

# THE UNITED STATES ARMY OLD GUARD FIFE AND DRUM CORPS



# FIFE BOOK 1

[www.fifeanddrum.army.mil](http://www.fifeanddrum.army.mil)



# THE BASICS

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## POSTURE

Think “tall” and keep a natural, upright curve in your spine.

Shoulders should be back and relaxed.

## BREATHING

Inhale deeply, keeping your shoulders down. Your waist, chest and back should expand.

## AIRSTREAM AND SUPPORT

*Embouchure* is the shape and form of our lips when we play a wind instrument.

Say the word “PURE” and notice how your lips form into an OOOH shape like you are blowing a kiss.

Keep the corners of the lips steady and balanced for control.

Put the palm of your hand in front of your lips. Take a deep breath, form the word “TOO”, and blow out by steadily letting your air out. You should feel a cool airstream on your hand - not a warm one. Engage your tummy muscles as you let the air out without tightening your shoulders, neck, jaw, or tongue.

## TONE (SOUND) AND TONGUING

Scoop the edge of the fife’s embouchure hole up to the bottom edge of your lower lip. The fife should be stable on your chin.

To make a sound, form your embouchure and begin to blow beginning with an attack from the tongue like saying the word “TOO”.

The air should partly go into the fife and partly across the embouchure hole.

To sound more notes, use the tongue behind the front teeth with another “TOO” at the beginning of each note.

After every attack, make sure the tongue travels down – away from the airstream.

# HOLDING THE FIFE



Place the middle of the fife just above the bottom joint of your left index (pointer) finger then hook it to cover the first tone hole. Place your left-hand thumb naturally on the fife to stabilize it. The left-hand middle and ring fingers will cover the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tone holes.

Place your right index (pointer) finger on the 4<sup>th</sup> tone hole down and your thumb comfortably underneath being careful not to “stick out” past the fife’s edge. The right-hand middle finger and ring finger will cover the remaining 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> holes.

On a 6-hole fife, you can opt to place your right pinky finger on the instrument for stability.

Feel the fife balance as you place the instrument on the chin. Commonly, the left-hand wrist will have a bent position, but be sure to keep the right-hand wrist straight. The overall balance should allow your fingers to move with ease.

## Six Hole Fingering Chart:

(If you are not playing a basic 6-hole fife, be sure to refer to your instrument maker’s fingering chart)

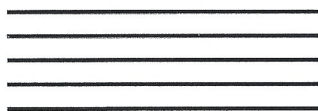
		D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C
Left Hand	1	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	○	●	○
	2	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	○	●
	3	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	○
Right Hand	4	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●
	5	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	●
	6	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	●



# READING NOTES

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The **Music Staff** has 5 lines and 4 spaces where notes and rests are written.



The **Treble Clef** is a symbol on the staff that indicates you are sounding higher pitched notes that are above middle-C.



## Notes on the Treble Clef



**Notes on the lines**



**Notes on the Spaces**



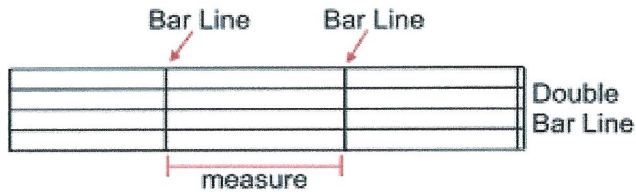
A good way to remember the notes on the lines is to remember this phrase:  
Every **G**ood **B**oy **D**oes **F**ine.

A good way to remember the notes on the spaces is to remember they spell out  
**FACE** from bottom to top.

# READING RHYTHM

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A **Measure** (or bar) divides time into a set of beats (or pulses).



**Bar Lines** separate measures.

The end of a song is shown with a **Double Bar Line**.

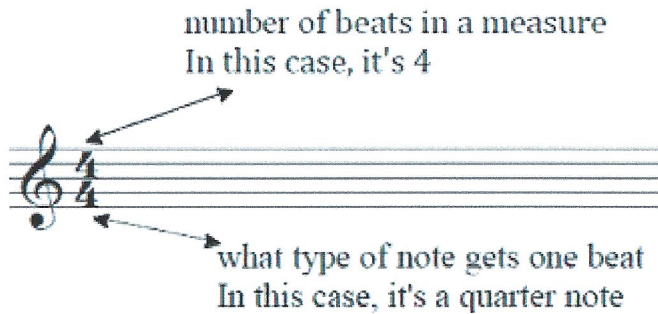
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The **Time Signature** is placed at the beginning of the staff.

