

Piano Note Detective

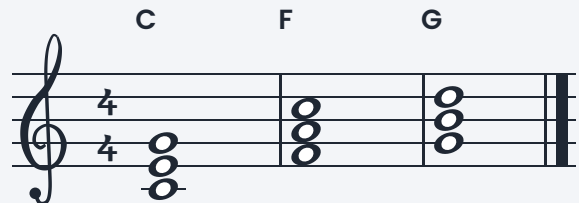
Major & Minor Triad Builder

Stack two 3rds and you have a triad: C, E and G make C major. Count half steps to tell major from minor, read chords on both staves, hear the difference, and play your first chord progressions.



IN THIS FREE SAMPLE

- Case 1: stack the thirds
- Name chords on the staff
- Build C, F and G
- Answers with reasons



C, F and G: three major triads, each a stack of two 3rds.

- 1 Find the root
- 2 Skip a letter twice
- 3 Count the half steps
- 4 Play the chord

Digital download · Print at 100% on US Letter · For students who know 3rds and half steps · Five sittings of about 15 minutes · With a piano or keyboard

How the case file works

Five cases, about 15 minutes each.

For a student who knows 3rds and half steps. A triad is three notes stacked in 3rds: a root, the note a 3rd above it, and the note a 5th above it. On the staff they sit line-line-line or space-space-space. Count the half steps from the root to the middle note: 4 makes a major triad, 3 a minor one. Case 4 needs a grown-up to play chords.

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
- A piano or keyboard
- A grown-up for the listening case

GOOD TO KNOW

- The root names the chord: C-E-G is a C chord.
- Chord symbols: a capital letter alone is major (C); a small m adds minor (Am).
- Major and minor sound different; listen for the middle note rather than for a mood.

NOT A METHOD BOOK

Theory and keyboard practice for students, not piano lessons. Root-position triads only; inversions come later.

Case 1: Stack the Thirds

A triad is a root, a 3rd and a 5th

THE STORY

The school choir sings in three-note chords, but the conductor's chord charts got wet. Rebuild the chords to read the choir's name.

LEARN

- A triad stacks two 3rds: root, 3rd, 5th.
- Skip a letter twice: C (D) E (F) G.
- On the staff a triad sits line-line-line or space-space-space.

C: C-E-G

F: F-A-C

1 Name each triad by its root (the bottom note). Write the chord symbol.

1

2

3

4

2 Write the three notes of each major triad, root first.

1. C =

2. F =

3. G =

Case 1: Stack the Thirds (continued)

3 Choose the best answer.

1. Which notes make a triad on G?

☒ G, B, D

☐ G, A, B

☐ G, C, E

CLUE 1



The first letter of the choir's name is the letter of your answer to task 3.

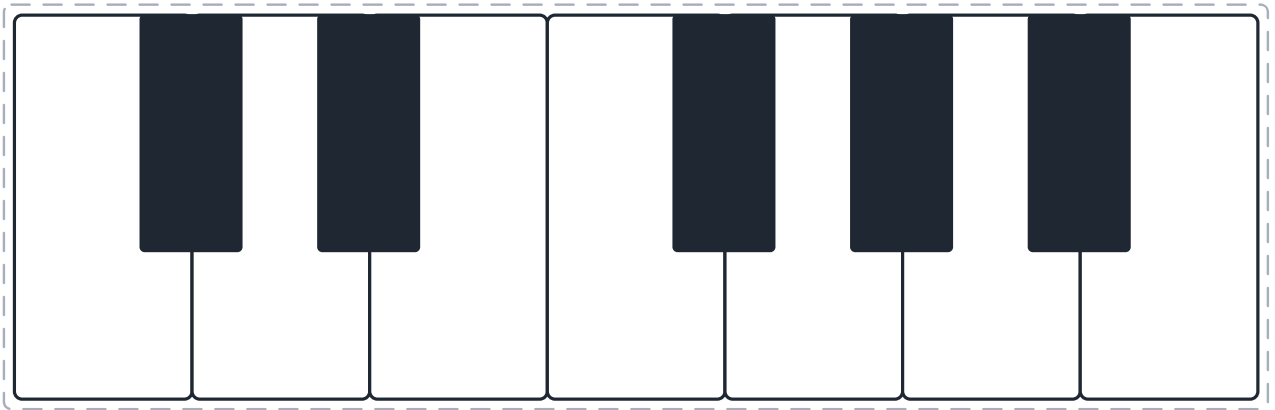
Clue:

Copy it onto the answer line of the final question.

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.

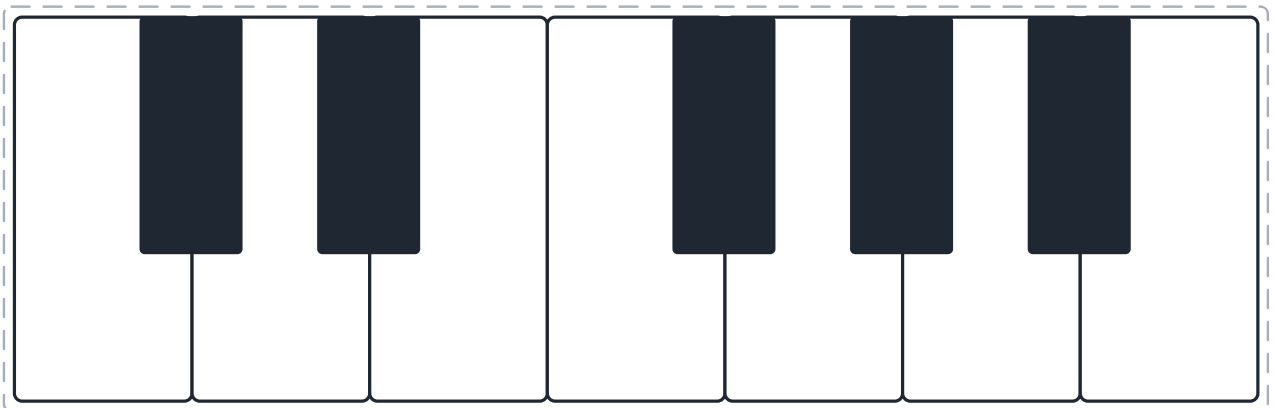
Low



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.

Case 1 answers

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

CASE 1 · STACK THE THIRDS

Task 1 PND38-C1-T1	1 C · 2 G · 3 F · 4 D Root C; 4 then 3 half steps: major = C. Root G; 4 then 3 half steps: major = G. Root F; 4 then 3 half steps: major = F. Root D; 4 then 3 half steps: major = D.
Task 2 PND38-C1-T2	1 C = C, E, G · 2 F = F, A, C · 3 G = G, B, D C: 3 notes stacked a 3rd apart from C (skip one letter each time): C, E, G. F: 3 notes stacked a 3rd apart from F (skip one letter each time): F, A, C. G: 3 notes stacked a 3rd apart from G (skip one letter each time): G, B, D.
Task 3 PND38-C1-T3	1 C: G, B, D Skip a letter twice from G: G (A) B (C) D.
Clue 1	C (the answer to item 1 of task 3)

THE FULL CASE FILE

The full Major & Minor Triad Builder has four more cases: major or minor, chords in the bass, hearing chords and chord progressions, with a notebook, the final question, hints and a certificate.