

Cumann Buíon Píobaire na hÉireann

# *Begin Piping*



Foundation Course I

	Index
Page 3	Introduction
Page 4	Before we Begin
Page 5	Notes Finger Placement on the Chanter
Page 6	Finger Placement on the Chanter <small>contd.</small>
Page 7	A Good Start / Grace Notes
Page 8	Notes, Beats, Bars & Time Signatures
Page 9	Monotones
Page 10	Monotones <small>contd.</small>
Page 11	Sight Reading
Page 12	Sight Reading <small>contd.</small>
Page 13	Exercises
Page 14	Simple Tunes with Grace Notes & Strikes
Page 15	Exercises and Dot & Cut
Page 16	Monotones with Dot & Cut
Page 17	The Practice Chanter
Page 18	More Tunes with Grace Notes & Strikes
Page 19	Enjoy Another Tune with Grace Notes & Strikes

# Introduction

The playing of an instrument is one of the most important factors in a cultural identity, defining who we are or who we want to be.

Bagpipes of various types are played throughout the world, but the most prolific and well known is the one known as Píob Mór, Warpipe or most commonly the Great Highland Bagpipe (GHB).

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the playing of the bagpipe was made popular, in the South of Ireland, through the foundation of many piping clubs and bands, initiated by the Ireland Irish Movement, the Gaelic League and subsequently in a more militaristic form by the Irish Volunteers.

Many current pipe bands in the Republic of Ireland have their 'roots' in these formations.



This educational text is aimed at supporting and promoting an important part of our cultural heritage and identity, by providing a structured guide to learning to play the bagpipe. Ideally the process should be supported and fostered by a **tutor**.

**Begin Piping** is a tutor led guide for young people, to help develop correct fingering technique for the bagpipe, as well as introducing **fundamental skills in reading music**.

The text takes the learner through the basics of **music theory** and gives a thorough grounding in the **practical exercises and skills** required for good musicianship on the bagpipe.

All practical work is conducted on an instrument called a '**CHANTER**'.

Students will learn the **scale**, ornamentations such as **grace-notes** and **strikes** (taps).

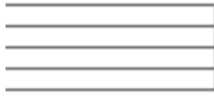
The tutor book also includes a number of short pieces of music.

There is a strong emphasis on **monotones**, which helps define the rhythm pattern of a given piece of music.

**Begin Piping** has been designed for ease of use, a guide to reading music and playing the chanter with confidence and skill.

It is a useful tool for anyone who wishes to learn more about a musical instrument, which is played world-wide and serves as an introduction the phenomenon that is the 'Pipe Band World'.

# Before We Begin



**The Staff or Staff** - A series of 5 horizontal lines and four intermediate spaces arranged in a ladder like arrangement to show the **pitch** of a note.



**Pitch** - the **height or depth of a sound**.  
The position of a note on a staff determines the pitch.  
A note higher up the staff has a higher pitch than a note lower down.



**Clef Sign** - the clef sign used for piping music is called a **G clef**.



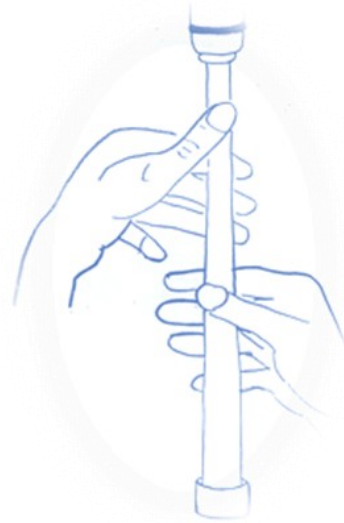
**Leger Line** - a short horizontal line placed above or below the staff to extend its range. In piping music we use a leger line above the staff—**high A**

