FREE CASE FILE

Piano Note Detective

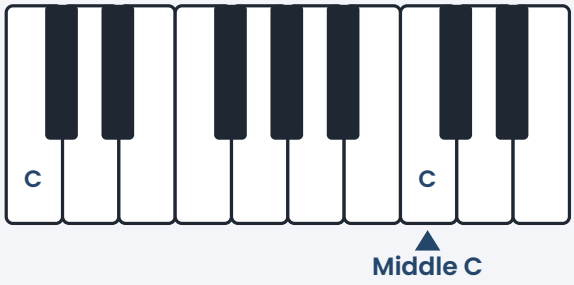
Find C: The Paper Stars

A first piano mystery: find the black-key groups, every C and Middle C, then follow four star clues to the missing tuning fork.



IN THIS FREE CASE

- 8 star clues, from easy to tricky
- Black-key groups and every C
- Middle C on the piano
- A mystery word to solve
- Paper keyboard (color and low-ink)
- Answers with a reason for each



Each group of two black keys has a C just to its left.

1. **Find the black-key groups**
2. **Find a C**
3. **Say the letters up from C**
4. **Check on a piano**

Digital download · Print at 100% on US Letter · Keyboard only, no staff reading yet · About 20 minutes · With a grown-up

How the case file works

One case, eight star clues, about 20 minutes.

This free case is for a beginner who has not read music yet. It teaches the map of the piano: black keys in groups of two and three, the letter names of the white keys, and Middle C. Sit beside the detective and read the story aloud.

EACH CASE

The story	Read it aloud together. It says what the detective is looking for.
Learn	The rule for this case, with a picture. Point at it while you read it.
Tasks	Short tasks that use the rule. Each one has a single right answer (except play tasks).
Clue	The last task gives a clue for the final question.

YOU NEED

- A pencil and two colored pencils
- A piano or keyboard if you have one; the paper keyboard near the end works too
- About 20 minutes (two short sittings are fine)

GOOD TO KNOW

- The strips on the task pages are the middle of the piano. In stars 1 to 4 they have no pointer: the detective finds the groups and the Cs, and in star 4 finds Middle C. From star 5 on, Middle C has a small pointer under it.
- Let the detective count aloud and point. Counting keys out loud is the skill, not a slow way of doing it.
- Every answer on the last page has a reason. Read the reason aloud when an answer is wrong.

NOT A METHOD BOOK

A free first case, not piano lessons. Note reading and keyboard practice only: no sharps, flats or key signatures.

Case 1: The Paper Stars

Black-key groups, every C, Middle C, and the letters A to G

THE STORY

Every morning Mr. Bell, the piano tuner at the Larkspur Music Shop, opens his felt case and takes out his silver tuning fork. This morning the case was empty. On the piano, someone had stuck eight little paper stars. Pip, the shop's small blue bird, loves shiny things. Read the stars one by one, Detective: they lead to the fork.

LEARN

- Along the piano, black keys come in groups of two and groups of three, over and over.
- C is the white key just left of a group of two black keys. Find any group of two, and its C is right there.
- Middle C is the C nearest the middle of the piano.
- From C, the white keys go up D, E, F, G, A, B, then C again. Going up means going right.



1 Star 1 is stuck on a black key in a group of two. How many groups of two black keys are on this strip?



My answer: ☐

Case 1: The Paper Stars (continued)

