes on the Grand Staff and Middle Ledger Lines
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.6:** Reading Notes on Ledger Lines
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.7:** Reading Notes on the Alto Staff
- **Music Theory Unit 1 Assessment 1:** *Quiz – Note Naming* (5 versions: treble only; bass only; alto only; treble and bass; treble-alto-bass)
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.8:** Reading (Counting and Performing) Ties and Dotted Notes/Rests
- **Music Theory Lesson 1.9:** Reading (Counting and Performing) Sixteenth Notes/Rests and Eighth-note Triplets
- **Music Theory Unit 1 Assessment 2:** Rhythm performance assessment ("Record" task)

Music Theory Unit 1 Project:

- Compose an 8-measure rhythm.
- Assign stepwise notes/pitches in a limited range to create a basic melody.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your rhythm, or write it on manuscript paper.
- Record yourself playing or clapping/tapping it.

Music Theory Unit 2

Naming “Black Keys”; Cut Time and Compound Meter

This unit will help students expand their ability to read music.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 2:

- **Music Theory Lesson 2.1:** Sharps, Flats, and Naturals (note and piano key identification)
- **Music Theory Lesson 2.2:** Interpreting Key Signatures and Accidentals
- **Music Theory Unit 2 Assessment 1:** Quiz – Sharp and Flat Note Naming (with accidentals and key signatures present)
- **Music Theory Lesson 2.3:** The Major Scale: Applying “Black Notes” and Solfege (prep for Scales and Intervals units)
- **Music Theory Lesson 2.4:** Chromatic Scale
- **Music Theory Lesson 2.5:** Reading (Counting and Performing) Rhythms in Cut Time
- **Music Theory Lesson 2.6:** Reading (Counting and Performing) Rhythms in Compound Meter ($\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{12}{8}$; including comparison and classification of simple and compound meters)
- **Music Theory Unit 2 Assessment 2:** Quiz – Time Signatures and Beaming

Music Theory Unit 2 Project:

- Compose an 8-measure rhythm in cut time or a compound meter.
- Use this rhythm to create a melody in a limited range with chromatic elements.
- Be careful not to overuse the chromatic notes! Make sure your melody is singable and memorable.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your melody, or write it on manuscript paper and record yourself playing or singing it.

Music Theory Unit 3

Expressive Elements, Musical Symbols and Form

Music Theory Unit 3 covers most of the “other” markings found in printed music – tempo, dynamics, articulation, and repeat signs. Use of repeat signs is reinforced in the lessons on musical form.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 3:

- Music Theory Lesson 3.1: Dynamic Markings
- Music Theory Assessment 3.1: Quiz – Dynamics
- Music Theory Lesson 3.2: Tempo Markings
- Music Theory Assessment 3.2: Quiz – Tempo
- Music Theory Lesson 3.3: Articulation Markings
- Music Theory Assessment 3.3: Quiz – Articulation
- Music Theory Lesson 3.4: Repeat Signs
- Music Theory Assessment 3.4: Quiz – Repeat Signs
- Music Theory Lesson 3.5: Musical Form 1 – Binary, Ternary, Rondo, Pop Song
- Music Theory Lesson 3.6: Musical Form 2 – Strophic, Theme and Variations, Through-Composed
- Music Theory Lesson 3.7: Musical Form 3 – Sonata-Allegro Form

Music Theory Unit 3 Project:

- Use a loop-friendly music production program like Soundation or Soundtrap, or a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to create an original piece of music in Rondo form.
- Be sure to include varied dynamics and articulation, and maybe even a tempo change to make the music more expressive.

Music Theory Unit 4

Major Scales and Key Signatures

This unit provides instruction and practice in building major scales and key signatures using multiple strategies.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 4:

- **Music Theory Lesson 4.1:** Tetrachords and the C Major Scale with Solfege
- **Music Theory Lesson 4.2:** Tetrachords and «White Key» Major Scales (D, E, G, A, B)
- **Music Theory Lesson 4.3:** Sharp Key Signatures and the Circle of Fifths
- **Music Theory Assessment 4.3:** Quiz – Sharp Key Signatures
- **Music Theory Lesson 4.4:** Flat Key Signatures and the Circle of Fifths
- **Music Theory Assessment 4.4:** Quiz – Flat Key Signatures
- **Music Theory Lesson 4.5:** All Major Key Signatures and the Circle of Fifths
- **Music Theory Unit 4 Assessment:** Quiz – All Major Key Signatures
(4 versions: Treble Clef, Bass Clef, Alto Clef, Treble and Bass Clefs)

Music Theory Unit 4 Project:

- Create a short melody (4 or 8 measures) in the sharp key or your choice.
- Repeat the melody two times, moving to the next key in the Circle of Fifths each time. Consider adding connecting notes between the repetitions to provide a transition.
- Add varied dynamics and articulation to make your music more expressive.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your melody, or write it on manuscript paper and record yourself playing or singing it.



