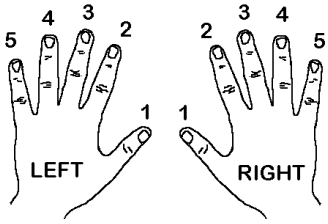
MU 1310 (Feurzeig) Keyboard Handout #1: Major Pentachords

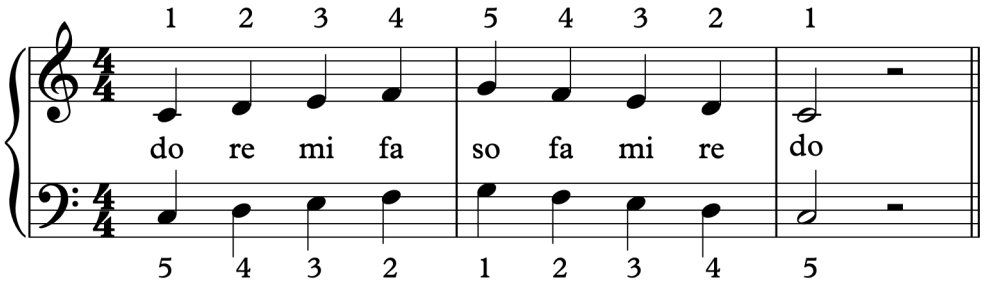
Keyboard fingering is indicated with numbers like this:



Note: on many instruments, including guitar and bowed strings, the thumb is indicated with a ***0*** *or + sign, and the numbers 1-4 are used for the remaining fingers, beginning with the index finger.*
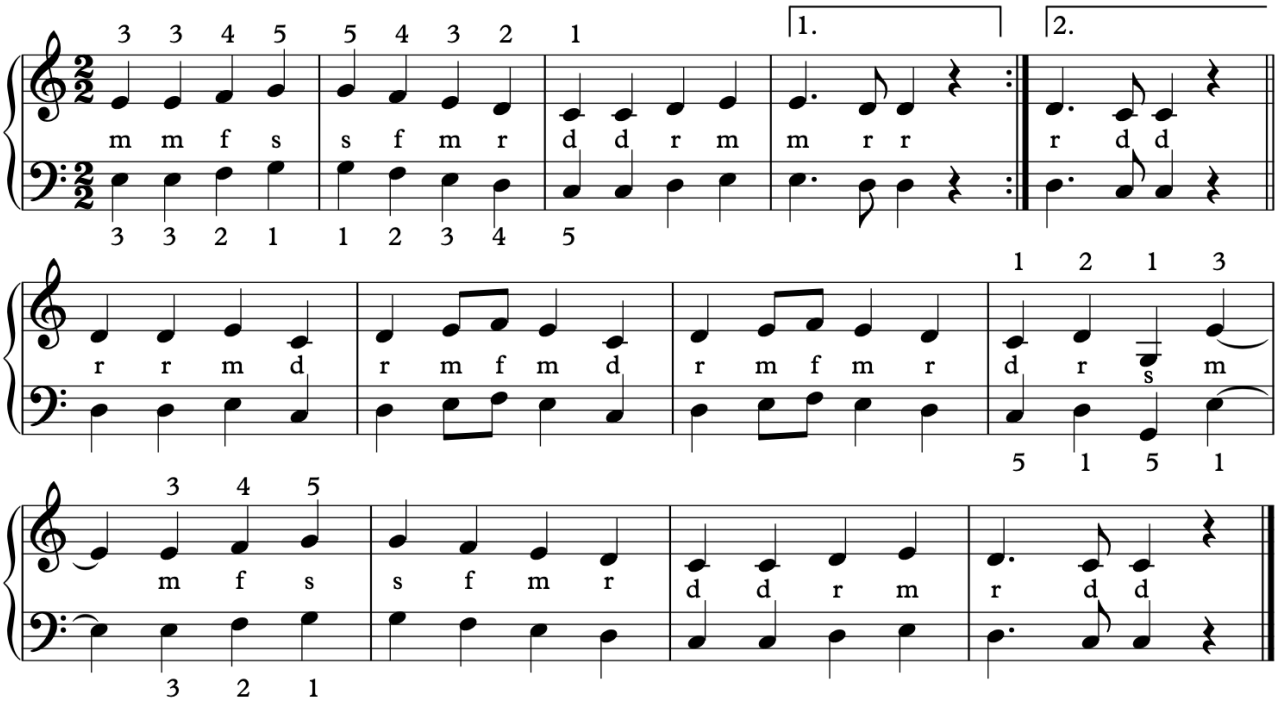
Five-finger **major pentachord** hand position