2 Star 2 is on a group of three. How many groups of three black keys are there?



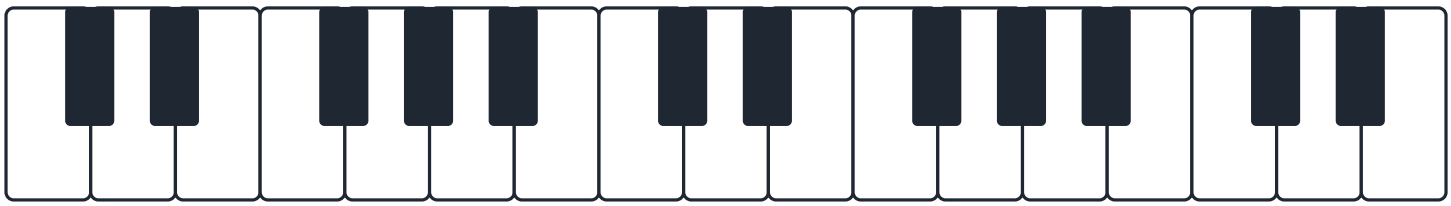
My answer: ☐

3 Star 3 says: "Color every C." Find the white key just left of each group of two black keys, and color it.



How many C keys did you color? ☐

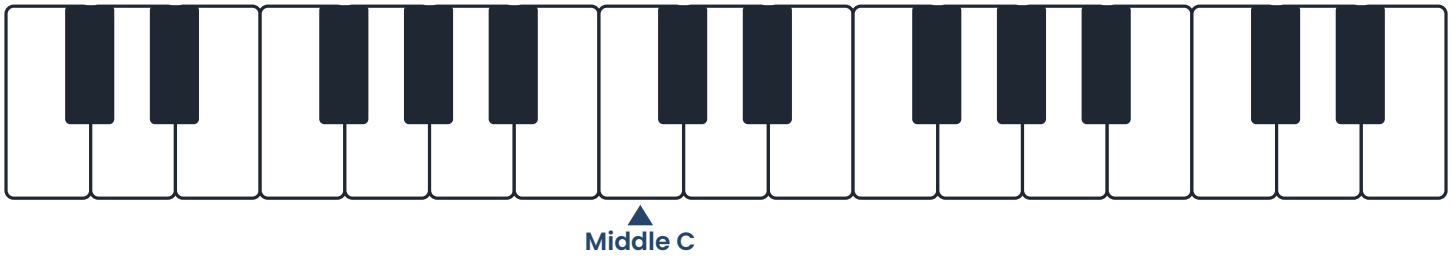
4 Star 4 says: "Find Middle C." Circle the C nearest the middle of the strip. Which C is it, counting from the left?



It is the … C from the left: 1st 2nd 3rd

Case 1: The Paper Stars (continued)

5 Stars 5 to 8 each describe one white key. Find each key, write the star number on it, and write its letter in the box. Count up from a C to name it.



5 The white key just left of a group of two black keys: the nearest one to the right of Middle C. letter ☐

6 The white key between the 2nd and 3rd black keys of a group of three: the nearest one to the right of Middle C. letter ☐

7 The white key between the 1st and 2nd black keys of a group of three: the nearest one to the left of Middle C. letter ☐

8 The white key just right of a group of two black keys: the nearest one to the right of Middle C. letter ☐

6 Check your work: play (or point to) every C from low to high. Then play your four star keys.

I played it | I pointed and sang

Where is the tuning fork?

The letters of stars 5 to 8 spell the answer.

THE STORY

Pip watched from the windowsill as you read the stars. The last four stars are letters. Put them in order, star 5 first, and they spell where the fork is.

Circle the place your letters spell. Then write the word.

- ○ **Mr. Bell's tool bag** — Brown leather, by the door
- ○ **Biscuit's dog bed** — The shop dog's blanket
- ○ **Pip's cage** — By the sunny window
- ○ **The café next door** — Mr. Bell buys tea there

Stars 5 to 8: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

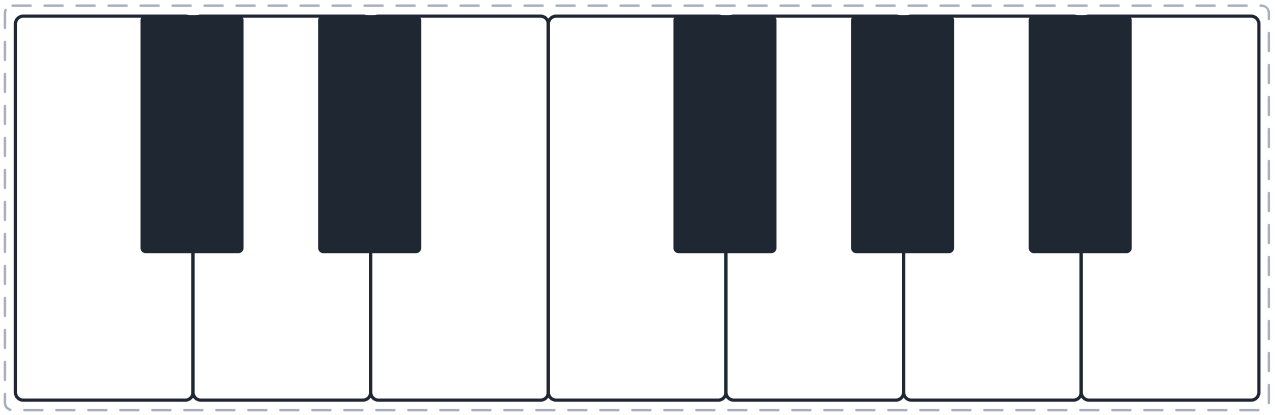
So the answer is: _____

How do you know? Name one clue that proves it.