## Finger Placement on the Chanter

Front View



Rear View



Left Hand



Outer finger pad with impression of chanter hole on the left (top) hand

Right Hand



Impression of chanter hole is on the centre pad on the right (bottom) hand

# Notes & Finger Placement on the Chanter

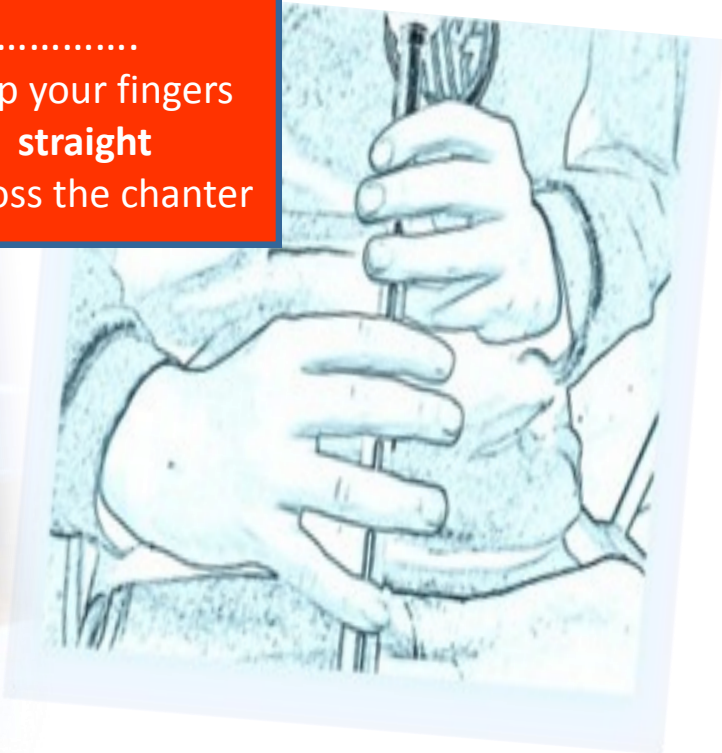
Note	Position	Diagram	Photo	Note	Position	Diagram	Photo
Low G				E			
Low A				F			
B				High G			
C				High A			
D				<p><b>Tip.....</b>                      never use the tips of your fingers or curl your fingers around the chanter</p>			



# Finger Placement on the Chanter

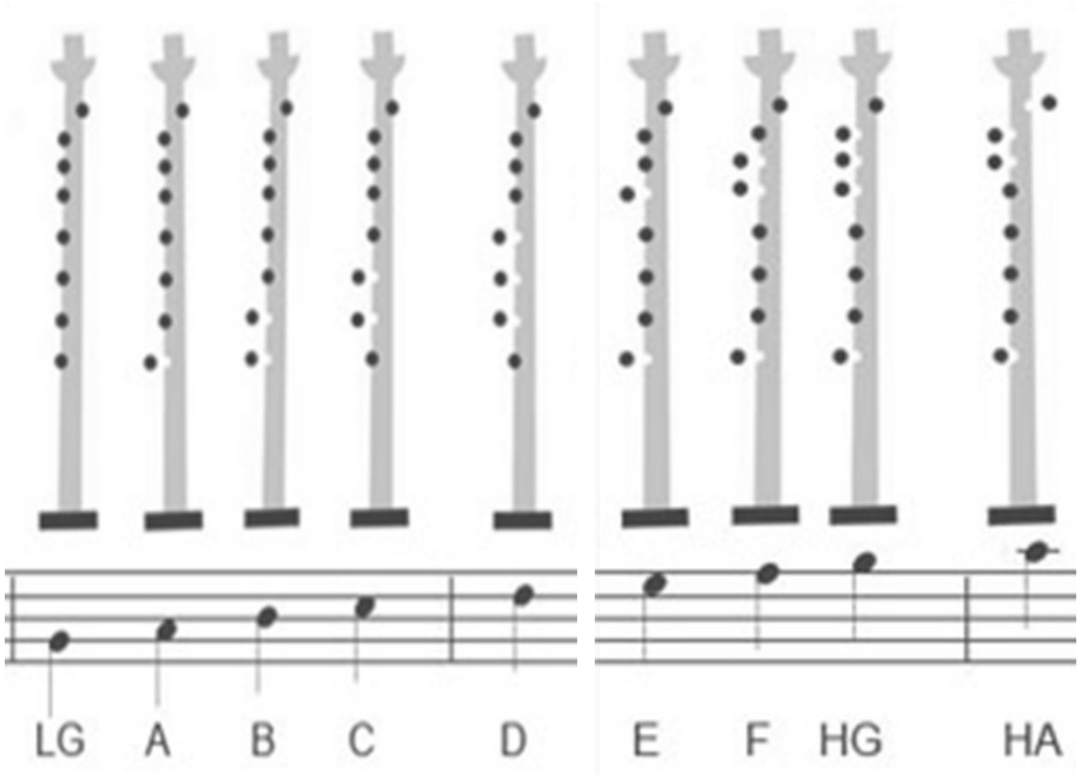
contd.

