

FIRST GRADE THEORY

There are a number of theory books available that will cover the following points.

1. Music Theory Made Easy (for AMEB) Grade 1 – Lina Ng
2. How to Blitz Theory Grade 1 – Samantha Coates
3. Essential Music Theory Grade 1 – Gordon Spearritt
4. Master Your Theory Grade 1 – Dulcie Holland
5. AMEB Theory of Music Grade 1 – AMEB

PITCH AND TONALITY

- Identify treble and bass clefs.
- Names of lines and spaces.
- 2 ledger lines above and below each stave.
- Identify sharps, naturals and flats.

KEYS AND SCALES











- Writing C, G, F major for one octave.
- Key signatures for the above.
- Tones and semitones for the above.
- Scale degree numbers.



INTERVALS AND CHORDS

- All diatonic intervals above the tonic in the treble using the set keys.
- Writing the tonic triad in root position in the treble using the set keys.
- Transpose a short melody without accidentals into C, G or F major.

TIME AND RHYTHM

Rest	Name	Value	Equal To
	semibreve	4	
	dotted minim	3	
	minim	2	
	crotchet	1	
	quaver	1/2	

TIME SIGNATURES

2 Simple Duple Time

3 Simple Triple Time

4 Simple Quadruple Time

4 2 crotchet beats per bar

4 3 crotchet beats per bar

4 4 crotchet beats per bar

Common Time (C)



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TERMS FOR FIRST GRADE THEORY

SPEED

- Adagio – slowly
- Andante – at an easy walking pace
- Moderato – at a moderate speed
- Allegro – Lively and fast
- Presto – very fast

MODIFICATIONS OF SPEED

- Accelerando (accel.) – gradually becoming faster
- Rallentando (rall.) – gradually becoming slower
- Ritardando (ritard.) -gradually becoming slower
- Ritenuto (riten or rit.) - immediately slower or held back
- A tempo – return to former speed





INTENSITY OF SOUND

- Crescendo (*cresc* or *cres*) – gradually becoming louder
- Decrescendo (*decresc* or *decrec*) – gradually becoming softer
- Diminuendo (*dim*) - gradually becoming softer
- Forte (***f***) – loud
- Piano (***p***) – soft




The presence of an anacrusis – the piece will begin with an incomplete bar with the remaining values found at the end of the piece

MUSICAL SIGNS






CLEFS

Sign	Name	Meaning
	Treble Clef G Clef	Denotes all notes are at Middle C or above
	Bass Clef F Clef	Denotes all notes are at Middle C or below

PITCH

	Flat	Lowers a note by a semitone (half step)
	Sharp	Raises a note by a semitone (half step)
	Natural	Instructs performer to return note to normal pitch

ARTICULATIONS

	Tie	Hold the note for the combined time value
	Slur	Play the notes smoothly and well connected (as in legato)
	Staccato	Play short and detached
	Accent	Play the note with more force
	Pause or Fermata	Hold the note for longer

DYNAMICS

p

Piano

Softly

mf

Mezzo forte

Moderately loudly

f

Forte

Loudly



Crescendo

Gradually becoming louder



Decrescendo or
Diminuendo

Gradually becoming softer



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KEY SIGNATURES - SHARPS

Count Up 5 Keys	Scale	Notes	Sharps	Key Signature
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C Major

C D E F G A B C

-

-

C D E F **G**

G Major

G A B C D E F# G

1

F#



To help remember the **Order of Sharps** use the following saying:

“Farmer Charlie Goes Down And Eats Berries”



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KEY SIGNATURES – FLATS

Count Down 5 Keys	Scale	Notes	Flats	Key Signature
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C Major

C D E F G A B C

-

-

C B A G **F**

F Major

F G A B \flat C D E F

1

B \flat

