

## **Setting up the student to Copy and Play**

Generally, teachers teach a song in the Copy, Play and Learn method by asking the students to sing and clap the rhythm of the words after each phrase the teacher has sung. After asking the students to identify the note names, these too can be sung to the backing track in place of the words. Teachers might want to again sing the note names as they play them. Depending on the student, teachers may also feel the need to sing the note names as the student “Copy’s” the phrase.

## **Developing dexterity of the thumb.**

At the early stages of learning to play the guitar, young people respond well to being asked only to focus on one task at a time. In playing the first few pieces, students can focus on the movement of their thumb; picking a rhythm on the string in time to the recorded backing track.

### **1. Work that thumb**

This piece introduces the Copy, Play and Learn technique as well as develop dexterity of the thumb.

The young child will not immediately be able to read music because you’ve told them a few time-names, pitches and the location of those notes on the guitar, but you will get the child to start thinking about how music works. Firstly, ask the student to repeat the rhythm of the piece. Most, if not all young beginners are familiar with the French (or Kodaly) time names of ta and te te, (or ti-ti) due to their exposure to them in classroom music. If you, yourself aren’t familiar with them, a “ta” is a quarter note or crotchet, a “ta-aa” a half note or minim, a “te-te” (or ti-ti) two eighth notes or quavers. Familiarise the students with the rhythm by clapping it as you say or sing the time names along with the recording. You, as their teacher will sing and clap first. The student will copy you in the “simile” bars.

Next, tell the students the pitch of the notes; E and B. Sing the note names to the rhythm you’ve just clapped. You may want the students to clap the rhythm again, this time as you sing the note names. Ask the students to tell you which note they thought sounded higher; E or B. Hopefully they’ll tell you that E sounds higher. Then you can tell them that the high sounding notes are positioned toward the top of the staff and the lower sounding, B, a little further down.

Show the students where the two notes are located on the guitar. Play the notes in time and with the recording and have your students Copy you in the simile bars. Call the note names as you go.

### **2. The first three open strings**

This piece is used to

- introduce the staff
- the notes on the lines and spaces
- enable the student to recognise a rhythmic phrase
- Show the student that to go down, we must go up

If you haven’t already done so, explain the repeat sign and the simile marks.

Ask the student to tell you which notes are on lines and which are in spaces. To us this is obvious but some very young children they might not know what you are talking about. Tell the student that a

note is written either on a line or in a space and that if it is written on a line, the line goes through the middle. If it is in a space, the line will be on either side of the note head. Download and print the *portable stave*; the lines and spaces taas and tee-tees and the E,G,B,D,F and F.A.C.E prompts from the website. Using the ta, move it across the stave and ask the children to identify whether a note is on a line or space. At this point it might be a good idea to mention how we remember the note names, that is, by remembering the saying, Every, Good, Boy, Deserves, Fruit and the spelling of FACE

Ask the student to identify the rhythms in terms of the French time names. Ask them if they have played that rhythm before. Can they show you where it is?

This piece introduces a new note, G. Show the student the position of G on the stave and ask them to tell you if it is written higher or lower on the stave than the other two notes. Ask them if they would expect the new note to sound higher or lower than the other two notes, and finally, show them where the new note, G is located on the guitar. Ask the students to show you, where on the guitar they would therefore expect to find the lower sounding strings. As they motion the direction on the guitar, upward from the floor, you can mention how strange it is that the high sounding notes are physically down toward the floor and the low sounding notes are up!

### **3. Homework**

This piece is the student's first real song. They'll enjoy playing to the Rock backing track as it challenges the dexterity of their thumb. Children may well recognise the themes presented and it will often give mum a bit of a laugh as she recognises some of the sayings directed at the children throughout the course of the song. This piece introduces the main character, Simon and his mother.

Teachers can direct the student's attention to the rhythms and ask the students to identify and clap them. They may start recognising them by now but it is primarily the rhythm of the words, learnt by the student and sung at pitch by their teacher as they play that enables the student to play in time.