Tip.....  
keep your fingers  
**straight**  
across the chanter



the right hand (bottom)

the left hand (top)



# A Good Start

## The Scale

The chanter scale consists of **nine** notes. All notes are named after the **first seven letters** of the alphabet **A,B,C,D,E,F & G**.

The notes on the lines of the stave are  
**E G B D F**



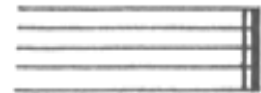
The notes in the spaces of the stave are  
**F A C E**



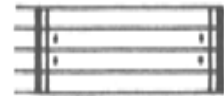
**Bar Lines** - are short vertical lines running across the stave. They divide the music into equal portions and indicate the strong accent.



**Double Bar Lines** are put at the completion of a piece of music.



**Repeat Marks** are placed at both the beginning and end of a section of music, which is to be repeated.



A **Grace Note** is played by raising and lowering a finger quickly.

Tip.....  
A **Grace Note** is played just before a note

**G Grace Notes** - played by raising and lowering the first finger (G finger) on the left hand



**E Grace Notes** - played by raising and lowering the 3rd finger (E finger) on the left hand







**D Grace Notes** - played by raising and lowering the 1st finger (D finger) on the right hand



# Notes, Beats, Bars & Time Signatures

**Notes:** A **Note** is a sign or symbol which shows the **length** of a sound

## Note Values

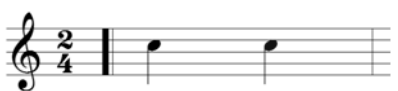


Name	Symbol	Value	Relative Value	Count
<b>Semi Breve</b>		Whole Note	<div style="text-align: center;">0</div> <div style="text-align: center;">1 Semibreve</div>	<b>4</b>
<b>Minim</b>		Half Note	<div style="text-align: center;">2 Minims</div>	<b>2</b>
<b>Crotchet</b>		Quarter Note	<div style="text-align: center;">4 Crotchets</div>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quaver</b>		One Eighth Note	<div style="text-align: center;">8 Quavers</div>	<b>½</b>

**Beats & Bars:** **Bar Lines** divide a piece of music into equal portions - A **Bar** is the space between **2 Barlines**



Within a **Bar** we can have a number of **Beats**, usually **2,3 or 4**

**Time Signatures:** A **Time Signature** is a fraction-like sign placed directly after the Clef Sign. The **Time Signature** tells us two things - **Top Figure** - tells us the number of beats in a bar - **Bottom Figure** - what the beat note is (this aspect will be covered later)

$\frac{2}{4}$		2 Beats in the Bar	Count 1 - 2
$\frac{3}{4}$		3 Beats in the Bar	Count 1 - 2 - 3
$\frac{4}{4}$		4 Beats in the Bar	Count 1 - 2 - 3 - 4



# Monotones

Monotones

2 beats in a bar

Monotone 1

1 2 1 2 1 & 2 & 1 & 2 &

1 2 & 1 & 2 1 & 2 & 1 & 2

1 & 2 & 1 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 2

Monotone 2

1 2 1 2 1 & 2 & 1 & 2

1 2 & 1 2 1 & 2 1 2 &

1 & 2 1 & 2 1 & 2 & 1 2

Tip.....

Tap your foot for each Beat

# Monotones

contd.

## Monotones 3 beats in a bar

### Monotone 3

1 2 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 1 & 2 3 1 & 2 & 3 &

1 & 2 & 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 3 1 & 2 3

1 2 & 3 1 & 2 & 3 1 & 2 3 & 1 2 & 3

1 2 3 1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 1 & 2 3 &

## Monotones 4 beats in a bar

### Monotone 4

1 2 3 4 & 1 2 & 3 & 4 1 & 2 3 4 & 1 & 2 3 & 4

1 & 2 & 3 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 & 2 3 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4

1 2 & 3 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 4 & 1 2 3 & 4 1 2 & 3 & 4 &

1 2 3 4 & 1 & 2 3 & 4 & 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 &

# Sight Reading

## ACE Exercises

Four staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each starting with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The notes are: Staff 1: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 2: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 3: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 4: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

## Near Neighbours to ACE

Four staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each starting with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: Staff 1: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 2: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 3: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 4: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

# Sight Reading

contd.

