

# Learn to Play Piano On Your Computer Beginner's Series CD-ROM

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By Susan Holmes



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# Product Description

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- ❑ “Learn to Play Piano: Beginner’s Series” is a CD-ROM based interactive instructional media product that will teach beginning piano techniques to users with various levels of musical experience with music and goals.
- ❑ The instructional format will teach users the basics of understanding, reading, and playing piano.
- ❑ The “How to Play Piano: Beginner’s Series” does not require the user to own a piano or keyboard.
- ❑ The design will include an interface for the user to play simple notes using either the computer keyboard, a simple, inexpensive keypad or keyboard with only three octaves that the user could connect to their computer using a USB port, and an option to connect a full electronic keyboard.
- ❑ The product will be available for purchase off the shelf as a CD-ROM or can be downloaded directly from the company website.



# Product Objectives

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- ❑ To teach basic fingering techniques.
- ❑ To teach how to read music.
- ❑ To teach music theory and dynamics.
- ❑ Because the various user segments represent different user goals, the interface will allow users to take a Quick Lesson Review or can navigate to specific topics or lessons.



# Company Objectives

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- ❑ To increase company revenue thru:
  - ❑ Sales of “Learn to Play Piano: Beginner’s Series”
  - ❑ Sales of “Learn to Play Piano: Intermediate & Advanced Series”
  - ❑ Sales of “Learn to Play Piano” product extensions for specific music styles (available on website and CD-ROM)
- ❑ To increase brand awareness thru:
  - ❑ Product displays
  - ❑ User satisfaction
  - ❑ Improved market share



# Target Audience: User Goals and Segmentation

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- User Goals:
  - Learn basic piano playing techniques.
  - Save money by avoiding expensive lessons.
  - Learn at own pace.
  - Test their interest, capability, and level of commitment before investing in a piano.
  
- Segmentation Factors
  - The user segments were determined based on the user's musical experience and goals.
  - Since people of all ages express an interest in playing piano and the age of the user is not directly related to the user's musical ability, age was not used as a determining factor when creating the user segments.
  - Computer skill was not included in individual user profiles since the product goals are not based on technological skills. For users uncomfortable with using computers a beginner's computer tutorial will be provided on the disc.



# Target Audience: User Segmentation

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- Complete Beginner
  - Music Reading Ability: None
  - Piano Experience: None
- Relative Beginner
  - Music Reading Ability: Some
  - Piano Experience: None
- Intermediate Beginner
  - Music Reading Ability: Moderate
  - Piano Experience: Some
- Returning Player
  - Music Reading Ability: Moderate
  - Piano Experience: Moderate
- Learning a 2<sup>nd</sup> Instrument
  - Music Reading Ability: Advanced
  - Piano Experience: None



# The Complete Beginner

User Profile #1



Ashley

## Goals:

To learn all of the basics of piano playing so that she can play easy versions of popular music selections.

To see if she likes playing enough to totally commit to learning how to play at the intermediate and advanced levels.

- ❑ Music Reading Ability: None
- ❑ Piano Experience: None

*“I can’t wait to learn how to play more than just ‘Heart & Soul’.”*

- ❑ Age: 13
- ❑ Location: Seattle, WA
- ❑ Education: Middle-school student
- ❑ Style: Wants to learn fun, recognizable songs
- ❑ Profession: Student
- ❑ Personal background: Likes listening to pop music, shopping, chatting with her friends online, and updating her My Space page.
- ❑ Family status: Single Minor/Lives with parents
- ❑ Yearly household income: \$90,000

# The Returning Player

User Profile #2



*Barbara*

## Goals:

To rediscover her lost passion for playing music.

Needs a quick refresher course on fingering techniques, music dynamics, and musical theory.

- ❑ Music Reading Ability: Moderate
- ❑ Piano Experience: Moderate

*“I loved playing when I was a teenager, but after I left for college I stopped playing. I’m looking forward to rediscovering my lost passion for piano.”*

- ❑ Age: 56
- ❑ Location: Birmingham, MI
- ❑ Education: Graduate Degree
- ❑ Style: Wants to play classical and easy listening music
- ❑ Profession: Psychologist
- ❑ Personal background: Likes walking her dog around the neighborhood, gardening, and going to the museum.
- ❑ Family status: Married
- ❑ Yearly household income: \$140,000

# Learning a 2<sup>nd</sup> Instrument

User Profile #3



Brian

- ❑ Music Reading Ability: Advanced
- ❑ Piano Experience: None

*“I already play guitar with a band, but I want to learn how to play piano so I can write music more easily.”*

## Goals:

To learn how to use the piano keyboard and fingering techniques.

Learn how to read music for piano versus other instruments in order to write music for his band.

- ❑ Age: 24
- ❑ Location: Los Angeles, CA
- ❑ Education: 4-Year Degree
- ❑ Style: Rock, Pop, & Jazz
- ❑ Profession: Musician
- ❑ Personal background: Moved to California to advance his music career. He lives and breathes music.
- ❑ Family status: Single
- ❑ Yearly household income: \$30,000

# Functionality Specifications

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- ❑ The instructional program will allow users to use either a computer keyboard or a traditional piano keyboard as an interface.
- ❑ The instructional program will comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- ❑ The instructional program will provide audio and video examples for each lesson requiring the user to play musical notes on a keyboard.
- ❑ The instructional program will teach users (the learner) the basics of understanding, reading, and playing piano through the following instructional specifications:
  - Presented with a piano keyboard, the learner will be able to locate middle “C” and name all of the major and minor keys in an octave.
  - Given a sheet of piano music, the learner will be able to locate middle “C” and show where all of the major keys are located on the music bar.
  - Given a sheet of piano music, the learner will be able to recognize what keys are flat or sharp, what octave the learner should play in by noting the treble and bass clefs, and how loudly or quietly the learner should play.
  - Presented with a piano keyboard, the learner will be able to play the easy-level musical compositions provided in the instructional materials.
  - Presented with a piano keyboard, the learner will be able to play simple two- and three-finger chords in the major keys.