Music Theory Unit 5

Intervals; Transposition

This unit covers all of the intervals of the one-octave diatonic scale. It includes written interval identification and construction, interval ear training, singing, and a bonus lesson on transposition. These activities required fundamental skill interpreting key signatures.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 5:

- **Music Theory Lesson 5.1:** Intervals – Unison, Octave, Seconds (visual and aural identification; simple dictation to be included in this and successive lessons in this unit)
- **Music Theory Lesson 5.2:** Major and minor thirds (introduce terms consonant and dissonant)
- **Music Theory Assessment 5.2:** Interval Quiz 1 – Identifying P1, P8, m2, M2, m3, M3 aurally and visually
- **Music Theory Lesson 5.3:** 4ths and 5ths (including intro to interval inversion)
- **Music Theory Lesson 5.4:** Sixths (including intro to compound intervals)
- **Music Theory Assessment 5.4:** Interval Quiz 2 – Identifying m3, M3, P4, P5, m6, M6 aurally and visually
- **Music Theory Lesson 5.5:** Sevenths and Tritones (A4/d5)
- **Music Theory Assessment 5.5:** Interval Quiz 3- Identifying m2, M2, TT (A4/d5), m7, M7 aurally and visually
- **Music Theory Lesson 5.6:** Transposition (and Transposing Instruments)
- **Music Theory Assessment 5.6:** Quiz 4 – Transposition
- **Music Theory Unit 5 Assessment:** Challenge Test

Music Theory Unit 5 Project:

- Choose 1 interval. Use it as the opening idea, or “seed” of a new melody.
- Repeat and vary that interval along with other connecting notes to create a melody that is 8-16 measures long.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your melody, or write it on manuscript paper and record yourself playing or singing it.

Music Theory Unit 6

Triads: Construction, Inversion, and Aural Skills

This unit covers basic triad construction, identification, and aural skills. The Dominant 7th chord is introduced because of its prevalence in popular and classical music.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 6:

- **Music Theory Lesson 6.1:** Major Triads; root position and inversion
- **Music Theory Lesson 6.2:** Minor Triads; Open/Close voicing
- **Music Theory Assessment 6.2:** Triad Quiz 1 – Major and minor triads (visual and aural identification)
- **Music Theory Lesson 6.3:** Augmented and Diminished Triads
- **Music Theory Assessment 6.3:** Triad Quiz 2 – Major, minor, augmented and diminished triads (visual and aural identification)
- **Music Theory Lesson 6.4:** Chords of the Major Scale; Chord Functions (Scale Tone Names and Roman Numerals)
- **Music Theory Lesson 6.5:** Intro to Harmonizing Melodies in Major Keys (including “power chords” and use of V7)
- **Music Theory Lesson 6.6:** Common Chord Progressions in Major
- **Music Theory Assessment 6.6:** Chord Progressions (listening and analyzing)

Music Theory Unit 6 Project:

- Using one of the chord progressions from Lesson 6.6, build your own song. Aim for 16-32 measures in length.
- Be sure to make sure that your melody fits with the notes of the chord progression as it travels along. End your melody on the home tone (tonic).
- Add varied dynamics and articulation to make your music more expressive.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your melody, or write it on manuscript paper and record yourself playing or singing it.

Music Theory Unit 7

Minor Scales and More

This unit provides a basic foundation in minor scales, church modes, and other commonly used scales.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 7:

- **Music Theory Lesson 7.1:** Minor Scales (Parallel and Relative minor; Constructing natural, harmonic and melodic minor)
- **Music Theory Assessment 7.1:** Quiz – Minor Scales (visual and aural identification of 3 forms of minor)
- **Music Theory Lesson 7.2:** Identifying and Constructing minor key signatures (correlated to relative Major)
- **Music Theory Assessment 7.2:** Quiz – Major and minor key signatures (identifying and constructing; 4 versions – Treble, Alto, Bass, and Treble/Bass clefs)
- **Music Theory Lesson 7.3:** Chromatic, Whole Tone, and Pentatonic Scales
- **Music Theory Lesson 7.4:** Blues Scale and 12-Bar Blues
- **Music Theory Lesson 7.5:** Intro to Church Modes
- **Music Theory Unit 7 Assessment:** Quiz – Minor Scales, Modes, and More (aural and visual identification of chromatic, whole tone, pentatonic and blues scales; Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian modes)

Music Theory Unit 7 Project:

- Choose one minor scale or mode.
- Compose a melody that is 8-16 measures long using that scale.
- Shift to a different type of scale and create a middle section that is at least 8 measures long.
- Return to your opening scale and melodic idea before ending.
- Add varied dynamics and articulation to make your music more expressive.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your melody, or write it on manuscript paper and record yourself playing or singing it.

Music Theory Unit 8

7th Chords; Harmonies in Minor Keys

This unit is designed to round out the beginning theory student's understanding of commonly used 7th chords, and provide a foundation for handling harmonies in minor keys. Some of this material delves into content appropriate for a second-level or AP Music Theory course.

Activities in Music Theory Unit 8:

- **Music Theory Lesson 8.1:** 7th chords (Dominant, Major, minor, half-diminished, and fully diminished)
- **Music Theory Assessment 8.1:** Quiz – 7th Chords (visual and aural identification of 5 common types)
- **Music Theory Lesson 8.2:** Triads and Chord Functions in Natural Minor
- **Music Theory Lesson 8.3:** Triads and Chord Functions in Harmonic and Melodic Minor
- **Music Theory Lesson 8.4:** Harmonizing Melodies and Common Chord Progressions in Minor Keys
- **Music Theory Assessment 8.4:** Ear training – Identifying chords within progressions in minor keys
- **Music Theory Lesson 8.5:** 7th Chords in Action (Resolving the 7th and the Leading Tone)

Music Theory Unit 8 Project:

- Using one of the chord progressions from Lesson 8.4, build your own song in the minor key of your choice. Aim for 16-32 measures in length.
- Be sure to make sure that your melody fits with the notes of the chord progression as it travels along.
- Use at least one 7th chord (V7), and be sure to resolve it properly. Use harmonic and melodic minor wherever appropriate.
- Be sure to end your melody on the home tone (tonic).
- Add varied dynamics and articulation to make your music more expressive.
- Use a notation program like Noteflight or MuseScore to craft your melody, or write it on manuscript paper and record yourself playing or singing it.





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