In 4/4 time, the top number indicates there are four beats in one measure.

The bottom number shows what note will get the beat (or pulse).

In 4/4 time, the quarter note gets the beat.



Symbol	Name	Read as	Description
	2/4 Time Signature	Two four time signature	Top number = 2 beats per measure Bottom number = a quarter note gets one beat
	3/4 Time Signature	Three four time signature	Top number = 3 beats per measure Bottom number = a quarter note gets one beat
	4/4 Time Signature	Four four time signature	Top number = 4 beats per measure Bottom number = a quarter note gets one beat

# Rhythmic Note and Rest Values:

Different kinds of **Notes** tell us how long to play.

**Rests** tell us to count silent beats.

Whole Note = 4 Counts

Whole Rest = 4 Counts

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a whole note (a single oval) on a treble clef, with counts 1, 2, 3, 4 below it. The second staff shows a whole rest (a horizontal bar) on a treble clef, with counts 1, 2, 3, 4 below it.

Half Notes = 2 Counts

Half Rests = 2 Counts

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows two half notes (ovals) on a treble clef, with counts 1, 2, 3, 4 below them. The second staff shows two half rests (horizontal bars) on a treble clef, with counts 1, 2, 3, 4 below them.

Quarter Notes = 1 Count

Quarter Rests = 1 Count

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows four quarter notes (ovals with stems) on a treble clef, with counts 1, 2, 3, 4 below them. The second staff shows four quarter rests (vertical lines with flags) on a treble clef, with counts 1, 2, 3, 4 below them.

Eighth Notes = 1/2 Count

Eighth Rest = 1/2 Count

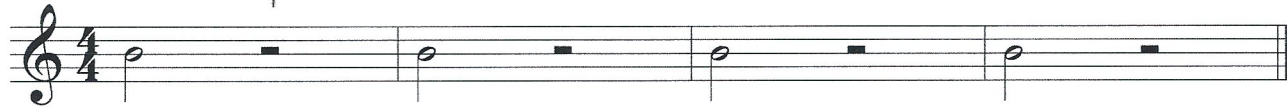
Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows eight eighth notes (ovals with stems) on a treble clef, with counts 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & below them. The second staff shows eight eighth rests (vertical lines with flags) on a treble clef, with counts 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & below them.

## Clap and Count

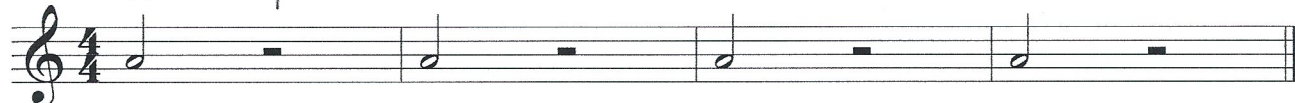
Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: a whole note, a half note, a quarter note, and an eighth note. The second staff shows a sequence of notes: a whole note, a half note, a quarter note, and an eighth note, with eighth rests interspersed between the notes.

# LESSON 1: Let's Play Music - Notes B-A-G

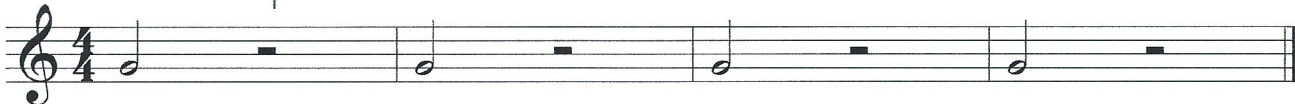
B ●○○○|○○○



A ●●○|○○○



G ●●●|○○○



## Changing Notes



## B-A-G with Steps



## B-A-G with Skips





**Hot Cross Buns**

Musical notation for 'Hot Cross Buns' in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and then a whole rest. The second staff shows a bass line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and then a whole rest.

**Mary Had a Little Lamb**

Musical notation for 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and then a whole rest. The second staff shows a bass line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and then a whole rest.

**French Tune**

Musical notation for 'French Tune' in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and then a whole rest. The second staff shows a bass line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and then a whole rest.

**# Sharp Sign:**  
Raises a pitch 1/2 step

**b Flat Sign:**  
Lowers a pitch 1/2 step

**Key Signature:**  
The Sharp(s) or Flat(s)  
placed after the Cleff  
on the Staff.



**Key of D Major:** Has two sharps.  
Play all Cs and Fs as sharp notes.

**New Note F#**

Musical notation for 'New Note F#' in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and then a whole rest. The second staff shows a bass line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and then a whole rest.

