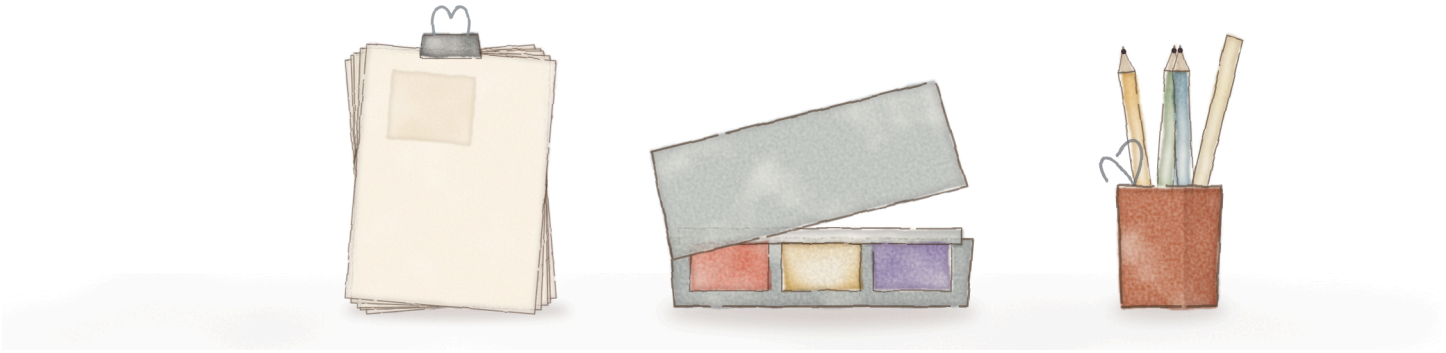
FREE SAMPLE · CASE 1

Piano Note Detective

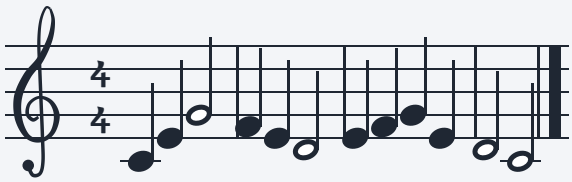
Write Your First Four-Bar Melody

Four bars, five notes, your own tune. Write the rhythm, choose the notes, shape it with steps and skips, bring it home to C, and hand it to someone else to play. Many good melodies, one checklist.



IN THIS FREE SAMPLE

- Case 1: rhythm first
- Check sample rhythms
- Write your own four-bar rhythm
- Answers and a checklist



One student's first melody: four bars, home at the end.

1 **Write the rhythm**

2 **Choose the notes**

3 **Check the rules**

4 **Hand it over**

Digital download · Print at 100% on US Letter · For students who read quarter, half, dotted half and whole notes and C to G on the staff · Five sittings of about 20 minutes · With a pencil and a piano

How the case file works

Five cases, about 20 minutes each.

For a student who reads quarter, half, dotted half and whole notes and C to G on the treble staff. The detective writes a four-bar melody of their own, one decision at a time: rhythm, notes, shape, ending. Sample melodies show the rules; they are not the answer. In the last case someone else plays the melody from the page: the real test of clear writing.

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	Rule-check tasks have one right answer; writing tasks have many good answers, checked against the rules and the checklist.
Clue	The last task gives a clue for the final question.

YOU NEED

- A pencil and an eraser
- A piano or keyboard
- The structure prompt cards at the back (cut out)

GOOD TO KNOW

- Rhythm first: a melody that adds up is easy to read.
- Change one thing at a time when revising.
- Praise choices; use the checklist, not your favorite tune.

NOT A METHOD BOOK

Composing practice for students, not piano lessons. No melody is the only right one: rules and a checklist judge it.

Case 1: Rhythm First

Write a four-bar rhythm in 4/4 that adds up

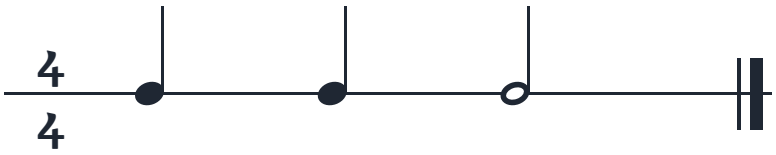
THE STORY

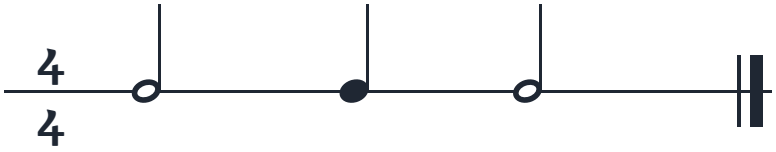
The school is choosing a new bell tune, and anyone can send one in. The entry form has five steps; each gives a letter of the contest's name.

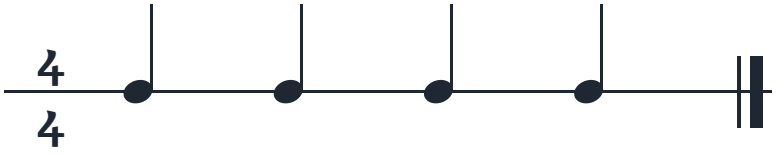
LEARN

- Start with the rhythm: four bars of 4/4, four beats each (quarter 1, half 2, dotted half 3, whole 4).
- Mix long and short: a whole or half note gives a resting point.
- A long note at the end of bar 2 and bar 4 makes the tune breathe.

