

# Theory Guidelines

## General Guidelines

- Material on all theory exams will be cumulative from earlier levels.
- In rhythm examples, students will be asked to write counting AND add bar lines. At the elementary levels, metric, unit and syllabic counting are all acceptable.

Examples:

Examples of rhythm notation with counting and bar lines:

- 3/4 time: Quarter note (1), Quarter note (2), Quarter note (3)
- Or: 1 2 3
- 4/4 time: Quarter note (1), Quarter note (2), Quarter note (3), Quarter note (4)
- Or: 1 + 2 + 3 +
- 4/4 time: Quarter note (1), Quarter note (2), Quarter note (3), Quarter note (4)
- Or: 1 + 2 + 3 e + a 4 +

- When writing scales, students should use whole notes and place necessary accidentals before each note (**no key signatures**). Melodic minor scales should be written ascending and descending; all other scales should be written ascending only.

Examples:

Examples of scales:

- D Major: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, D5
- e harmonic minor: E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, D5, E5
- f melodic minor: F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5

## Pre-Elementary

1. Music alphabet – forward and backward.
2. Finger numbers.
3. Names of white piano keys.
4. Values of  $\bullet$ ,  $\text{♩}$ ,  $\text{♪}$  and write counting for rhythm examples.
5. Identify steps and skips (2nds and 3rds).
6. *p*, *f*.


## Early Elementary

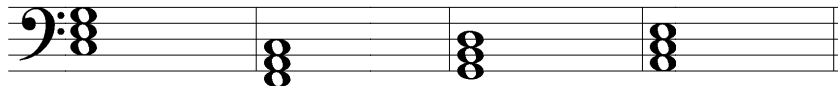
1. Notes on the Grand Staff:

Grand staff showing notes on the treble and bass clefs.

2. Values of  $\text{♩}$ ,  $\text{♪}$ ,  $\text{♫}$ ,  $\text{♬}$ .  
Write counting and add bar lines to rhythm examples in **2**, **3**, **4**.  
**4** **4** **4**
3. Music alphabet – forward and backward.
4. Names of white piano keys.
5. Terms and symbols: *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*.
6. Identify intervals: 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths.

## Late Elementary

- Notes on the Grand Staff (no ledger lines except middle C).
- Additional note and rest values: 
- C** as the abbreviation for common time (4/4).
- Names of piano keys, including **two** names for black keys (e.g., C# and D<sup>b</sup>).
- Identify intervals as **half steps** or **whole steps**.
- Additional intervals: 6ths. Identify and draw **harmonic** and **melodic** intervals.
- Additional terms and symbols – legato, staccato, interval, triad, slur, tie, dynamics, #, b, q || :||, pick up/upbeat, common time (**C**).
- C, G and F major scales. A minor scale (**harmonic** form).
- C, G and F major **blocked** triads (not broken triads). A minor blocked triad.

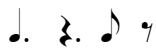


C Major	F Major	G Major	A Minor
Blocked triad	Blocked triad	Blocked triad	Blocked triad

## Early Intermediate

- Notes on grand staff, including ledger lines above and below each staff.
- Additional time signature:  $\frac{5}{4}$
- Write and identify intervals through the octave (e.g., 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>).
- Additional terms and symbols: 8<sup>va</sup>, loco, key signature, time signature, fermata, ritardando, a tempo, *pp*, *ff*, triplet.
- Write and identify major key signatures and scales: C, G, D, F, B<sup>b</sup>.
- Write major triads in root position: C, G, D, F, B<sup>b</sup>.
- Write and identify minor key signatures and **harmonic** minor scales: a, e, d.
- Write minor triads in root position: a, e, d.

## Late Intermediate

- Additional note and rest values: 

Additional time signatures:  $\frac{6}{8}$     $\frac{9}{8}$     $\frac{12}{8}$     $\text{C}$
- Intervals through the octave: identify by number and quality (perfect or major).  
Examples: P5, M3.
- Additional terms and symbols: D.C. al fine, AB form, ABA form, allegro, moderato, andante, tempo, natural, accent, whole tone scale, tenuto, ostinato, damper pedal, alla breve (cut time,  $\text{C}$ ).
- Write and identify major key signatures and scales: C, G, D, A, E, F, B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>.
- Major triads in root position: C, G, D, A, E, F, B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>.
- Write and identify minor key signatures and **harmonic minor scales**: a, e, b, d, g.
- Minor triads in root position: a, e, d, b, g.

