



Music Composition Lessons

The following lessons were developed with the ArtFusion Opus project goals in mind and will provide teachers with a comprehensive approach to teaching standards-based music composition while supporting instruction in the Sibelius music notation software, with which these lessons are aligned.

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Unit 1 Lessons 1-4

Conventions of writing music using standardized notation

These lessons are designed to be taught in sequential order, as new concepts are introduced that build upon the previous lessons.

(We recommend that students first handwrite their notation for Unit 1 before using the Sibelius notation software.)

Composition Lesson 1

Use with Sibelius lesson 1 p. 13

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, note and rest values, pitch and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Begin with a bar line and a treble clef sign
		2. Use a 4 over 4 time signature
		3. Using bar lines, divide the staff into 4 equal measures .
		4. Use G A B as your pitches.
		5. You may use quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, whole notes, sixteenth notes and their corresponding rests . (Each measure must contain 4 beats .)
		6. End with a double bar (The last line of the double bar line should be thicker.)

Composition Lesson 2

Use with Sibelius lesson 2 p. 15

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Begin with a bar line and a treble clef sign
		2. Use a 3 over 4 time signature
		3. Using bar lines, divide the staff into 8 equal measures .
		4. Your first note must be C . (Label this note name.)
		5. Use C D E F G as your pitches.
		6. End measure 4 on G . (Label this note name.)
		7. You may use quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, whole notes, sixteenth notes and their corresponding rests . (Each measure must contain 3 beats .)
		8. The last note of your song must be C .
		9. End with a double bar (The last line of the double bar line should be thicker.)

Composition Lesson 3

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Begin with a bar line and a treble clef sign
		2. Use a 4 over 4 time signature
		3. Using bar lines, divide the staff into 8 equal measures .
		4. Your first note must be C . (Label this note name.)
		5. Use C D E F G as your pitches.
		6. Use a series of steps (4 notes in a row that step) somewhere in the first 4 measures of your composition.
		7. End measure 4 with a strong G . (Label this note name.) (Strong G is at least half of the measure, and can be 2 quarter notes, a half note or even a whole note.)
		8. Use a series of leaps (4 notes in a row that leap) somewhere in the last 4 measures of your composition.
		9. You may use quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, whole notes, sixteenth notes and their corresponding rests . (Each measure must contain 4 beats .)
		10. The last note of your song must be C .
		11. End your song with a double bar .

Composition Lesson 4

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Begin with a bar line and a treble clef sign
		2. Use a 3 over 4 time signature
		3. Using bar lines, divide the staff into 8 equal measures .
		4. Your first note must be C . (Label this note name.)
		5. Use C D E F G as your pitches.
		6. Use a series of steps and a series of leaps in your composition.
		7. End measure 4 with a strong G . (Label this note name.)
		8. You may use quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, whole notes, sixteenth notes and their corresponding rests . (Each measure must contain 3 beats .)
		9. The last note of your song must be C .
		10. End your song with a double bar .

Unit 2 (Lessons 5 & 6)

Key signature, Articulation and Dynamics

Composition Lesson 5

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Begin with a bar line and a treble clef sign .
		2. Use either a 3 or 4 beat time signature .
		3. Start with a quarter note. Use any note except C . Draw a bar line. (This is called a pick up note . Label this "Pick up." This is used as an introduction to your song.)
		4. Using bar lines, divide the remaining staff into 12 equal measures .
		5. Your first note in the first full measure must be C . (Label this note name.)
		6. Use the key of C (C D E F G A B C') as your pitches. (Expansion of octaves is at teacher discretion.)
		7. Use a series of steps and a series of leaps in your composition.
		8. Use at least 3 rests. (Each rest must be separated by at least one note.)
		9. Use an example of staccato and legato somewhere in your piece.
		10. End measure 6 with a strong G . (Label this note name.)
		11. The last 3 notes of your song should be F G C . Label the note names.
		12. The last measure of your piece should have one beat less than your meter signature because of the borrowed pick up note at the beginning of your piece.
		13. End your piece with a double bar .