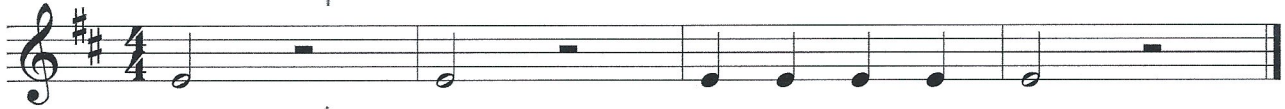
**Climbing Up and Down**

Musical notation for 'Climbing Up and Down' in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and then a whole rest. The second staff shows a bass line starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and then a whole rest.

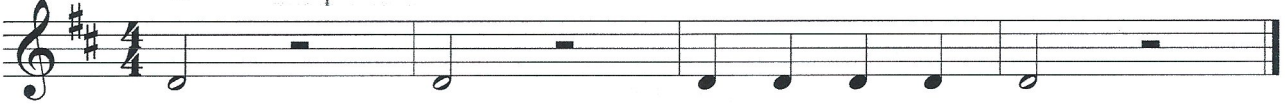


# LESSON 2: New Notes E and D

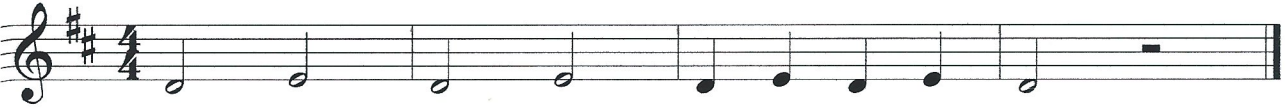
E ●●●● | ●●●○



D ○●●● | ●●●●



## D and E Together



## 5-Note Scale



## Scale in 3rds

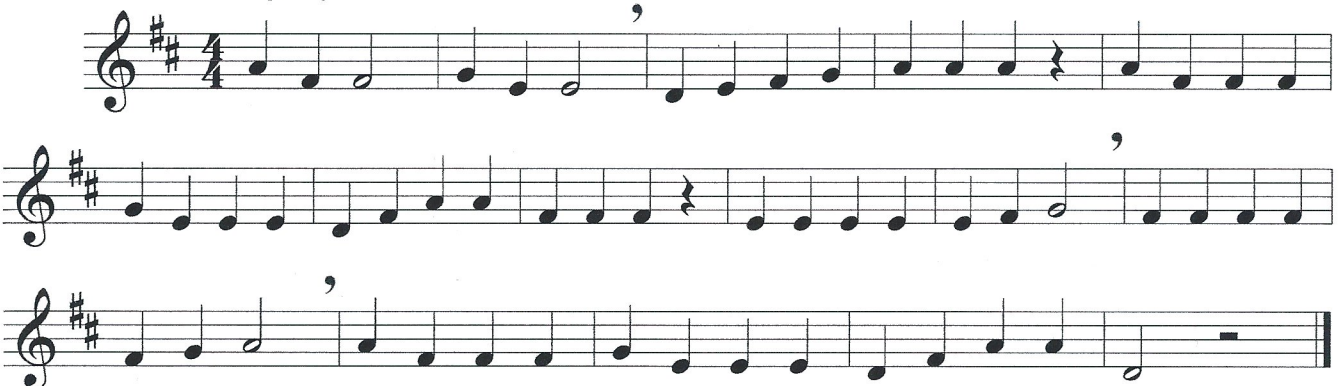


● **Breath Mark:** Take a full breath through your mouth at the end of a note.

## Go Tell Aunt Rhodie



## Lightly Row



### Lightly Row - in 2/4

Musical notation for 'Lightly Row' in 2/4 time, consisting of three staves of music in G major. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature.

### Twinkle Twinkle

Musical notation for 'Twinkle Twinkle' in 2/4 time, consisting of two staves of music in G major. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature.