# Content Outline: Tech Instructions & Main Page

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## **Technical instructions**

- Load product
  - Opening video to play while product is loading
  - Step-by-step guide to save product to hard drive
  - “Read Me” file in Adobe Acrobat with complete product instructions and reference guide
- Help files for:
  - Tutorial for users needing help understanding standard computer interface.
  - How to attach an external electronic keyboard to the computer.

## **Main Page**

- Introduction
  - Welcome comments
  - Instructions on how to use lessons
- Table of Contents
- Quick Review Guide
- Option to change user profile for multiple users



# Content Outline: “Parts 1 & 2”

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## □ **Lesson Parts**

### ■ **Part 1: “Meet the Keyboard”**

- Lesson 1: Black keys and white keys
- Lesson 2: Octaves
- Lesson 3: Finding Middle “C”
- Lesson 4: Key names: A-G

### ■ **Part 2: “What am I looking at?”: How to Read Simple Music Notation”**

- Lesson 1: What all those lines mean
- Lesson 2: Finding the key on the bars
- Lesson 3: Whole notes
- Lesson 4: Half notes and quarter notes
- Lesson 5: The rest symbol
- Lesson 6: Treble and bass clef



# Content Outline: “Part 3”

- **Part 3: “Time to Start Playing”**
  - Lesson 1: Wrists up! How to hold your hands
  - Lesson 2: Numbering the keys for each finger
  - Lesson 3: Left hand vs. right hand
  - Lesson 4: “Let’s Play!” – Playing your first song with your right hand
    - Sheet music
      - Screen version
      - Printable version
    - Hear what it sounds like (Sound file)
    - Video of hand playing the notes
  - Lesson 5: Now try the left hand
    - Sheet music
      - Screen version
      - Printable version
    - Hear what it sounds like (Sound file)
    - Video of hand playing the notes
  - Lesson 6: Playing with both hands
    - Sheet music
      - Screen version
      - Printable version
    - Hear what it sounds like (Sound file)
    - Video of hand playing the notes



# Content Outline: “Part 4”

## ■ Part 4: “Learning Your First Keys”

- Lesson 1: Crossing over your fingers
- Lesson 2: The key of “C” (No black keys)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Lesson 3: Sharps & flats: What those black keys look like on paper
- Lesson 4: How to find out what key you’re playing in
- Lesson 5: The key of “F” (1 Flat)
  - Finding the right black key (B Flat)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Lesson 6: The key of “G” (1 Sharp)
  - Finding the right black key (G#)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Lesson 7: Additional Exercises
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Quiz



# Content Outline: “Part 5”

## ■ Part 5: “Learning the Rest of the Major Keys”

- Lesson 1: The key of “D” (2 Sharps)
  - Finding the right black keys (F# & C#)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Lesson 2: The key of “A” (3 Sharps)
  - Finding the right black keys (F# , C#, & G#)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Lesson 3: The key of “E” (4 Sharps)
  - Finding the right black keys (F#, C#, G#, & D#)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Lesson 4: The key of “B” (5 Sharps)
  - All of the black keys (F#, C#, G#, D#, & A#)
  - Playing the scale: number fingering image
  - Now play a song in this key
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Additional Exercises
  - Sheet music for scale and song
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (sound file)
- Quiz



# Content Outline: “Part 6” & Review

## ■ Part 6: Chords & Intermediate Dynamics

- Lesson 1: Playing octaves
- Lesson 2: Chords: Playing with more than 1 finger at once
  - 2 finger chords
  - 3 finger chords
- Lesson 3: Dynamics
  - Different volumes
  - Hitting the keys differently
  - From “pianissimo to fortissimo”
  - Staccato
  - Phrasing
  - The dynamic symbol
- Exercises
  - Sheet music
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (Sound file)
- Quiz

## ■ Review

- Final Quiz
- More finger exercises & songs
  - Sheet music
    - Screen version
    - Printable version
  - Hear what it sounds like (Sound file)