Teachers can ask the students to identify the pitch of the notes presented in this piece and where they are to be found on the guitar as well as discussing the rhythms as mentioned previously. Teachers can ask their students to copy them in the "simile" bars as they play the notes and sing the words of the song to the recorded backing track.

### **4. At the beach**

This piece primarily uses the same rhythms as "Homework" and students should be encouraged to notice this. However, the challenge presented by this piece is to have the student moving their thumb in time with the recorded music as they manoeuvre between the first and second strings.

To learn this piece, as before, teachers can sing the rhythm of the words as they play the notes on the guitar. Children can then imitate as they play along to the recorded backing track.

### **5. Four String Rock**

The goals in this piece reinforce the idea that notes of lower pitch are to be found toward the bottom of the stave and located on the guitar, physically upward from the floor. This piece also encourages greater movement of the thumb across the strings.

Reinforce the rhythms learnt so far. Ask the student too observe that the pitch of the notes in the melody is the same every two lines except that the rhythm changes. Ask the student to describe the rhythm. Teachers could expect an answer such as; “the first two lines are ‘ta’s’, the next group of two lines are ‘te-te’s’ and the third group of two lines are ‘ta, te-te’”

### **Introducing the fretting hand**

#### **6. My Socks Smell**

The purpose of this piece is to introduce the fretting hand to the fingerboard and in particular will focus on movement of the first finger. This piece can also be used to further explore the relationship between the position of the note on the staff and its likely location on the guitar finger board.

Teachers have already established, and students currently know, that the high sounding strings on the guitar are located toward the floor. The note, “E” is currently the highest sounding note that the student knows and of course, is open first string. Ask the student if they know what might need to be done in order to produce a higher sounding note. If not, show them that to attain such notes, the string needs to be fretted and the vibrating string length shortened by moving the fretting finger toward the bridge. Tell the students that there are now two paths to finding a higher sounding note on the guitar.

Ask the student to notice the relative positions of E and F on the staff. Alphabetically they are not very far apart, they are very close together on the staff and therefore, should be located quite close together on the guitar. The result is of course that F sounds just a little bit higher than E. Teachers can demonstrate the relationship that exists between pitch, alphabetical order and the position on the staff and fingerboard by demonstrating notes close in pitch and notes distant in pitch.

Place a sticky dot on the fingerboard noting the position of F. Teach the students the piece the same way as had been done previously.

#### **7. Our Friend, the Judge.**

There are several points associated with this song that are worth mentioning. It gives the “Judge” character musical credibility and shows students that not every piece of music starts with an E note! It exists to improve dexterity of the first finger by challenging the student to move it a little quicker between the open first string and the first fretted note and also to reinforce the previously learned rhythm of te-te, te-te, ta, ta.

#### **8. I like cake and custard**

Students can associate the rhythm of the words, “I like cake and custard” to “te-te, te-te, ta,ta. While the written rhythm doesn’t strictly reflect the recorded rhythm, it is fairly close. It must be remembered that the goal is merely to get the children to play and enjoy the guitar at this stage. Teaching the notion of syncopation is something that can be left till later.

This piece brings together finger movements that have been learnt previously but separately. It challenges the student to move the first finger of the fretting hand between E and F (done previously

in “My Socks Smell” and “Meet the Judge”), while moving the thumb from the first to the second strings, as was done in “At the Beach”.

### **9. School Today**

This song introduces another fretted note, G. It sounds higher, it is written higher on the staff and will therefore be located on the guitar in a higher position (toward the bridge) than the other notes in the piece. Encourage the student to note the contour of the melody line and ask them how they would expect the pitch of the notes to reflect this. Make use of the *portable staff* and get the children to discover that as a note moves up by step, the note name advances by one step in alphabetical order. Show this on the guitar too. Play a scale from the open E up the neck toward the bridge and get the student to name each note.

At about this time you as their teacher could do a science experiment and draw a parallel with stringed and brass instruments. The students by now know that as the vibrating length of string gets shorter, the pitch of the notes rise and the name of the note progresses alphabetically. Take an empty bottle, explain that it is not empty but full of air and that by blowing across the opening you can make that column of air inside the bottle vibrate and produce a note. Ask the kids to listen for the pitch of the note. Now half fill the bottle with water telling them that the column of air inside is now shorter and ask them what they would expect to happen to the pitch. Would it go up or down? The conclusion to reach here is that as the vibrating medium gets shorter, the pitch goes up.