Paper keyboard

Cut out the rows and tape them in order, low to high. White keys are about as wide as a real piano's.

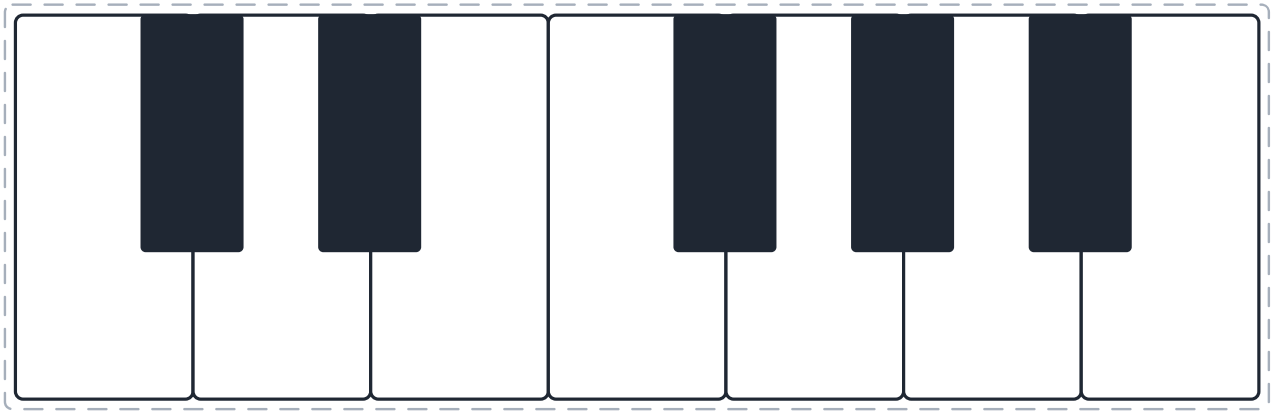
Low



Middle



High

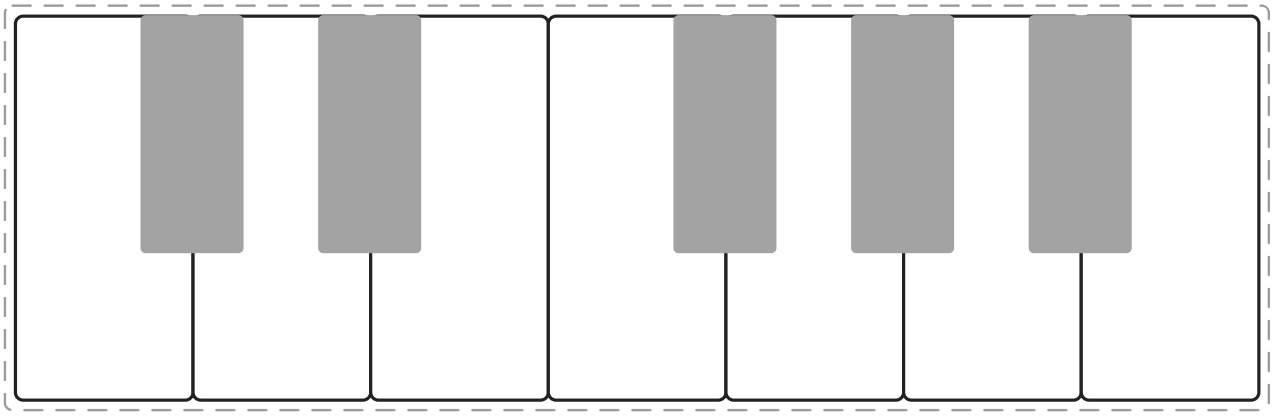


Only Middle C is labeled: finding the other keys is the detective's job. Tape the rows edge to edge (low on the left) to make one long keyboard.