# Content Assets

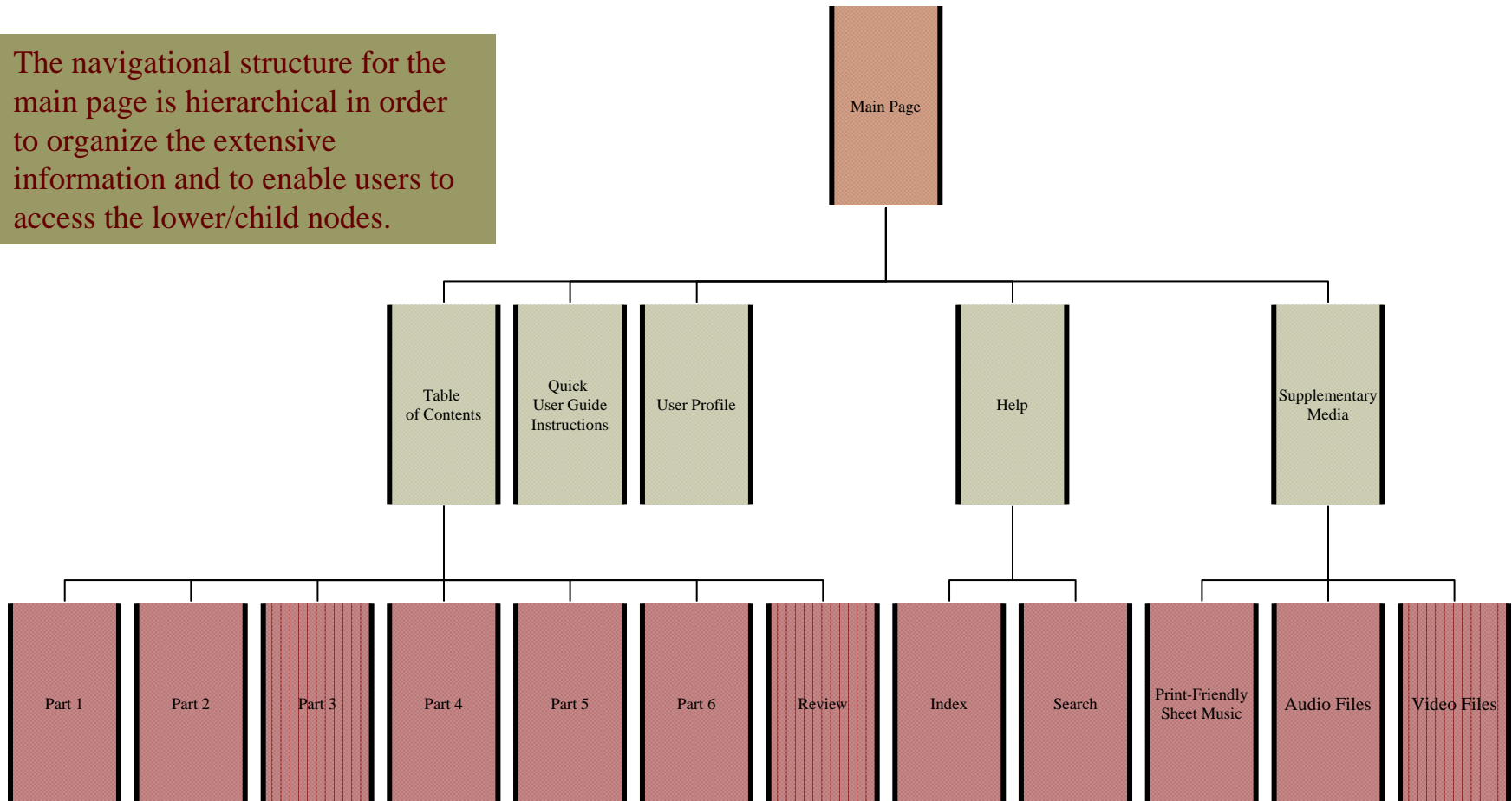
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- Master Layout
  - Overall color schemes
  - Text: Fonts to be used throughout product
  - Images:
    - Background images
    - Navigational images (GIF's or Rollovers)
  - Sound:
    - Background sound files
    - Navigational sound files
- Main Page & Introduction
  - Software interface to load file onto computer hard drive
- Lesson Files
  - Text: Step-by-step instructions
  - Images:
    - Image files of sheet music for each exercise
      - For screen display
      - Printable version
    - Musical notation GIF's to include with text
  - Sound: High quality sound files with examples of exercises within each lesson
  - Video:
    - Visual display of piano keyboard that corresponds as a direct interface with the user's finger placement on the computer keyboard.
    - Video of real person's hands playing the exercises on a piano keyboard.
- External Products & Software:
  - Adobe Acrobat to print sheet music
  - Active X for video files
  - Driver for electronic keyboard using USB connection
  - Computer keyboard overlay for piano keyboard guide (Removable Stickers & Cardboard)