**Slur:** A curved line which connects notes of different pitches. Tongue only the first note in a slur.

### London Bridge

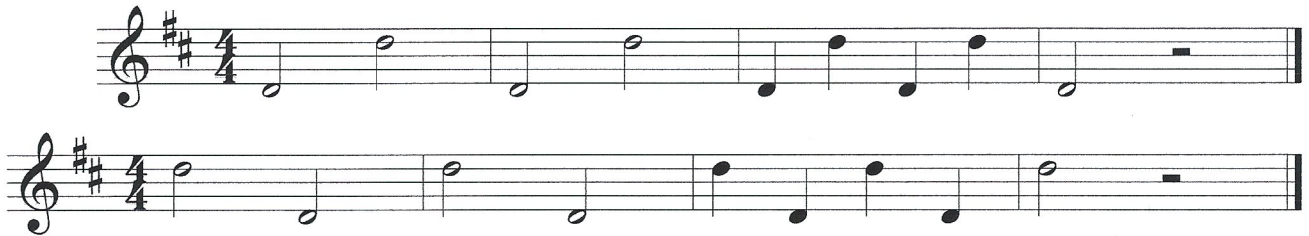
Musical notation for 'London Bridge' in 2/4 time, consisting of two staves of music in G major. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature.

### Are You Sleeping? - Round (8th notes in 4/4 time)

Musical notation for 'Are You Sleeping? - Round' in 4/4 time, consisting of two staves of music in G major. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first four measures are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, indicating the start of the round.

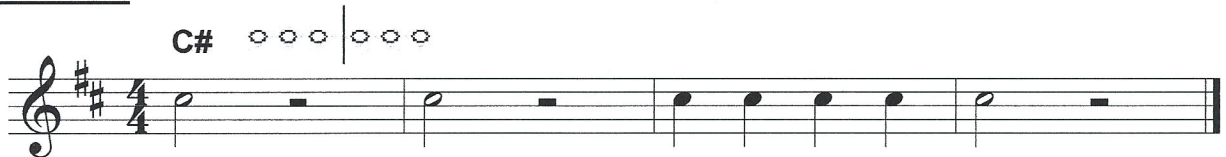
# LESSON 3: Playing in D Major and Notes up to High A

**D Octave:** Use the same D fingering for both low and high.  
For the high note, increase the air speed and form a smaller lip opening.