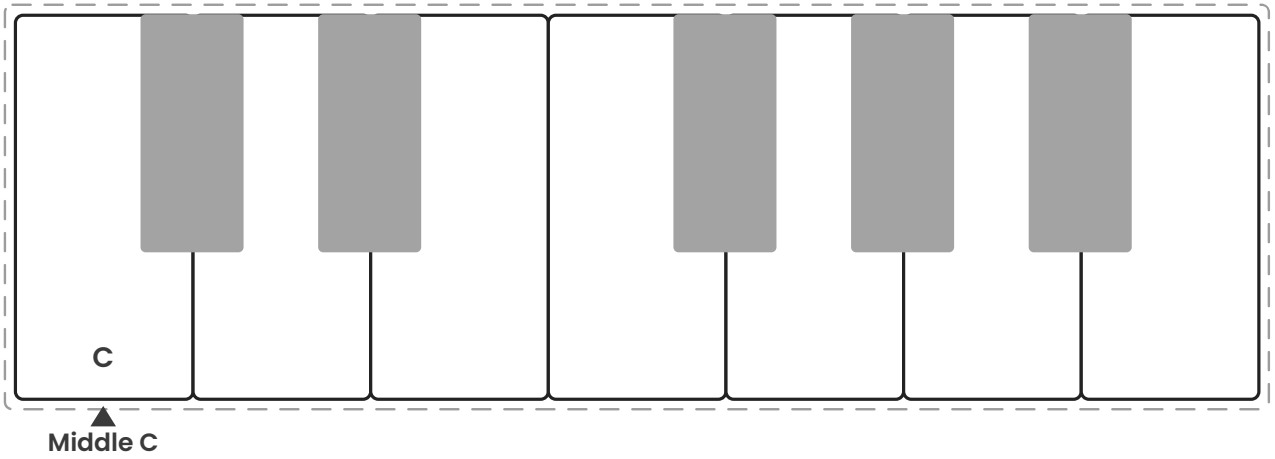
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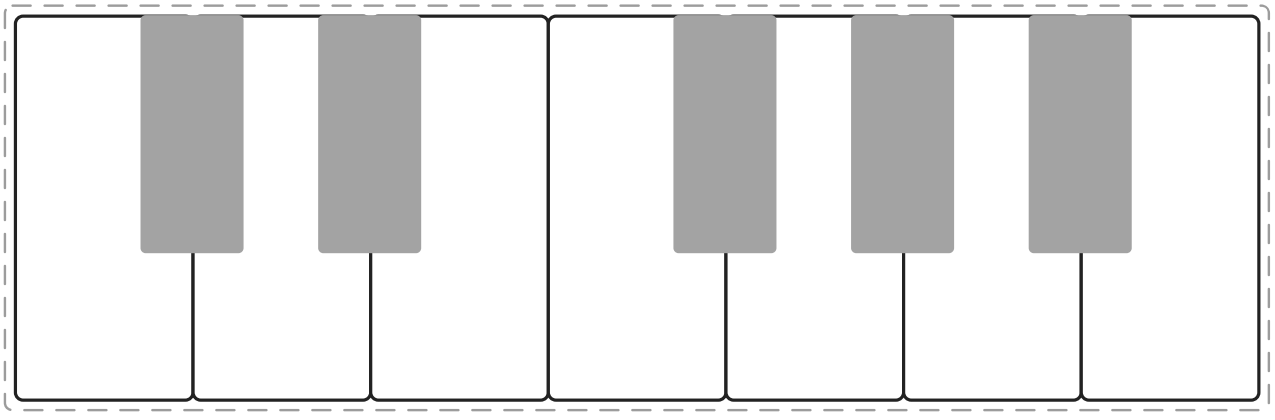
Low



Middle



High



Only Middle C is labeled: finding the other keys is the detective's job. Tape the rows edge to edge (low on the left) to make one long keyboard.

Answers

Every answer comes with its reason. Read the reasons aloud: they teach.

CASE 1 · THE PAPER STARS

Task 1
PND01-C1-T1

3 groups of two

The strip has 3 complete groups of two black keys.

Task 2
PND01-C1-T2

2 groups of three

The strip has 2 complete groups of three black keys.

Task 3
PND01-C1-T3

3 keys: C3, C4, C5

On this keyboard, every C is just left of a group of two black keys.



Task 4
PND01-C1-T4

the 2nd C from the left (Middle C, C4)

The strip has 3 C keys (C3, C4, C5); Middle C is the C nearest the middle of the piano, and this strip is the middle of the piano, so it is the 2nd C.



Task 5
PND01-C1-T5

5 C (C5) · 6 A (A4) · 7 G (G3) · 8 E (E4)

C is just left of a group of two black keys; the nearest one to the right of Middle C is C5. A is between the 2nd and 3rd black keys of a group of three; the nearest one to the right of Middle C is A4. G is between the 1st and 2nd black keys of a group of three; the nearest one to the left of Middle C is G3. E is just right of a group of two black keys; the nearest one to the right of Middle C is E4.



Task 6
PND01-C1-T6

Played or pointed. On this strip, each C is just left of a group of two black keys; each C sounds higher than the one before it.

THE FINAL QUESTION

Clues

C + A + G + E = CAGE

Answer

Pip's cage. The tuning fork was in Pip's cage, under the seed cup. Pip only wanted something shiny. Mr. Bell gave Pip a shiny bottle cap instead.