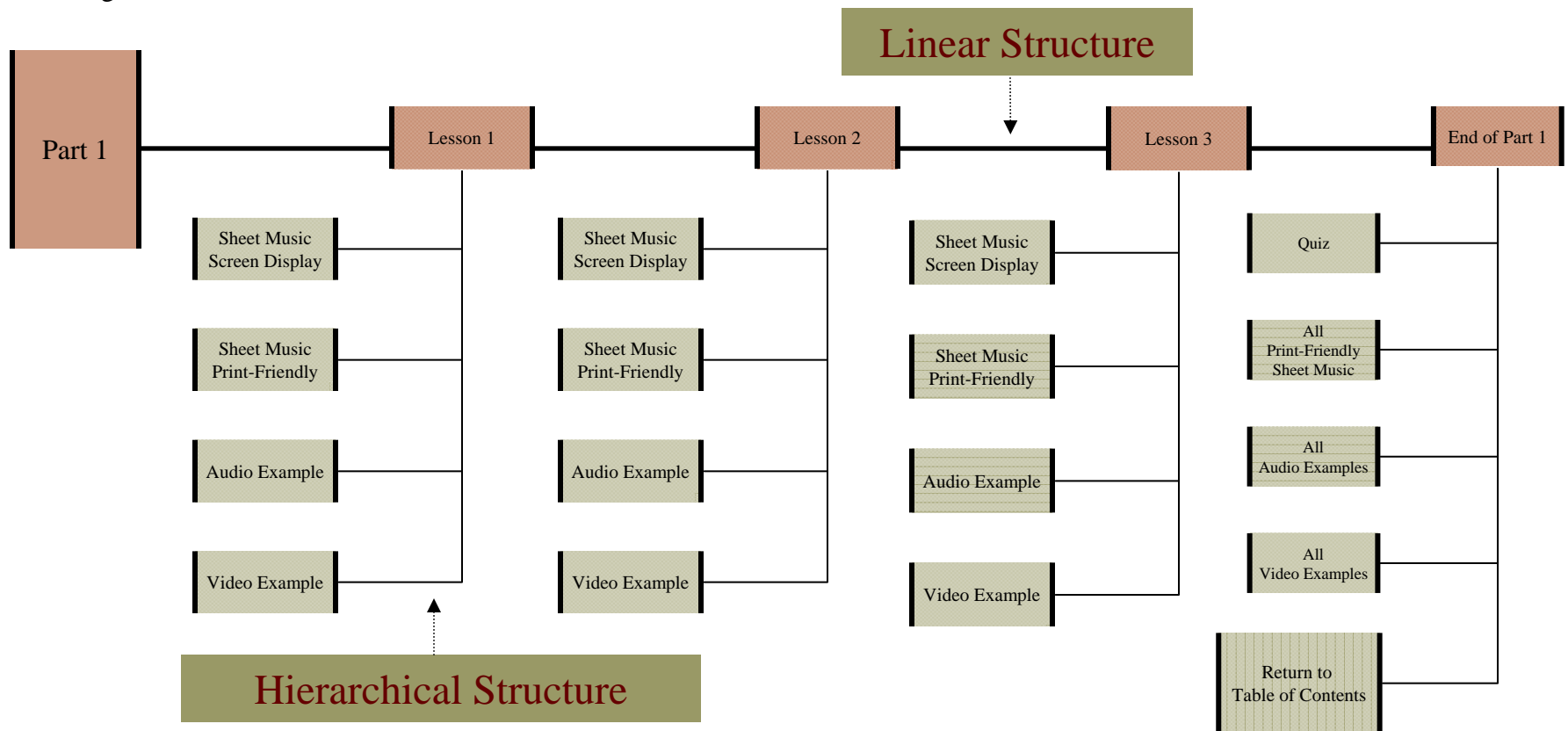
# Architectural Map: Main Page

The navigational structure for the main page is hierarchical in order to organize the extensive information and to enable users to access the lower/child nodes.