Composition Lesson 6

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation, dynamics, rhythm pattern and conventions of composing.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Begin with a bar line and a treble clef sign .
		2. Choose a time signature .
		3. Start with a pick up note. Use any note except C . Draw a bar line.
		4. Using bar lines, divide the remaining staff into 12 equal measures .
		5. Your first note in the first full measure must be C . (Label this note name.)
		6. Use the key of C (C D E F G A B C') as your pitches. (Expansion of octaves is at teacher discretion.)
		7. Use a series of steps and a series of leaps in your composition.
		8. Use at least 3 rests. (Each rest must be separated by at least one note.)
		9. Use a rhythm pattern that repeats at least 3 times in your piece and label it "rhythm pattern."
		10. Use an example of staccato and legato somewhere in your piece.
		11. End measure 6 with a strong G . (Label this note name.)
		12. The last 3 notes of your song should be F G C . Label the note names.
		13. The last measure of your piece should have one beat less than your meter signature because of the borrowed pick up note at the beginning of your piece.
		14. Add some dynamic markings to your piece (f, p, ff, pp, crescendo or decrescendo)
		15. End your piece with a double bar .

Unit 3 (Lessons 7-10)

Form

Composition Lesson 7

Use with Sibelius lesson 7 p. 16

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation, dynamics, rhythm pattern and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Compose a 4 measure section that begins and ends on C (label the note names) – Label this section of your song A
		2. Compose 3 more 4 measure sections and label one B, one C, and one D. (These 3 sections should be different from each other. You could use different dynamics, time signatures, rhythms, tempos, or starting and ending notes.
		3. On the next page, arrange your music into Rondo form: ABACADA – label each section with a capital letter.
		4. Put a double bar between each section (these end the section, but not the song, so both lines are thin.) Do NOT put a new time signature for each section, unless you are changing meter from the previous section.
		5. The special feature of a Rondo is the A section, because it repeats between the other sections, and it is EXACTLY the same each time it is written and played.
		6. End the last section with the final double bar line .

Composition Lesson 8

Theme and Variations (ABC)

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation, dynamics, rhythm pattern, contrast, and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Select a total of 8 measures from your previous compositions (they must all have the same meter). This section must start and end on C, with a strong G in measure 4. Label this section of your piece A.
		2. Put your song on the computer and listen to it. (Finale, Sibelius, Noteflight, etc.)
		3. Write 2 variations of your original piece. Label these sections B and C.
		4. A variation uses your original section A music, and slightly changes it. You should still be able to recognize the original melody. You could change meter, or vary the rhythm pattern. (See attached theme and variations idea sheet.)
		5. Use a double bar at the end of each section. (these end the section, but not the song, so both lines are thin.)
		6. ALL 3 of your sections should begin and end on C.

Composition Lesson 9

AB form

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation, dynamics, rhythm pattern, contrast, title and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Write two 8 measure sections of music. Label the first section A and the second section B.
		2. The A section starts on C and ends on G.
		3. The B section starts on G and ends on C.
		4. The B section should be different from the A section.
		5. Use a double bar at the end of each section.
		6. You may use any of the following elements to help show contrast; a pick up note, dynamic changes, tempo changes, rhythm changes, meter changes, steps in one section, leaps or repeats in another, a series of rhythm or melody patterns
		7. End your song with a final double bar.
		8. Title your composition (The title should “fit” your music.)

Composition Lesson 10

ABA form

Use with Sibelius lesson 10 p. 17

The objective addressed in this lesson is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation, dynamics, rhythm pattern, contrast, title, lyrics and conventions of composing.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Write two 8 measure sections of music. Label the first section A and the second section B.
		2. The A section starts on C and ends on C.
		3. The B section has strong G in the 4 th measure.
		4. The B section should be different from the A section.
		5. Use a double bar at the end of each section.
		6. You may use any of the following elements to help show contrast; a pick up note, dynamic changes, tempo changes, rhythm changes, meter changes, steps in one section, leaps or repeats in another, a series of rhythm or melody patterns
		7. Arrange your song into ABA form. (The A section is EXACTLY the same both times it is written and played.)
		8. Use lyrics (words-text) somewhere in your composition for at least one measure.
		9. End your song with a final double bar.
		10. Title your composition (The title should "fit" your music.)

Culminating Project – Final Composition

Use with previously learned Sibelius skills

The objective addressed in this Culminating Project is composing using standardized notation. The elements of standardized notation used are; bar lines, clef sign, time signature, key signature, note and rest values, pitch, developing melody, articulation, dynamics, rhythm pattern, contrast, title, lyrics and conventions of composing, including editing, revising and polishing. The student will demonstrate competency using the composing techniques explored in the lessons of this unit. Each student needs to read through all prior lessons and compositions in preparation for their final composition. The purpose for choosing instruments for this composition is to help promote band, marimba, orchestra, and choral music programs in our schools. The teacher will choose the parameters for this composition, keeping in mind the time constraints of the student, groups available to perform the songs, etc.

