

Lesson 1

Welcome

- Make sure student can access Zoom
- Familiarize them with controls if they're not aware (camera, mic, etc)
- Ice breakers
 - Name, age, grade, favourite school subject
 - Talk about something interesting - student hobbies, games, news, memes, etc
 - Fun facts about me: I'm 22, I live by myself with one cactus and many stuffed animals, I live on the 26th floor

Music Motivation

- Ask whose idea it was to study music (do they want to or was it mom/dad's idea)
 - If student's idea, ask if they've played any music before
 - Favourite instrument, favourite song, any songs they want to learn
- Ask what kind of music they like
 - Talk about their favourite artist/game/movie
 - Do they want to play music like that? Or just "normal piano"
 - Play them a snippet of a piece in their favourite genre
 - Examples
 - Classical: La Gemissante, Gymnopedie No. 1, Brahms Waltz in E minor
 - Jazz: Cruella de Vil, I Fall in Love Too Easily, New York State of Mind (I know it's not strictly jazz but Billy Joel is great)
 - Pop: Pull up chord charts from a radio hit. If they don't suggest anything, I'll probably play Taylor Swift or Carly Rae Jepsen (or Ava Max?)
 - Video Games: Minecraft Title Screen, Zelda's Lullaby, sans.
 - Memes: Mii Channel Theme, All Star

Starting Skills

- Ask if they've played any instruments before
 - If yes, ask them if they want to play something
 - It doesn't matter what the piece actually sounds like. It was fantastic and I'm proud of them.
- If not, it's ok! We'll start from the very beginning

- Skill checklist in order. Ask them how comfortable they are with each skill until we reach one that they don't know yet. Then stop and work on that. If they've done piano before, we can skip most or all of the list.
 - Concept of rhythm/beat, even if not by name
 - Note names on the piano
 - Sharps, flats, naturals
 - Key signatures (if they know different types of scales, they know key signatures)
 - Music notation (Grand staff, clefs, rhythmic values)
- If they're familiar with all those concepts, we can move on to choosing a piece
 - Students can bring their own books, or I can send a scan of a piece in one of mine

Knowledge Building

- This section will be unique based on what I learned about the student in the previous section. Here are some options.
- Beat/Rhythm/Time signature
 - Listen to some familiar music with a strong beat
 - Ask the student to clap along
 - Explain how beats are divided into groups
 - Use physical props to represent the beats
 - Show the student rhythmic notation
- Piano note names
 - Use letters of the alphabet
 - Very very very bottom note is A
 - Stops at G and repeats at A
 - Explain why there's no note H based on frequencies if student is interested
 - Show how to identify notes in random places based on pattern of black notes
- Sharps & Flats
 - Explain semitones are the smallest distance between notes - white or black
 - Play the chromatic scale
 - Black notes don't get their own names (remember these are notes not people - it's only okay to treat them differently because notes don't have feelings)

- We need a way to refer to them though, so we compare it to the closest white note
- Sharps go up and flats go down. To remember, which way would you go if you sat on something sharp/flat?
- This applies to white notes that are next to each other too
- Key signatures
 - There's a certain pattern of tones and semitones that makes a major scale
 - A major scale makes music sound "right." Other scales can work too but this one is easiest to start with
 - The white notes make a major scale automatically if you start on C
 - But if you want to start the scale on another note, you have to put in black notes to keep the pattern
 - The key signature is 1. The number of black notes and 2. WHICH black notes.
- Practice a Piece
 - Have the student play the piece as well as they can
 - Make sure all notes and rhythms are correct
 - If they're not, show them some tricks to make practicing easier
 - Ask them to use a pencil to circle the place that's tricky
 - Talk about the meaning of the piece and how to play it to make it tell a story

Wrap-Up

- Make a short list with the student of the things they can do in-between lessons to get better at music
- Ask them to write it down if they're old enough, or if they're too young, send it in an email afterwards
- Thank the student for their time and make sure they can meet at the same time next week