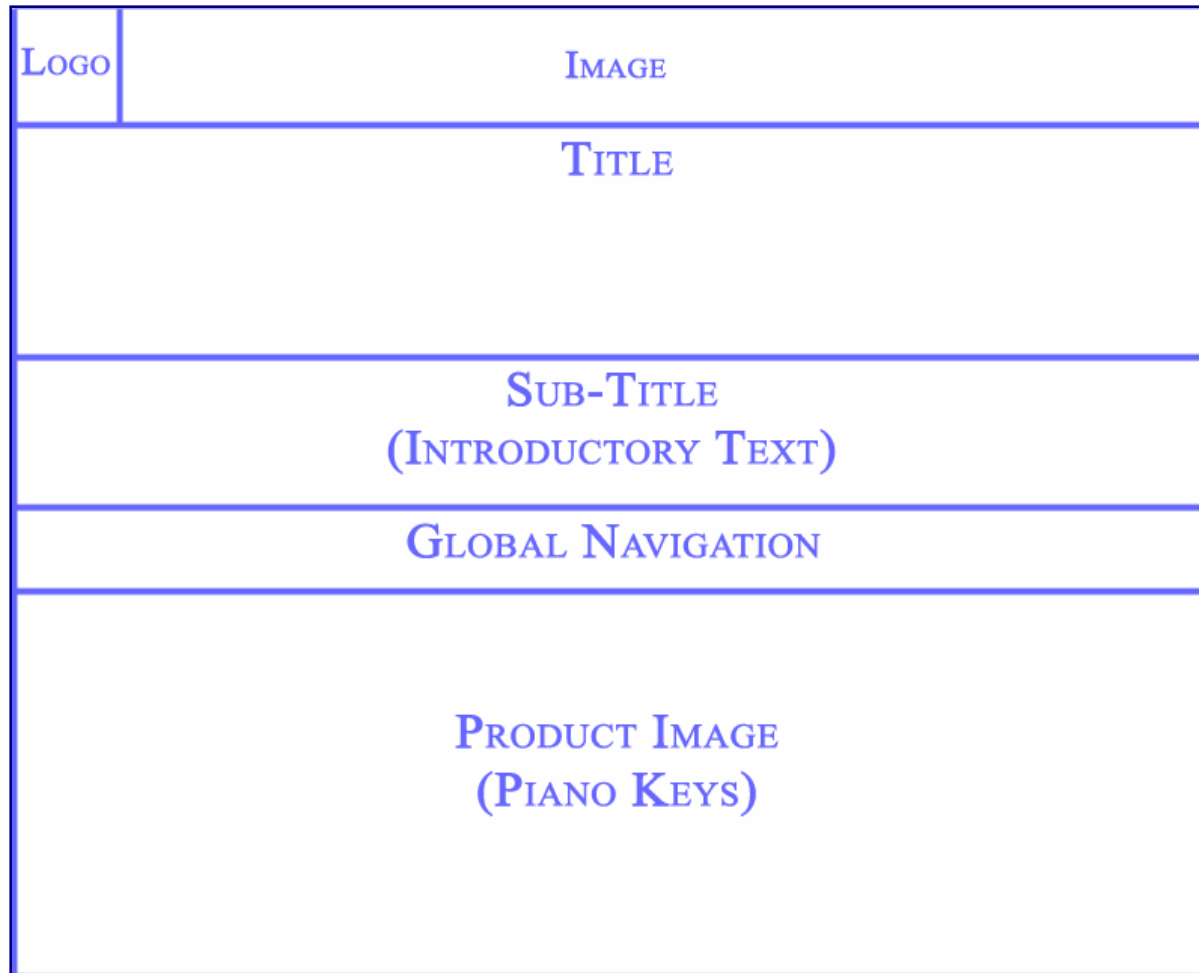


# Architectural Map: Lesson Structure

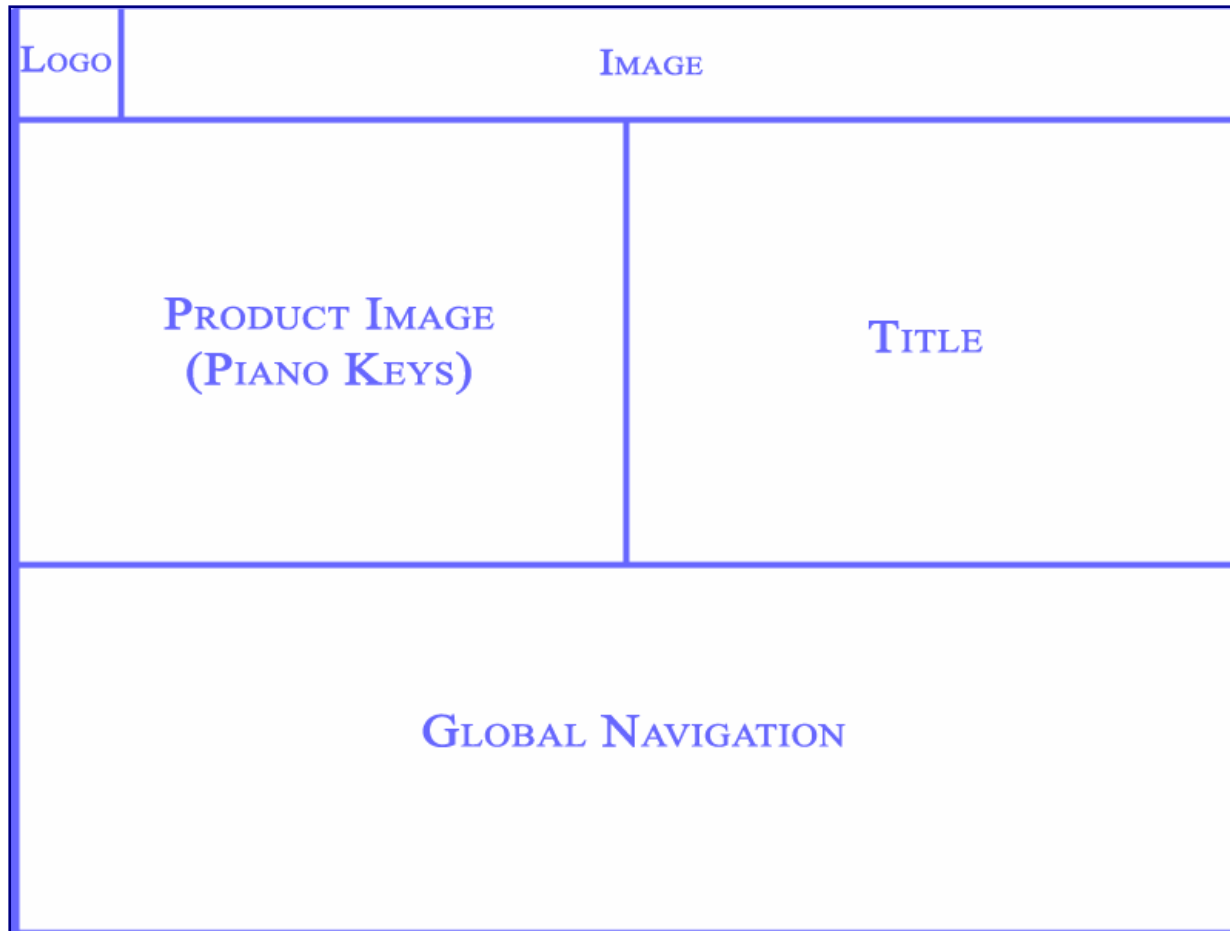
Each lesson is based on a linear structure since the user should have a basic understanding of each part of the lesson before progressing to the next step. The nodes within the linear structure represent the sequential “parts” of the lesson. Each “part” serves as the parent for an hierarchical structure that included the supplementary materials for each lesson. In the example only three parts are included due to a space issue. However, since each internal part of the lesson is identical, “part” nodes may be added or subtracted without affecting the overall structure.