### **10. Soggy Sandwiches**

The purpose of this song is to develop dexterity of the third finger by placing it on, and taking it off, the third fret of the first string. Students will recognise some of the rhythms and be able to work out the rest but, primarily they will use the rhythm of the words and copy you, their teacher to play the rhythms correctly.

**Copy and Play by imitating a visually logical pattern of notes as demonstrated by their teacher.**

### **11. Slow Blues**

The third finger movement explored previously in “Soggy Sandwiches” has been intensified in this song, “Slow Blues”. This is the first of many songs that draws a melody from a finger pattern.

Teachers can ask students to identify the rhythm and introduce the note, “D”. Students can then be shown that in order to play the second part of the piece, all they need do is transfer the finger movement to the next lowest string.

### **12. Cupcakes**

This song challenges movement of the first and third fingers as the melody moves between the F and G notes.

### **Reading through association.**

Children often learn to read words through association. For example, they may associate the word, “McDonalds” with the universally recognisable, big, “golden arches” that is the McDonalds trademark. Children can’t necessarily read the word, “McDonalds”, but they know what the writing below the sign says. In a similar way, there are phrases that recur in pieces throughout this book that once learned, will become visually and aurally recognisable. In other words, upon seeing or hearing the phrase, the student instantly recognises it and is able to play it.

#### **13. I Love football**

This song introduces the “C” note and students could be encouraged to work out its name. It appears at the end of a phrase, descending in a stepwise movement from G and as students already know, stepwise descending phrases move in alphabetical order but backwards. Students, of course could also count up the spaces.

There are several rhythms this piece uses; te-te, te-te, ta, ta (which they should be able to recognise by now) which is then varied to te-te,te-te,te-te, ta. The dotted crotchet, tied quaver rhythm is perhaps best learned at this stage by clapping the rhythm of the word, “tit-ans”.

The notes in the phrase, “I love foot-ball” (C,G,F,C) may present a challenge to students as they combine movements of their left and right hands learned previously but separately. The fretting hand finger movement of G-F was explored and drilled in “Cupcakes” whilst skipping across strings with the thumb of the “picking” hand has been done in previous pieces.

Teachers could drill the phrase, “I Love Football” to prepare the students for its occurrence. The same phrase appears in a later piece and will be recognised visually and possibly aurally by some students. Just as they might recognise the writing below the big “Golden Arches” of McDonalds, they should be able to recognise and play the phrase of “C,G,F,C”.

#### **14. A day at Indy**

This piece introduces the “A” note, played by placing the second finger of the fretting hand on the second fret of the third string. If not already done so, teachers should place a sticky dot in this position.

This piece is based on a pattern that the student should be able to recognise. While not necessarily a finger pattern, the students could recognise that each two bar melodic phrase consists of open string notes which then move upwards and stepwise to the next highest, fretted note. Ask the student to identify upon which string each phrase starts.

### **Introducing some basic chords.**

#### **15. School Today - chords**

At this stage, to facilitate recognition and ease of playing, chords have been simplified. Changing chords from G7 to C is as simple as moving the first finger of the fretting hand from the second string, first fret to the first string, first fret. (The author recognises the fact that the chord diagrams are orientated 90 degrees to what is considered the standard chord diagram orientation. The reason

for doing this was to show the student that the strings are strummed toward the floor from the string to which the end of the arrow on the diagram corresponds.)

### **16. Surfing**

This is a simple song with a simple rhythm and two note melody. It's a good rock song that gives the children a little respite from the intensity of the last few songs while introducing the sharp.

Children can be reminded that the alphabetical order of notes only advances to G before starting again at A. The song focuses on the movement of the third finger.

### **17. This is the worst day, ever**

Two finger patterns, the effect of the sharp and rhythmic variation are explored in this song.