The Teacher and Student columns can be used as check-off boxes for completed tasks.

Teacher	Student	Procedure
		1. Choose up to 4 instruments for your song. Be sure to write notation in the ranges for your chosen instruments. (see attached range sheet)
		2. Your piece must have at least 32 measures of music. Choose a Form (AB, ABA, ABC (Theme and Variations), or Rondo (ABACADA).
		3. Use all of the techniques you have used and learned in previous assignments to make your music interesting to you as well as the reader and performer of your piece.
		4. Title your composition. (The title should fit the description of your music.)
		5. Do your best work. This is where you know have the most choices and you can show what you know. Personalize your music as you want – you may use lyrics, illustrations and any other things to make your music special and add finishing touches to your composition.
		6. Be ready to rewrite your piece at least 2 times after the teacher corrects and makes suggestions to your piece. Two drafts are normal, although some students have written 3 drafts, especially if they have written for more than 2 instruments.

Sibelius for Lesson 1

Sibelius

1. Click on the Sibelius icon on the desk to open
2. Choose 'start a new score' from the Quickstart menu, click ok .
3. In the left **Manuscript Paper** screen select '**blank**' then click on the '**change instruments**' button. Select piano and click 'add to score'. In the 'staves in score' window on the right side. +Piano (a) and +Piano (b) will appear. Select +Piano (b) then select the 'delete from score' button. Now you will have a treble clef staff. Click on Next.
4. Next window '**house style**' leave it on 'unchanged' and click next.
5. Choose **Time Signature**, 4/4. Click on Next
6. Choose **Key signature**: C Major.
7. On the **score info** page type in the composer (you) and the title. Click on Finish.
8. You should see a blank 5 measure treble clef staff. You need 4 measures. To select a measure to delete, hold down the control key (on PC, on Mac hold down the Command key instead) and click on one measure. A double purple box will surround that measure. Hit Delete and it disappears! If you need to add a measure(s) hit control B (command B on Mac).
9. Using the keypad and the computer keyboard input your music. (If the keypad is not visible, look in the **Window** menu at the top of the page, Select keypad. Navigator and playback should also be open. If not, select them.
10. Click on the first measure of the music. Choose the first rhythm on the keypad. It should turn blue. Notice the rest button is also selected. Click on it to deselect it. If you drag your cursor back to the first note you'll notice it is blue (it's 'loaded') Click where you want the pitch to be. Continue on to your next note. If you don't want your cursor 'loaded' hit the 'esc' key. (This deselects everything.)
11. For **Lesson #1**, using the pitches BAG, you need to write 4 measures of music.
12. Remember to save your work. First time, "save as", type in your last name and save to desktop. After that, just choose save.

Sibelius Shortcuts/Functions

Following are a number of items that will facilitate the use of Sibelius. It is recommended that you review the following items to help you successfully complete lessons 1 and 2. You may also need to refer to this list for the remaining lessons.

Never delete a rest! (It might mess up your ability to have the right number of beats in a measure.) To change it to a note, select it and use the notepad to select the rhythm you want and hit 'rest' button to change it from a rest to a note.

For dotted rhythms: For a dotted half note, click on the half note, then the '.', then key in the note name. Same for dotted quarter, etc.

For accents, fermata, etc.: Accents, staccato, legato are at the top of the keypad. Click on the note, then click on the articulation. For a fermata, click on the fermata icon at the top of the keypad, it will change all of the symbols on the keypad, click on the other 'fermata'. Be sure to click on the whole note to change it back to rhythms.

Accidentals: click on the note to select it, click on the accidental on the keypad. Hit esc or click away from it.

To copy & paste: select the item you want to copy, hold the control key and hit 'c'. Next click where you want to paste it and hold the control key and hit 'p'.

Dynamics are called "expressions" to enter a dynamic click on the note where you want to add it to the music, then hold down the control key and type 'E', type the dynamic you want and it should appear under the note (tab key will advance you to the next note if you want to continue adding other dynamics) otherwise, click away from the dynamics and it should turn black.

If you want to create a **crescendo**, click on the note where you want it to begin, type 'h' and a small crescendo will appear below it. Hit the space bar to make the crescendo increase to where you want it to stop. Click away from it. For a decrescendo, click on the note, hold down the shift key and hit 'H'.

Your **arrow keys** will move a note up or down on the staff (you must select the note first by clicking on it). To change octaves, hold down the control key and hit the up arrow to go up an octave; or hit the down arrow to go down an octave.