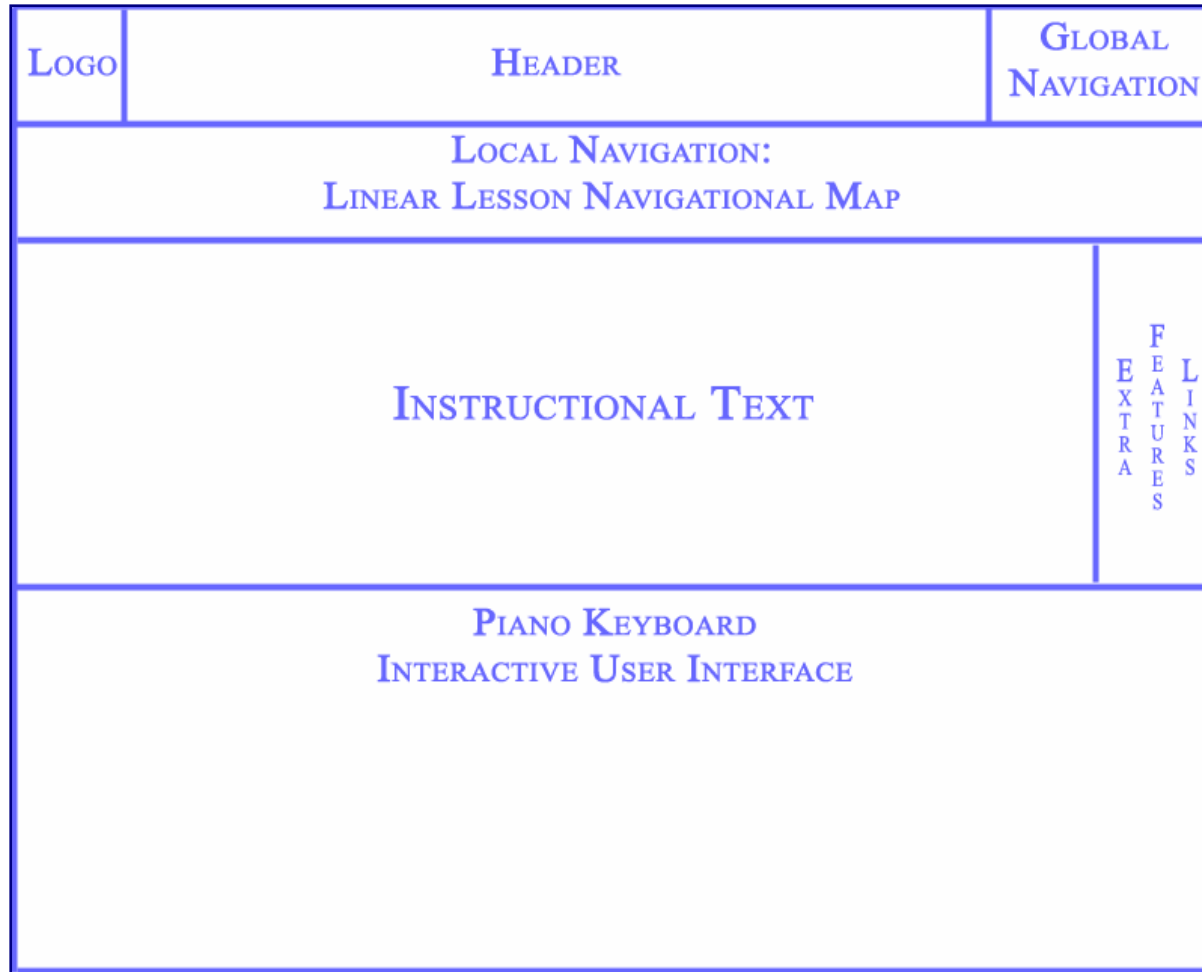
# Main Page Wireframe: Option 1



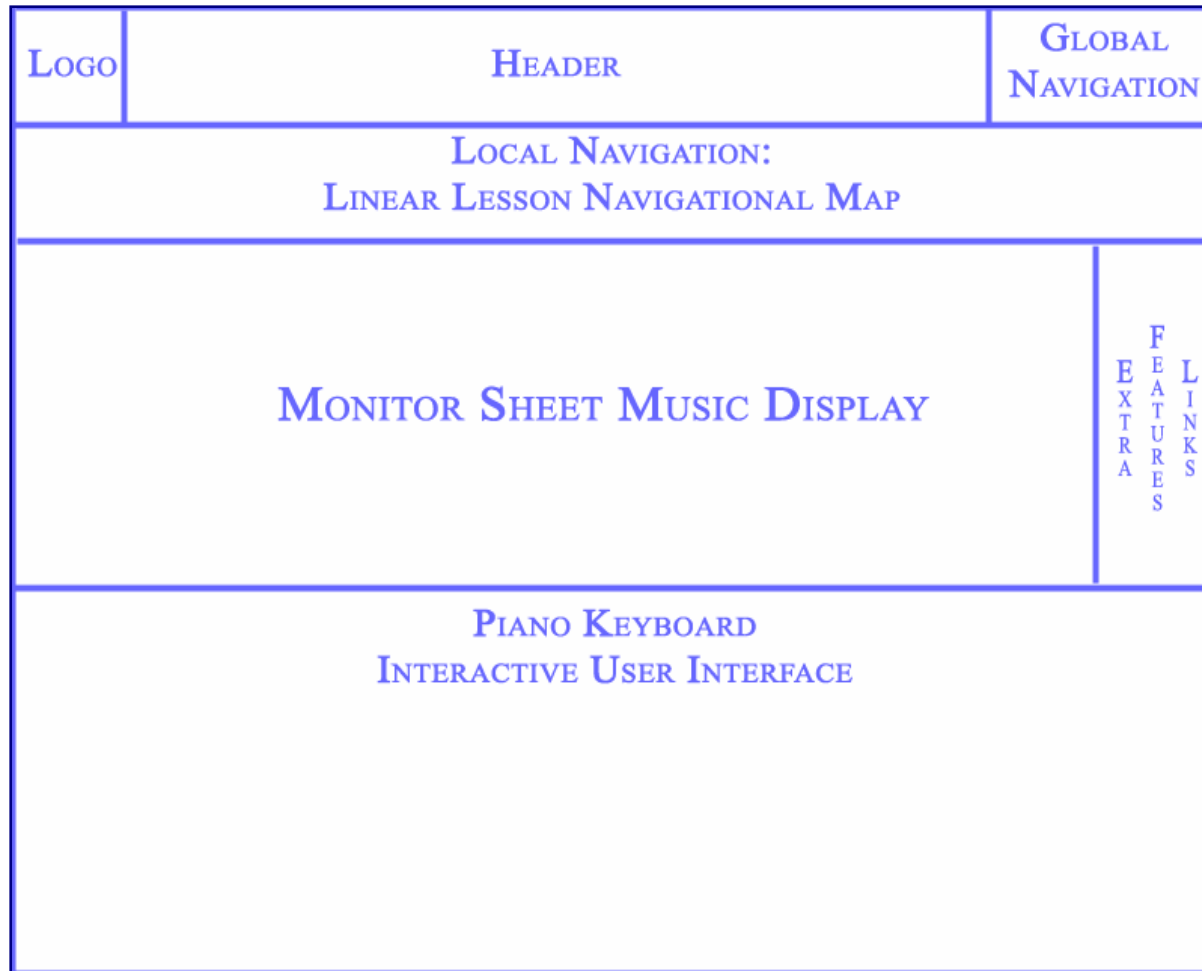
# Main Page Wireframe: Option 2



