

Beginner Piano Checklist

*Notation and rhythm

**this category of skills is the most important.*

- Reading notation should be fluent/can identify most notes with ease. (Note that this doesn't translate to being able to play what you're reading quickly, especially if it's complicated.)
- Can identify any interval from a 2nd to 8th quickly.
- Understands how to count all basic note values: whole, half, dotted half, quarter, dotted quarter, eighth, dotted eighth, sixteenth notes. (Note that this doesn't mean being fast; rather, the understanding is there.)
- Understands how to count in basic time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, cut, common, 6/8, 3/8 time
- Has experimented a handful of times with syncopation
- Understands the idea of upbeats and downbeats
- SASR score around 300-400
- Can read basic key signatures (C, F, G, D and their minor equivalents)

Chords

- Understands the idea of I, IV and V7, and can figure out these chords in basic keys
- Can build a major triad on any note
- Can build a minor triad on any note
- Understands chord inversions with basic chords
- Understands the basic theory behind diminished chords (*fluency not expected*)
- Understands the basic theory behind 7 chords (*fluency not expected*)
- Has a general idea of what a cadence is

Technique

- Can play the technical requirements for RCM 2, ABRSM 2, or similar
- Can write out technical exercises on blank notation paper

Artistry

- Can apply the syncopated damper pedal technique
- Can apply legato effectively to level 2 pieces
- Understands and can apply all dynamic markings
- Understand and can apply basic articulations: staccato, tenuto, accent, etc.
- Understands the basics of how to articulate simple baroque/classical dance pieces
- Understands and has tried a variety of inventions/canons

Theory

- Understands the basic idea of stem direction
- Understands how a major, harmonic minor, and melodic minor scale are built (*this does not need to be memorized*)

Ear

- Can discern a major from a minor chord
- Can discern a major third from a minor third