F, high G & high A

Four staves of musical notation in treble clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a repeat sign followed by a sequence of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6. The second staff continues with quarter notes: G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7. The third staff continues with quarter notes: G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9. The fourth staff continues with quarter notes: G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, ending with a double bar line.

**Exercises to reduce 'Crossing Noises' - getting rid of the 'BLUP' sound between notes**

**Hand Change Exercise 1**

Three staves of musical notation in treble clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a repeat sign followed by a sequence of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6. The second staff continues with quarter notes: G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8. The third staff continues with quarter notes: G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, ending with a double bar line.

**Hand Change Exercise 2**

Two staves of musical notation in treble clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a repeat sign followed by eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6. The second staff continues with eighth notes: G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, ending with a double bar line.

# Exercises

## Strikes



## High A or thumb Grace Notes



## Gracenote & Strike Exercise



# Simple Tunes with Grace Notes & Strikes

Tip.....  
**Monotone** the tune before playing it

## Polka

The musical notation for 'Polka' is written in 2/4 time on a single treble clef staff. It consists of four lines of music. The first line begins with a repeat sign and contains four measures. The second line contains four measures. The third line begins with a repeat sign and contains four measures. The fourth line contains four measures and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The melody is characterized by eighth-note patterns and grace notes.

## Coulter's Candy

The musical notation for 'Coulter's Candy' is written in 4/4 time on a single treble clef staff. It consists of two lines of music. The first line begins with a repeat sign and contains eight measures. The second line contains eight measures and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The melody features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with grace notes.



# Exercises

## G D & E Grace Notes

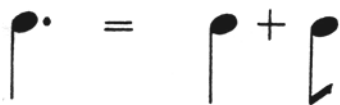


## G D & E Exercises



# Dot & Cut

When a **dot** is placed directly after a note, it increases the value of the note by **half**



In general terms if we **dot** a note, i.e. increase its value by half, we have to **'cut'** the adjacent note by half of its value, to maintain an overall equality of note values.

All the bars below retain the same sum total of note values



# Monotones with Dot & Cut

## Monotone 4

1 2 the 1 2 1 the 2 the 1 & 2 &

1 the 2 & 1 & 2 1 & 2 the 1 the 2

1 & 2 & 1 2 the 1 the 2 & 1 the 2

1 the 2 & 1 the 2 1 & 2 1 the 2 &

## Monotone 5

student to work out rhythm pattern

## Monotone 6

student to work out rhythm pattern

# The Practice Chanter

## Practice Chanter Reed



Mouthpiece

Reed Chamber

Chanter

The **Practice Chanter** is made up of a number of parts

1. The mouthpiece and reed chamber form the **Blowpipe**
2. The **Chanter**
3. The **Reed**

## Caring for your **Practice Chanter**

1. After playing, get rid of excess moisture
2. Remove mouthpiece, leave to dry
3. When opening, use both hands to grip the chanter bowl and ferrule, then twist
4. Remove with care and lift straight off
5. Do not twist or turn the chanter from the bottom as this may damage or break the chanter
6. Take care not to damage the reed blades

Do not leave your chanter lying around, where someone might accidentally sit on it

# More Tunes with Grace Notes & Strikes

## The Minstrel Boy

monotone before playing

The musical notation for 'The Minstrel Boy' is written in 4/4 time on a single treble clef staff. The piece begins with a repeat sign. The melody is characterized by frequent grace notes, which are small eighth notes with a vertical line through them, often placed before the main notes. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, with some beamed eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

## The Mountains of Pomeroy

monotone before playing

The musical notation for 'The Mountains of Pomeroy' is written in 4/4 time on a single treble clef staff. The piece begins with a repeat sign. The melody features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with several grace notes used throughout. There are also some beamed eighth notes and occasional eighth-note rests. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

# Enjoy Another Tune with Grace Notes & Strikes



## Slade Polka

The musical notation for the Slade Polka is presented in four staves, all in treble clef and 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with grace notes indicated by a small 'v' symbol above the notes. The second staff continues the melody and ends with a double bar line and repeat sign. The third and fourth staves provide further musical detail, including a final phrase with a grace note and a double bar line.