## Early Advanced

1. Additional note and rest values: sixteenth notes, sixteenth rests, dotted eighth notes, dotted eighth rests.
2. Intervals through the octave: identify by number and quality (perfect, major and minor).  
Examples: P4, M2, m3.
3. Additional terms and symbols: cantabile, dolce, adagio, vivace, accelerando, D.S. al fine, sfz, coda, opus, rondo form, tonic, dominant, poco, primo, secondo, rallentando, pentatonic, ritenuto, una corda pedal, tre corda, sotto voce, chromatic, diatonic, sostenuto pedal, subdominant, marcato.
4. All major key signatures and scales.
5. Minor key signatures and **natural and harmonic minor** scales through four sharps and four flats.
6. All major triads.
7. Minor triads: a, e, f#, c#, d, g, c, f.
8. Identify major and minor triads in root position, first inversion and second inversion.  
Examples:

The image shows three musical staves, each containing a triad. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and contains the notes A4, C#5, and E5. The second staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and contains the notes G4, Bb4, and D5. The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and contains the notes D4, F#4, and A4.

A Major  
Root Position
g minor  
1st Inversion
D Major  
2nd Inversion

## Late Advanced

1. Intervals through the octave: identify by number and quality (major, minor or perfect).
2. Additional terms and symbols: enharmonic, meno mosso, più mosso, molto, largo, presto, allegretto, sempre, leggiero, simile, maestoso, espressivo, rubato, sequence, senza, morendo, allargando, a piacere, sonata, concerto, cadence, cadenza, supertonic, mediant, submediant, leading tone.
3. All major key signatures and scales.  
All relative minor key signatures and scales – **natural, harmonic and melodic forms**.
4. Any major, minor, diminished or augmented triad.
5. Write any I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi or vii<sup>o</sup> root-position triad in major keys.

The image shows four musical staves, each containing a triad. The first staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and contains the notes C4, Eb4, and F4. The second staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and contains the notes Gb4, Bb4, and C5. The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and contains the notes F#4, A4, and C5. The fourth staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, and G#) and contains the notes E4, G#4, and B4.

F Major: ii
C-flat Major: vi
F# Major: vii<sup>o</sup>
E Major: V

6. Students will be asked to analyze chords using Roman numeral analysis with figured bass in a major key. Possible chords included in the analysis are I, ii, iii, IV, V, V<sup>7</sup>, vi and vii<sup>o</sup> and their inversions. (V<sup>7</sup> chords will be in root position.)

Example:

The image shows a musical score for G Major in C major key signature. The top staff is a treble clef with a common time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a common time signature. The first chord is a G major triad (G-B-D) in root position. The second chord is a D major triad (D-F-A) in first inversion (IV<sub>6</sub>). The third chord is a G major triad (G-B-D) in second inversion (I<sub>6/4</sub>).

G Major: I IV<sub>6</sub> I<sub>6/4</sub>

7. Tonic and dominant seventh chords in **major and minor** keys (root position only), using accidentals, not key signatures.

Examples:

The image shows two examples of tonic and dominant seventh chords in root position. The first example is in the key of A Major, showing the tonic chord (A major triad) and the dominant seventh chord (E7). The second example is in the key of f minor, showing the tonic chord (f minor triad) and the dominant seventh chord (C7).

Key of A Major: I v<sup>7</sup>

Key of f minor: i v<sup>7</sup>

8. Style periods, their dates and three representative composers from each. Know the following:

**Baroque:** (1600-1750) Bach, Handel, Scarlatti.

**Classical:** (1750-1820) Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven.

**Romantic:** (1820-1900) Schumann, Chopin, Brahms.

**Contemporary:** (1900-present) Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Copland.