Teachers can encourage the student to note that opening bar of C notes to the rhythm of te-te, te-te, ta, ta, was last played in "I Love Football" (Pres-ton plays at full-back). The teacher may want to ask the simple question, "Who remembers how "I love football" starts. The point here is that the student may be able to play the opening bar of this song by reading the music or associating it with the words to the previous song.

Teachers will note that lines one, four and five make use movement of fingers, one and two. The burden to the student of having to process the pitch of the notes, F and F# in line five is eased as the teacher will explain that the pattern is simply transferred to the higher string.

Students, in previous pieces learned how to manipulate fingers one and three. (Firstly in "Cupcakes" and secondly in "I Love Football") They also learned how to coordinate their fretting hand with their picking hand as they crossed strings. This piece enhances the student's dexterity as both left and right hand challenges are combined.

Students may notice that the second finger pattern (established in line two) has, as its basis the movement of fingers one and three. There is however a change in rhythm between the bars on the left and those on the right.

### **Playing with the help of finger patterns**

Using a piece that is composed of a visually logical pattern of notes can help a student play the guitar as they learn to process pitch and rhythm.

### **18. Mum's vexation.**

This piece is composed of two themes; a fairly established finger pattern for the first part and a stepwise descending melody for the second. The first theme makes up the first three lines of this piece and use the same "open string to third finger" pattern played on two consecutive strings. Teachers might like to challenge the student's ability to name the notes in the stepwise descending melody of the second theme and ask them to show where on the guitar lower sounding notes might be located. Teachers could ask the question, "if you have three notes located on the second string and the notes start high and end low, which direction on the guitar fingerboard do the notes go?"

### **19. I've got rabbits**

This song uses two themes, two (and a half) finger patterns and is in ternary form (A,B,A). It attempts to get the student playing independently of their teacher in a four bar section; that is, there is no "Copy and Play" in these bars.

The first theme uses the established, open string to third finger movement using a variety of rhythms. This finger movement is duplicated in the "B" section though of course on the E string. The second theme challenges the student's dexterity by asking them to place consecutive fingers on consecutive frets in consecutive bars from the open string to third finger (A section), and from the first finger to the fourth finger in the "B" section.

Playing the second pattern poses another challenge. As students and teachers play the second pattern together, the student needs to become accustomed to jumping into the second pattern with their teacher immediately after copying the last two bar phrase of the first pattern. Drilling this a few times will see that challenge overcome.

### **20. Shoe laces**

A series of ascending notes from an open string make up the pattern upon which, "Shoe Laces" is based.

Students could be encouraged to notice which open string each two bar phrase starts from and note that as the melody ascends by step, the student plays the corresponding note on the guitar from an open string to the next highest sticky dot and then to the next highest sticky dot beyond that.

### **21. My X Box**

A series of different and established finger movements make up this song. As in previous songs, teachers can teach the song by asking the students to sing and clap the rhythm of the words after each phrase the teacher has sung. After asking the students to identify the note names, these too can be sung to the backing track in place of the words. Teachers might want to again sing the note names as they play them. Depending on the student, teachers may also feel the need to sing the note names as the student "Copy's" the phrase.

### **Starting to process pitch and rhythm. Making sense of the dots.**

All students are different and some may be starting to process pitch and rhythm while others may not be. The next two pieces function well in the "Copy, Play and Learn" format and are also ideal to encourage note reading.

### **22. Where's my soccer ball**

Students are encouraged to note the contour of the melody. The notes go up then they go down. Students may be getting to know their alphabet backwards by now.

If students are starting to read the music rather than copy their teacher or rely on the finger patterns, this piece allows them to start to process pitch and rhythm as it is not too complicated and gives them a little time to gather their thoughts.

### **23. Grommets**

In this piece we are finding out a little more about the personality of the main character, Simon. Students may make the connection between this piece, the previous piece and the piece, "Simon" a little later in the book.

This piece is very much like the last one but a little more complicated and challenging.

### **24. My Skateboard**

In this song, the phrases are predominantly made up either of notes on the lines, or notes in the spaces. It is a good opportunity to revise the prompts, Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit and F.A.C.E

### **25. My sister eats worms**

This piece is quite complicated though it does make use of established finger movements. It is positioned here mainly because of its significance in the story. It can of course be left till later.