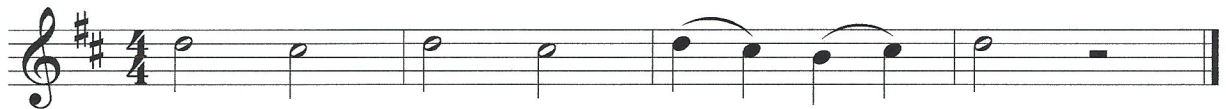


## New Note C#

C# ○○○○ | ○○○○



## D and C# Switch



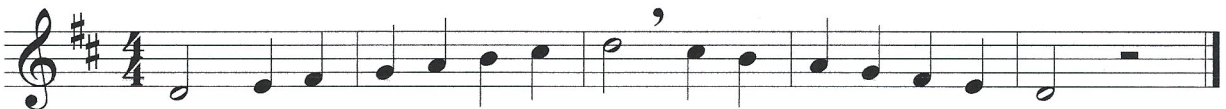
## D Major Scale Moving Down



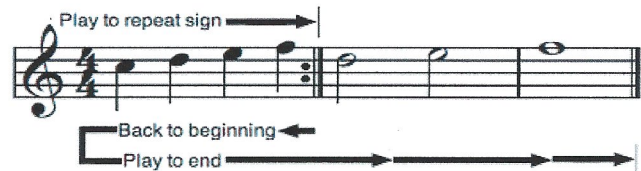
## D Major Scale Moving Up



## D Major Moving Up and Down



**Repeat Sign:** Without stopping,  
play once again from the beginning.



## March





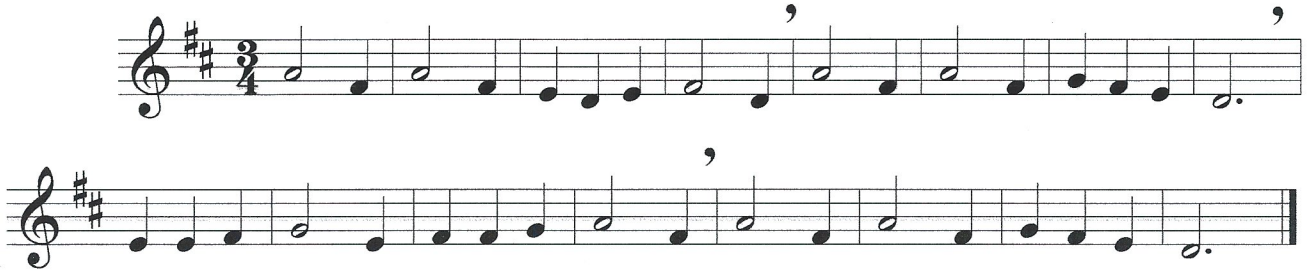
Three Beats  
Per Measure



**A Dotted Half Note:** = three beats  
A dot adds half of a note's value to the note.

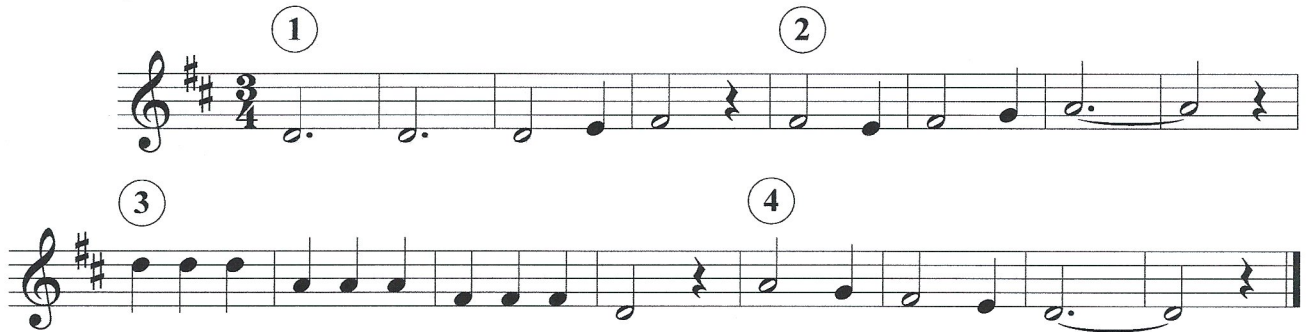
**3/4 time:** Three beats per measure and the quarter note gets the beat.

### Cuckoo

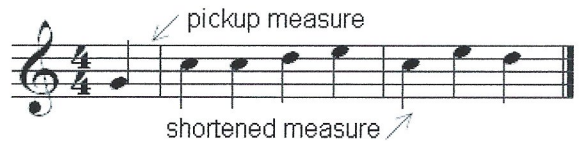


**Tie:** A curved line connecting notes of the same pitch.  
Play one note for the combined counts of the tied notes.

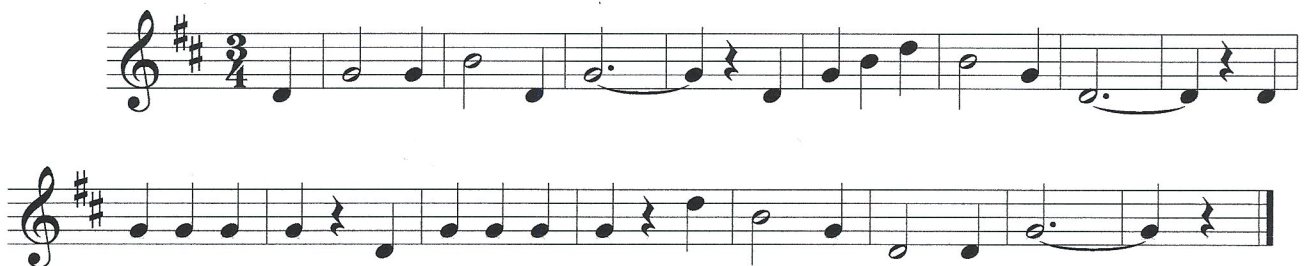
### Row Row Row Your Boat - Round

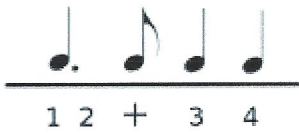


**Pick-up Note(s):** One or more notes that come before the first full measure. The beats of pick-up notes are subtracted from the last measure.