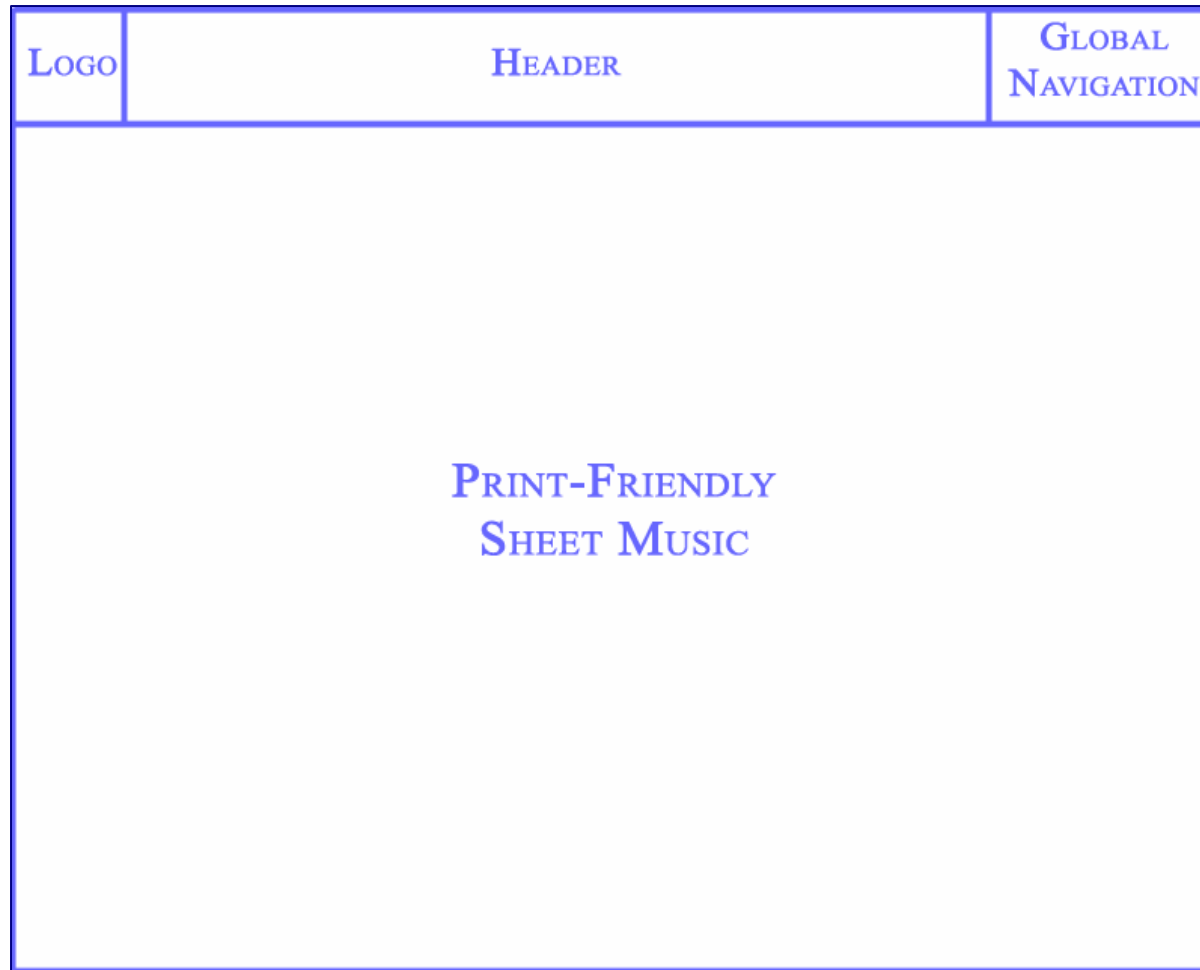
# Inner Wireframe: Lesson Page



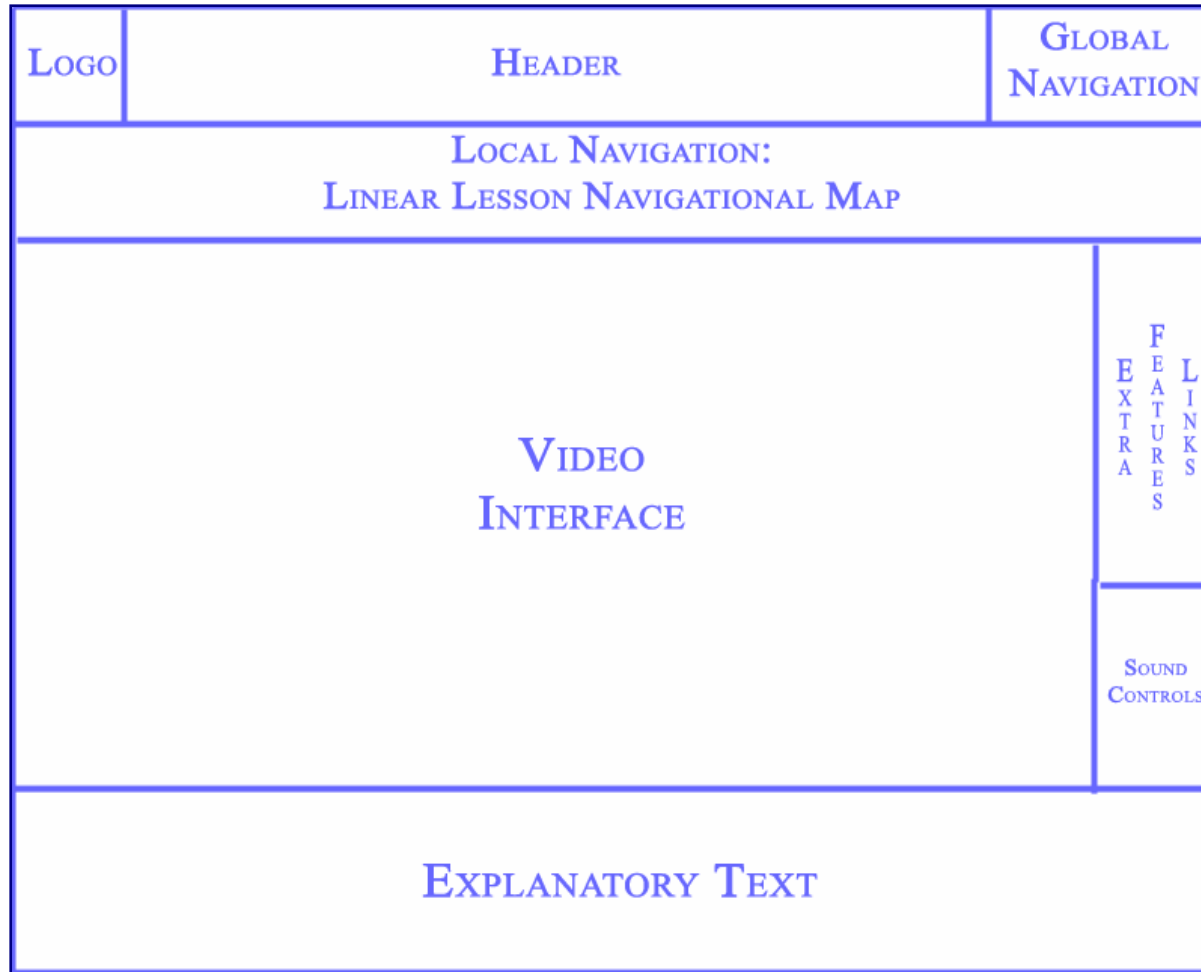
# Inner Wireframe: Sheet Music Display Page



