Lesson 1:
Overview

At the completion of Lesson 1 the student will be able to:

● understand the following concepts:
  ○ tonal and non-tonal music
  ○ major and minor modes
  ○ origins and purpose of musical notation
  ○ pitch and pitch class
  ○ read, notate, sing and play pitches notated in bass and treble clefs
  ○ chromatic alterations and enharmonic spelling
  ○ identify the patterns and multiple names of white and black keys on the piano and distinguish between whole steps and half steps (diatonic and chromatic)

● sing and play on a keyboard:
  ○ pitches
  ○ half and whole steps
  ○ short melodic patterns

● demonstrate aural skills:
  ○ identify tonal and non-tonal music
  ○ identify major and minor modes
  ○ identify the relative register of notes (for example, if two notes are played in succession, be able to determine if the second note played is in a higher, lower, or the same register as the first note played)
  ○ identify pitches given a starting note
  ○ identify intervals in a series as steps or leaps
  ○ notate short melodic fragments
Lesson 1.1:  
Tonality

- Tonality
- Gravitational Center
- Tonal Music
- Tonic
- Non-tonal music

**Tonality** is a musical phenomenon whereby compositions contain a single pitch around which all other pitches orbit. This central pitch is called the **tonic**, and provides the **gravitational center** of music of the common practice period. Music from the **common practice period** (c. 1650-c. 1900), including music of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods, has this quality and is called **tonal music**. Tonal music can be found throughout the world.

**Non-tonal music** has no tonal center or gravitational pull towards a tonic pitch.

Lesson 1.2:  
History of Musical Notation

- Consistency
- Permanence

Writing down music (called “notation”) preserves it and creates **permanence**, allowing music to be passed down through the years, and makes certain that it receives a fairly **consistent performance**. Musical notation has evolved for many centuries.

Lesson 1.3:  
Pitch Notation

- Staff and Clef
  - Score
  - Pitch
  - Staff
  - Clef
- Clefs
  - C Clefs: Alto and Tenor
  - Treble
Staff and Clef

Writing down music (called “notation”) preserves it and makes certain that it receives a fairly consistent performance.

- Musical scores begin with several elements, including the staff and clef, which make it possible to fix pitches.
- Pitches are musical sounds created by vibrating bodies, like strings or an air column. They are named using the letters of the alphabet, from A to G, which define the relationships between them.
- A staff (plural: staves) is made up of horizontal lines and spaces, each of which, when associated with a clef, represents a specific pitch. A staff lets the performer determine exactly how much higher or lower a specific pitch is in relation to another pitch.
- A clef indicates which location on a staff represents which pitch. The earliest clefs indicated the location of what is now called middle C, and are thus called C clefs. Example 1 shows what the C clef looks like in modern notation.

Example 1

```
soprano clef
middle C
soprano range

alto clef
middle C
alto range

tenor clef
middle C
tenor range
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Types of Clefs

Although C clefs may appear on any line of a staff, today only two C clefs are commonly used:

1. **Alto** clef is used to notate viola music.
2. **Tenor** clef is used to notate some trombone, bassoon, and cello music.

Two other clefs came into common usage centuries after the C clefs were well established. These newer clefs can accommodate the bass (lowest voice) and soprano (highest voice) at their extremes, with the alto and tenor voices within.

- **Treble** or G clef indicates the location of G above middle C.
- **Bass** or F clef indicates the location of F below middle C.

Bass and treble clefs often appear one above the other in the **grand staff**, as shown in Example 2. **Ledger lines** extend a staff either above the top line or below the bottom line, in order to accommodate pitches that exceed its range.

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Example 2: Grand Staff

![Grand Staff Diagram]

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Pitch and Pitch Class

In Example 3, the note E appears in various locations on the staff: high, middle, and low. When we refer to specific Es that are higher or lower than one another, each E is considered to be a distinct pitch.

- Pitch refers to the relative highness or lowness of a sound; the concept of pitch lets us identify both the name and placement of each E in relation to other Es.
- The term **pitch class** refers to all the pitches that have the same letter name. All of the Es are represented by the pitch class E, no matter how high or how low they are on the grand staff.

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Example 3: Pitch and Pitch Class

![Pitch and Pitch Class Diagram]
The Division of Musical Space: The Interval

An interval is the distance between any two pitches. Each interval has its own unique sound quality.

As you cycle through the seven intervals based on the seven different pitch names, the eighth note begins the cycle anew (e.g., A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A-B...). This distance (from A to A) is called an octave. It has been universally considered to be a crucial interval because it marked an important sonic boundary. Pitches separated by one or more octaves were considered to be so closely related that they shared the same name.

Eventually, the music created by western (European) musicians used pitches that divided the octave into seven steps, each of which was given its own name, corresponding to the first seven letters of the alphabet (A through G). These steps were of two different sizes, one exactly twice as large as the other. Let’s use the keyboard to represent relationships and distances in music.

- The smaller step is called a half step. Half steps on the keyboard occur between any two adjacent keys, such as E and F, or B and C.
- The larger step is called a whole step, and is defined as two half steps. Whole steps on the keyboard occur between any two keys that are separated by an intervening key, such as between C and D, and A and B. Example 4 illustrates various half (H) and whole (W) steps on the keyboard.
- The numbers following each letter name describe specific pitches: each octave, moving upward from C, is assigned a number. Pitches above C in that octave will have the same designation.

Example 4: Half and Whole Steps on the Keyboard
Accidentals

The octave (A-G) has seven different pitch names within it, but the keyboard has twelve different keys within that octave: seven white keys and five black keys. Naming each of these twelve keys involves altering the names of the seven basic (or natural) keys by adding various modifiers that are called chromatic alterations or accidentals.

The three most common accidentals are:
- the flat (♭), which lowers a pitch by one half step.
- the sharp (#), which raises it by one half step.
- the natural (♮), which cancels a previous accidental. For example, an F♯ following an F♮ removes or cancels the sharp, causing the resulting pitch to be one half-step lower.

Two more accidentals are less common but still frequently used:
- a double sharp (♯♯) raises a pitch by two half steps (or an already-sharped pitch by one half step).
- a double flat (♭♭) lowers a pitch by two half steps (or an already-flatted pitch by one half step).

Notes are enharmonic equivalents when they are the same sounding pitch (or key on the piano) but have different names. For example, F# and Gb sound the same and are the same key on the piano, and they are enharmonic equivalents.

Example 5 summarizes all five accidentals and Example 6 illustrates where various notated examples are played on the keyboard. Note that in example 6, each of the five accidentals has been applied to the note F.

Example 5: Summary of Accidentals

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>raises a pitch a half step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♮</td>
<td>flat</td>
<td>lowers a pitch a half step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♮</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>cancels a previous accidental or indicates an unaltered pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♯</td>
<td>double sharp</td>
<td>raises an unaltered pitch two half steps or a sharped pitch one half step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♯</td>
<td>double flat</td>
<td>lowers an unaltered pitch two half steps or a flatted pitch one half step</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 6: Accidentals on the Keyboard