### You're in the Army Now



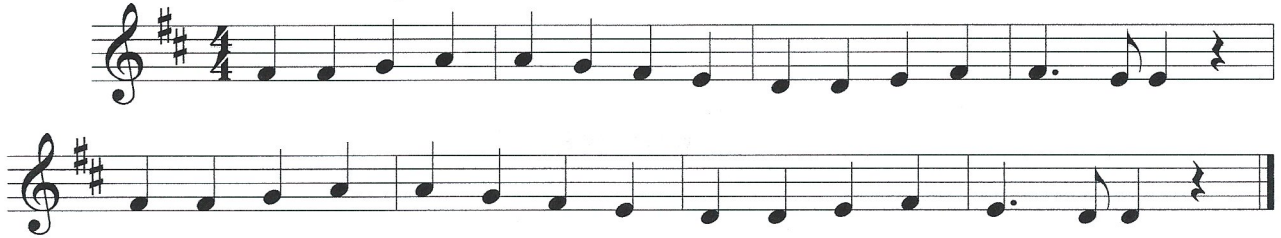


**Dotted Quarter Note:** The dot adds half of the note's value. For a quarter note - add an 8th note.

A single 8th note has a flag on the stem.

**Ode to Joy**

*Beethoven*



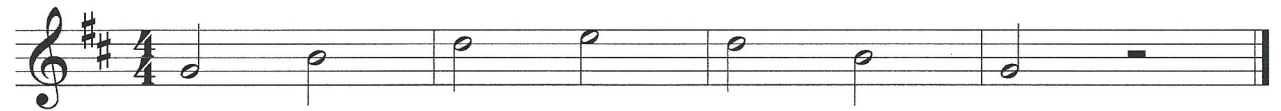
**Oh Susanna**



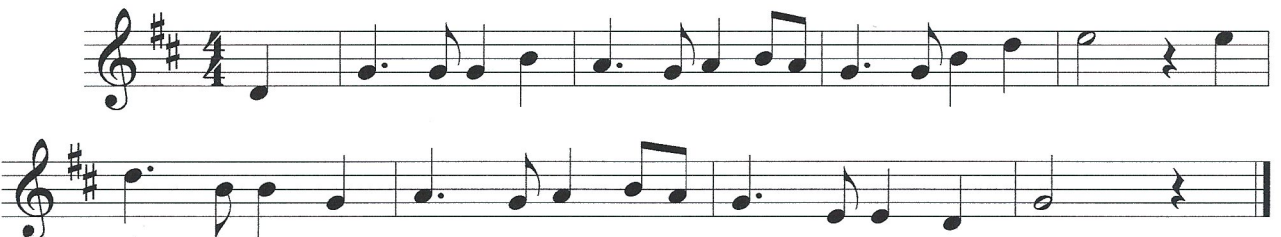
**New Note E** (Octave higher)



**Reach to High E**



**Auld Lang Syne**





**Notes Up to High A:**

F#    ●●● | ●○○      G    ●○○ | ○○○      A    ○●● | ●●○

**High Note Exercises in D Major**

**Lightly Row Up High**

**Home on the Range**

**Jumping Around Exercise**

**Welcome Here Again**

# Lesson 4: Playing in G Major and New Note C Natural



**Natural:** Cancels a flat or sharp and remains in effect for the entire measure.

**Accidental:** a note that is not a member of the key indicated and marked with a flat, sharp or natural sign before the note to be played.

## New Note C- Natural

C      ○ ● ○ ● ● ●

New Key Signature:



Key of G Major: Has one sharp.  
Play all Fs as sharp notes.

## Exercise in G Major

## G Major Scale

## G Major Scale in 3rds

## My Country 'Tis of Thee

## Buffalo Gals



### Rakes of Mallow

Musical notation for 'Rakes of Mallow' in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of three staves. The first staff contains the main melody. The second and third staves contain accompaniment. The piece features a first ending and a second ending, both marked with repeat signs and first/second endings.

**Repeat 1st and 2nd Endings:** Play through the 1st ending then back to the repeated section. On the repeat, skip the 1st ending and play the 2nd ending.

Diagram illustrating the repeat and back to beginning instructions. It shows a musical staff with a first ending bracket. An arrow labeled "Play to repeat sign" points to the right. Another arrow labeled "Back to beginning" points to the left, indicating a jump back to the start of the repeated section.

### The Girl I Left Behind Me

Musical notation for 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of three staves. The first staff contains the main melody. The second and third staves contain accompaniment. The piece features two first endings and two second endings, marked with repeat signs and first/second endings.

### Yankee Doodle

Musical notation for 'Yankee Doodle' in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the main melody. The second staff contains accompaniment. The piece features a first ending and a second ending, marked with repeat signs and first/second endings.

### Norman Toy

Musical notation for 'Norman Toy' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the main melody. The second staff contains accompaniment. The piece features a first ending and a second ending, marked with repeat signs and first/second endings.