# Inner Wireframe: Sheet Music Print-Friendly Page



# Inner Wireframe: Video Interface Page



# Design Comp: Main Page




**LEARN TO  
PLAY PIANO**

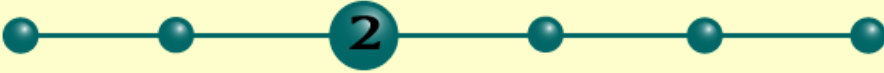


ON YOUR COMPUTER

LESSONS   QUICK GUIDE   PROFILE   EXTRAS   HELP

# Design Comp: Inner Page Part 1\Lesson 2




## LESSON 2: "OCTAVES"




IN THE LAST TWO LESSONS YOU LEARNED ABOUT **BLACK** KEYS AND **WHITE** KEYS. IN THIS LESSON YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT OCTAVES. OCTAVES ARE MADE UP OF **7** WHITE KEYS AND **5** BLACK KEYS.

LOOK AT THE EXAMPLE SHOWN BELOW.


NOTICE THAT THE BLACK KEYS ARE GROUPED IN SETS OF **2** AND **3** KEYS. AN OCTAVE HAS ONE SET OF EACH OF THESE GROUPS.




**2 SETS OF  
BLACK KEYS**




VIEW  
SHEET MUSIC



PRINT-FRIENDLY  
SHEET MUSIC



LISTEN  
TO EXERCISES



VIEW  
VIDEO

# Look and Feel: Main Page

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**Program Icon**



**Header Graphic**



**Title Font & Color**



**Center Graphic**



**Global Navigation Icon**



# Look and Feel: Inner Page



Global Navigation Icon



Main "Part" Location Icon



Header Lesson Title Icon



Interactive Local Navigational Map

IN THE LAST TWO LESSONS YOU LEARNED ABOUT **BLACK** KEYS AND **WHITE** KEYS. IN THIS LESSON YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT OCTAVES. OCTAVES ARE MADE UP OF 7 WHITE KEYS AND 5 BLACK KEYS.

Instructional Text



Interactive Keyboard Interface



Local Extras Navigation Icon



# Look and Feel: Color System

- Color System
  - Dark Red (#660000)
    - Main Page Background Color
    - Inner Page Global Navigation Icon Background
    - Inner Page Local “Part” Location Background
  - Taupe (#cdcc65)
    - Main Page Header Text
    - Main Page Global Navigation Icon Background
    - Inner Page Header Background
    - Inner Page Global Navigation Icon Text
    - Inner Page Local “Part” Location Text
    - Inner Page Label Box Background
  - Black (#000000)
    - Main Page Global Navigation Icon Text
    - Main Page Header Image
    - Inner Page Instructional Text
    - Inner Page Extra Features Icon Text & Image
    - Inner Page Interactive Keyboard Image
    - Sheet Music Text & Graphics
  - Cream (#ffffcc)
    - Inner Page Background Color
    - Sheet Music Monitor Display Background
  - Turquoise (#006666)
    - Inner Page Local Navigational Map
    - Inner Page Header Text
  - White (#ffffff)
    - Main Page Header & Center Images
    - Inner Page Interactive Keyboard Image
    - Print-Friendly Sheet Music Background



# Look and Feel: Typography

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- Trebuchet MS (Regular, Strong, Small Caps)
  - Main Page Header (Size=60)
  - Main Page Sub-Header (Size=36)
  - Main Page Global Navigation Icons (Size=24)
  - Inner Page Global Navigation Icons (Size=18)
  - Inner Page Extra Features Icons (Size=11)
- Lucida Sans (Regular, Strong, Small Caps)
  - Inner Page Instructional Text (Size=14)
  - Inner Page Label Text (Size=24)
- Amerigo BT (Roman, Strong, Small Caps)
  - Inner Page Header (Size=48)
  - Inner Page Local “Part” Location Text (Size=36)
  - Inner Page Local Navigation Map Lesson Number (Size=30)



# Look and Feel: Project Language

- Tone: The language should have a friendly, supportive tone.
  - Numbers:
    - Use the number character instead of writing out the number when referring the several objects.
    - “One” is acceptable written out when used on a phrase in which “a” is interchangeable.
  - Use “like” instead of “such as”.
- User References:
  - Addressing the user: Address the user in the second-person as “you” to maintain familiarity.
  - User possession: When referring to the keyboard, include the second-person possessive “your”.
    - Example: “When sitting at *your* keyboard...”
- Locations:
  - Use “find” when referring to the user locating an object on the keyboard or on the music.
    - Example: “...find ‘Middle C’ on the keyboard.”
  - Object Composition: When explaining what an object or set of objects consist of use the terminology of “made up of” or “has”.
    - Example: “Octaves are made up of 7 white keys and 5 black keys.”
  - Directing the user: Use friendly terms to direct the user’s attention, including “see”, “look at”, and “notice”.
    - Example: “Notice that the black keys are placed...”
- Words & Phrases to Avoid
  - Do not use overly technical terms.
  - Avoid using unnecessary transitional words and phrases including “Thus” or “Therefore”.
  - Do not use vocabulary that is not used in every-day conversation by the average person.



# References

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- <http://www.learnpianoonline.com>
- <http://www.yokewong.net/>
- <http://www.alistapart.com/>
- Garrett, Jesse James, *The Elements of User Experience: User-Centered Design for the Web*, American Institute of Graphic Arts, 2003
- Barfield, Lon, *Design for New Media: Interaction Design for Multimedia and the Web*, Pearson Education Limited, 2004