### **26. Breakfast, lunch and dinner**

This piece is used to reinforce the note names on the lines and spaces and also to revisit the "C" chord. Teachers will observe that the bars on the left are made up of notes positioned on the lines whereas the notes in the bars on the right are made up mainly of notes in the spaces. Teachers can talk about how a chord is made up of individual notes and those notes within the C chord are C, E and G.

### **Working towards playing independently of the teacher.**

The following two pieces are designed so that the student can start to play without the necessity of copying their teacher or pausing to gather their thoughts.

### **27. Moving**

Composed of two similar, largely descending phrases, the movement of which the student is getting used to, this piece is ideal to use as a start toward independent playing as it has minimal information in each bar that needs to be processed by the student.

### **28. Lost in Space**

This piece also has minimal melodic movement in each bar making it ideal as a place to start processing pitch and rhythm and independent playing. It also challenges the dexterity of fretting hand fingers, one, two and three.

### **29. Bluey the dog.**

This piece explores the differences of the notes in the two chords learnt so far; the G7 and the C. It also reinforces the correlation of the advancement of note names in alphabetical order to the increase in pitch and the note's positioning on the guitar fingerboard.

### **30. My sister, Dorothy**

This piece uses some previously explored finger movements but may appear to the student as a melody composed of random leaps. As the phrases are only two bars in length and contain no more than four different notes, teachers might like to view this piece as an extension of the note reading challenges encountered in “Moving” and “Lost in Space”.

### **31. The sleepover**

“The sleepover” is designed to challenge the dexterity of the fretting fingers and further expose the students to the syncopated rhythms that were first encountered in “I Love Football”. Teachers can also use it to reinforce the function of the sharp and tie.

Starting by using fingers two and three of the fretting hand, the student should now be accustomed to associating notes that ascend by step to the alphabetical order of note names and their likely position on the guitar fingerboard. Similarly the student should be able to work out the note names of the descending notes in the second pattern.

The last two lines of this piece are designed primarily to challenge finger dexterity but can also function to reinforce the French time names of the rhythm.

### **32. The sleepover, part 2**

Students seem to enjoy making connections between the pieces contained in this book and in this piece, we get Simon’s best friend, Kyle’s perspective on the Sleepover.

The piece introduces two lower notes; E and F on the fourth string, each of which becomes a part of one of two easily recognisable finger patterns.

### **33. Dorothy’s revenge**

This piece makes reference to the earlier piece, lost in space and we find the real reason why Simon’s “air is low”.

Making use of finger movements first used in “Cupcakes”, Dorothy’s revenge revisits and extends these finger movements by including a position shift. It challenges the student by adding another finger pattern, played on alternate lines.

### **34. Fairyland**

Seemingly a long piece of two pages, “Fairyland” is one song with two verses. It exists to challenge finger dexterity and further expose students to tied notes and the sound of syncopated rhythms.

Students may be able to read the opening bars as the melody descends stepwise. They may also notice a finger pattern on strings one and two which will help those that experience difficulty reading it, be able to play it. This finger pattern will be used later in “I dreamt Aunty Glennis was the tooth fairy.” Some students will be able to play it upon either seeing the written notes of the phrase or hearing it played.

Reading the notes in the verse can be quite a challenge but as each phrase is only two bars long and doesn't contain too many notes of different pitch, it is easily learned. The pre chorus contains notes of the lines only and might be used to refresh the student's knowledge of the prompt that is used and indeed the names of the notes themselves.

The real challenge though is in having the student use fingers two and four of the fretting hand play the G#,F# and D# notes of the chorus.

### **35. What will I do when I grow up.**

Students already know the C and G7 chords. "What will I do when I grow up" extends the chord repertoire of the student by introducing a very similar looking "A" and "Em". Notice the arrows, they serve to indicate to the student from which string to strum.

### **36. My friend, Kyle.**

"My friend, Kyle exists in order to extend the chord repertoire of the student by introducing a "D" chord. D is a little harder to play and takes a little more time for the student to finger, however as the student "Copies" the teacher, there is usually ample time for students to prepare the chord fingering.