C major pentachord:



This same pattern (i.e. with the RH thumb and the LH pinky on "do") works well for many other major pentachords besides C. **Transpose** the major pentachord to begin on G, D, A, E, B, and on G♭ as well, using the same fingering pattern. Listen to make sure it sounds right: you should have all whole steps except for the half step between *mi* and *fa*. Practice the hands separately, then together. (In some keys, playing both octaves hands together may not fit on smaller keyboards.)

The "Ode to Joy" theme uses only the first five notes of the major scale. Place your hand on the keyboard in the C major pentachord position and you can play almost the entire tune without shifting your hand.

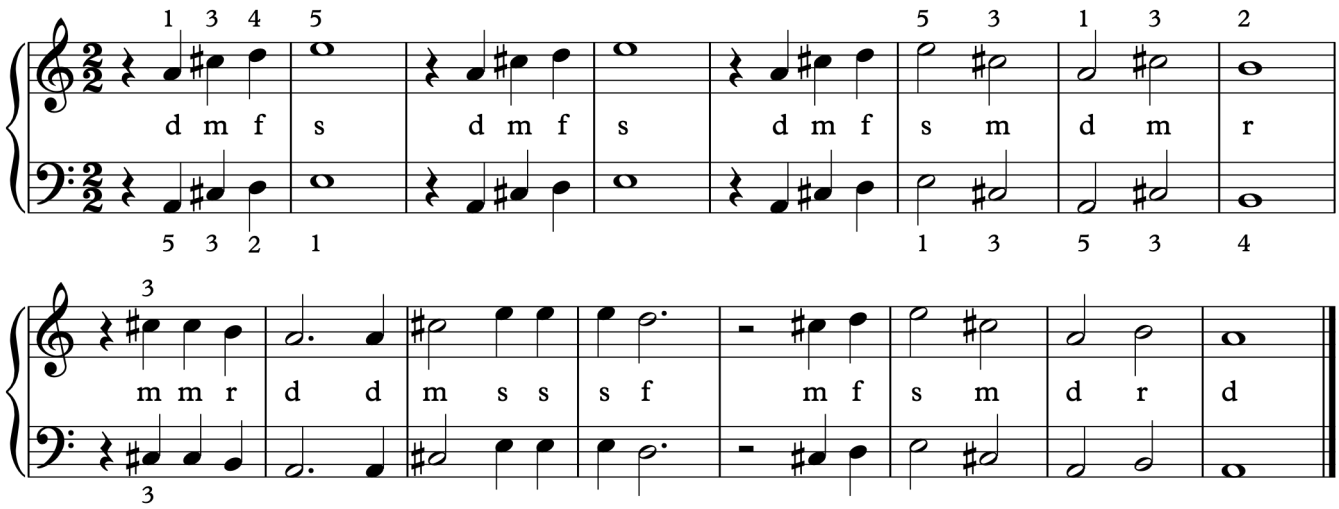


Now place your hand on the keys in a D major pentachord position. Both your middle fingers should be on *mi*. (What note is *mi* in the D pentachord?) Play the Ode to Joy in D, the original key.

Transpose the Ode to Joy to the keys of F, G, A, and E as well. Remember that the tune starts on *mi*, not *do*. Practice hands separately—use your LH as much as your RH!—then together if you want a challenge. Then practice playing while singing along with solfege syllables. Try singing with note letter names too.

Below is another tune using only the notes of the major pentachord.

When The Saints Go Marching In (key of A)



Transpose “Saints” to other keys. Try beginning on C, G, D, E, B, and G♭.