1 Do these bars each hold four beats? Circle yes or no.

1.  yes no

2.  yes no

3.  yes no

4. yes no

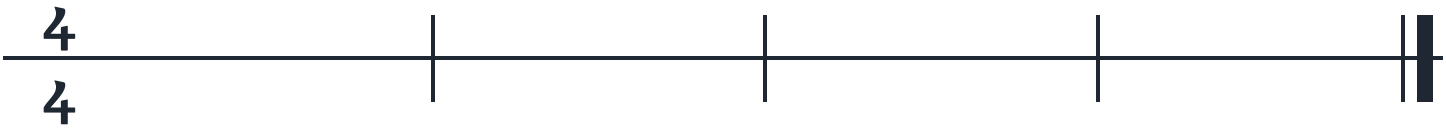
5. yes no

Case 1: Rhythm First (continued)

2 Write your own four-bar rhythm on the rhythm line. Then clap it.

Rules

- Every bar holds four beats.



3 Choose the best answer.

1. Bar 2 of your rhythm has a half note and a dotted half note. What is wrong?

   (M) It holds five beats, one too many
   (N) Nothing
   (P) It holds three beats

CLUE 1

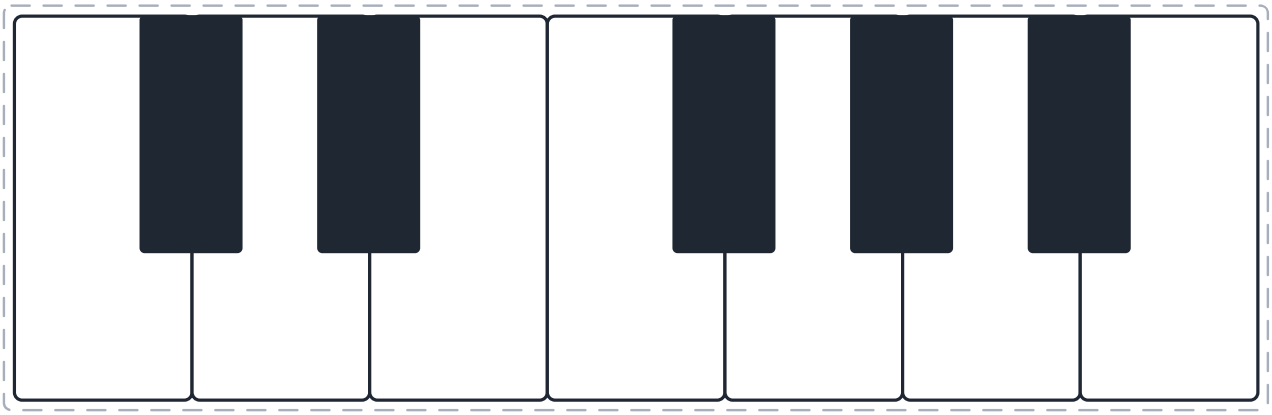
The first letter of the contest's name is the letter of your answer to task 3.

Clue: _____ **Copy it onto the answer line of the final question.**

Paper keyboard

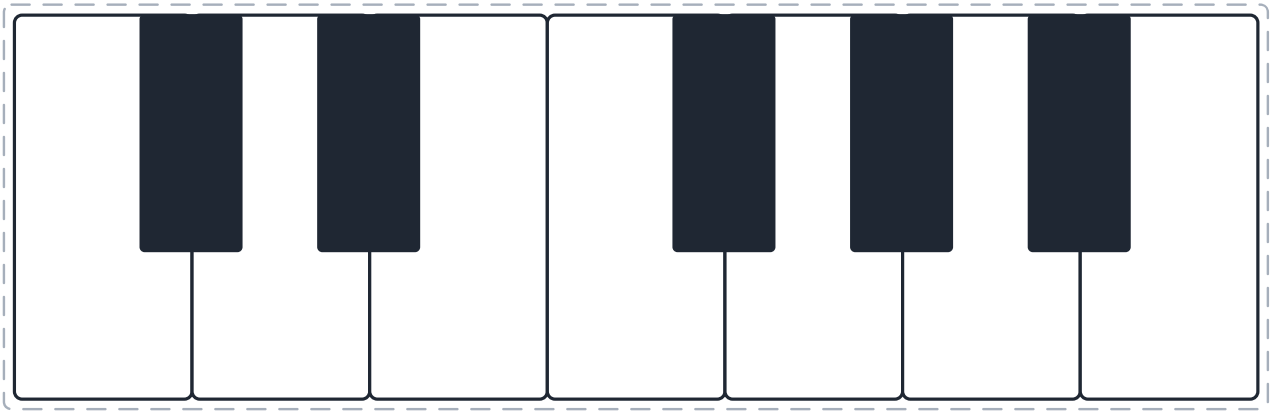
Cut out the rows and tape them in order, low to high. White keys are about as wide as a real piano's.

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 · RHYTHM FIRST

Task 1 **PND45-C1-T1**	1 yes · 2 no · 3 yes · 4 yes · 5 no 1 + 1 + 2 = 4 beats: right. 2 + 1 + 2 = 5 beats: not 4. 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4 beats: right. 4 = 4 beats: right. 3 + 2 = 5 beats: not 4.
Task 2 **PND45-C1-T2**	Many good answers. Check with the rules and the rubric. One example that follows every rule (not the answer): quarter note, quarter note, half note | quarter note, quarter note, half note | half note, quarter note, quarter note | whole note.
Task 3 **PND45-C1-T3**	1 M: It holds five beats, one too many 2 + 3 = 5 beats; a bar of 4/4 holds four.
Clue 1	M (the answer to item 1 of task 3)

THE FULL CASE FILE

The full Write Your First Four-Bar Melody has four more cases: choosing notes, shaping the tune, bringing it home and handing it over, with 12 structure prompt cards, a notebook, the final question, hints and a certificate.