### **37. A Sunday BBQ**

It seems that Simon's mum may not think too highly of Simon's dad's ability to cook!

This piece is a challenge in that there is a new note on nearly every beat and students really need to draw on their budding ability to process pitch. Thankfully the first bar of each phrase makes use of the ascending stepwise movement that they are now used to.

### **38. A Sunday BBQ-chords**

A Sunday BBQ – chords, exists in order to extend the chord repertoire of the student by introducing the "Am" and "E" chord. As the hand shape required to play both chords is the same, most students are able to learn the chords and play the piece without too much trouble.

### **39. Nigel the Athlete.**

Apparently no one has told Nigel that in order to be an athlete, it's not just your nose that runs!

Unlike most of the other pieces learnt so far, this piece uses leaps rather than steps in the melody. It will challenge the note reading skills of the student, yet not stress them as the short phrase length and limited number of different notes within each phrase will enable the student to "Copy" the teacher without too much trouble.

### **40. I'm Simon's mother**

Some of the mothers of guitar students may be able to relate to this!

This piece involves quite a stretch involving the first and fourth fingers of the fretting hand, uses a cross string descending phrase which starts with the third finger and introduces the natural sign.

Some students can read this reasonably easily but again, the phrase length is short enough to allow those who are not as yet comfortable with reading quickly to “Copy and Play”.

Dexterity of the fretting hand and coordination of the left and right hands is challenged as the melody requires movement from fingers three, two and one whilst coordinating that movement with the thumb as the student plays notes on strings three and two.

#### **41. Simon**

We hear from another of Simon’s friends, Stan sharing his perspective on the main character, Simon. Students may enjoy the challenge of relating this song to previous songs.

“Simon” should be reasonably easy to play at this stage. There is a single, two bar finger pattern of which most of this song is composed and the chords and rhythm of the middle section have all been played before.

#### **42. Nigel, the Athlete-chords**

Children like to feel as though they are progressing. The main purpose of this song is to learn a simplified “G” chord and revise some previously learnt chords while learning a new song.

#### **43. I dreamt Aunty Glennis was the tooth fairy.**

Like “Moving” and “Lost in space”, “I dreamt Aunty Glennis was the tooth fairy” is suitable as a piece for the student to use in order to continue to learn to process pitch and rhythm and develop the ability to play independently of their teacher. It is of a brisk tempo and like the two pieces mentioned, “I dreamt Aunty Glennis was the tooth fairy” uses a descending stepwise phrase with minimal melodic movement in each bar.

Students may be able to play the opening bars by associating it with the previously learnt piece, “Fairyland”. Some may recall it by hearing or seeing the phrase; others may remember the finger pattern or simply read it.

The chorus challenges deftness of the fretting fingers as students are asked to play a different note on beats one, two and three of the second bar of the phrase. As it is to be played four times, students have ample opportunity to refine it.

The “outro” is a semitone higher than in introduction and is designed to challenge the dexterity of fingers three and four of the students fretting hand.

#### **44. You’re angry because I hate broccoli?**

This piece, it could be said, is built on fragments and is a summary of previous pieces. Because of this, students have little trouble in playing it.

Students could recognise and play the opening bars as they played them previously in “I love football”. The rhythms can be traced as far back as the first piece but are more likely to be associated with “I like cake and custard”. There are familiar finger movements from “My X box”, “I’m Simon’s mother” and “A Sunday BBQ”.

#### **45. Walking the stairs**

Walking the stairs is designed primarily to demonstrate to the students that the musical staff represents a “set of stairs” which relates to pitch and the ordered placement of note names. “Walking the stairs” also revisits and reinforces chord shapes learned previously and again challenges the deftness of movement of fretting fingers four to three.

#### **46. Blues in E**

With only two melodic patterns to be learned, (though one is to be moved to the pitch of a higher string), “Blues in E” is perhaps the most ambitious piece in this method as it requires more dexterity, concentration and coordination than perhaps any other piece in this method.