If you want to make changes to a note or rhythm, you click on it and either click on the keypad to select a rhythm, or use the arrow key to move the note up and down.

Slurs or ties: If you are creating a slur, select the first note of your slur, hold down the shift key and select the last note of your slur. Hit the 'S' key. The slur should appear. If you want to change the direction of the slur (go under the notes, instead of over them or vice versa) type 'X' while it is selected. If you want to delete the slur, click on it and hit delete. A tie connects notes that are the same pitch. You would select the notes as above (click on the first note, hold down the shift key and click on the last note) and then hit the tie icon on the note keypad.

T= time signature: your cursor will be loaded, click where you want the new time signature

K=key signature: same as above, click where you want the new key signature.

Delete extra measure(s): Hold control key, select measure(s) the first measure you want to delete, hold the shift key and click on the last measure you want to delete, hit delete, they should disappear.

Add a bar : To add extra measures, click in a measure, hold down the control key and hit 'B'. Every time you hit 'B' a new measure should appear.

Create text: go up to the 'create' menu, drag down to 'text'/ over to 'other staff text'/ over to 'plain text' and click on it. Your cursor will be loaded (blue) click where you want the text to be. Type your letter. Click away from it.

Always save your work. Be sure it is saved on the desktop with your last name as the title. (Shortcut for saving is: control 'S'.)

Sibelius for Lesson 2

1. If Sibelius is already open. Close previous file. (save it first).
2. Under **File** menu select **New**
3. In the left **Manuscript Paper** screen select '**blank**' then click on the '**change instruments**' button. Select piano and click 'add to score'. In the 'staves in score' window on the right side. +Piano (a) and +Piano (b) will appear. Select +Piano (b) then select the 'delete from score' button. Now you will have a treble clef staff. Click on Next.
4. Next window '**house style**' leave it on 'unchanged' and click next.
5. Choose **Time Signature**, 3/4. Click on Next
6. Choose **Key signature**: C Major.
7. On the **score info** page type in the composer (you) and the title. Click on Finish.
8. You should see a blank 5 measure treble clef staff. You need 8 measures. To select a measure to delete, hold down the control key (on PC, on Mac hold down the Command key instead) and click on one measure. A double purple box will surround that measure. Hit Delete and it disappears! If you need to add a measure(s) hit control B (command B on Mac).
9. Input notes and rhythms. A shortcut for selecting notes names is to type the letter name on the computer keyboard. If you are using a laptop you will not have a number pad. However, if you have a desktop computer the keyboard should have a number pad. Notice that the Keypad corresponds with the numbers on the number pad. (0=rest, quarter note is 4, half note is 5, etc.).
10. Using the pitches CDEFG, your assignment should have 8 measures; 3/4 meter; begin measure 1 with C; end measure #4 on G; and end measure 8 on C. Label each one.
11. To add text, select the note you want to label (click on it, it should turn purple). Go to **Create menu**, drag down to **Text**, drag over to **Other Staff Text**, then to **Plain Text**. Click on it. A cursor should blink above the note. Type the note name. Click away from it to deselect it (or hit the 'esc' key).
12. **Save** your work and close.

Sibelius

Sibelius for Lesson 7

Compose a Rondo

You will be creating two documents for this assignment. The first document will be creating your 4 measure sections for your Rondo: ABCD. We will be copying and pasting these sections into the second document to create your Rondo (ABACADA).

1. Open a new document. Save it as 'rondo sections'. Choose time signature, key, instrument, etc. In the window **Time Signature and Tempo**, notice you can add a tempo, metronome markings and even pickup notes! (See Lesson #5).
2. Create a 4 measure section that begins and ends on C. Label it A
3. You will need to add measures so you have enough measures for three more sections.
4. Compose 3 more sections of 4 measures each. Use different rhythms, tempos, dynamics, etc.
 - **T= time signature:** your cursor will be loaded, click where you want the new time signature
 - **K=key signature:** same as above, click where you want the new key signature.
 - **Delete extra measure(s):** Hold control key, select measure(s) the first measure you want to delete, hold the shift key and click on the last measure you want to delete, hit delete, they should disappear.
 - **Add a bar :** To add extra measures, click in a measure, hold down the control key and hit 'B'. Every time you hit 'B' a new measure should appear.
 - **Create text** go up to the 'create' menu, drag down to 'text'/ over to 'other staff text'/ over to 'plain text' and click on it. Your cursor will be loaded (blue) click where you want the text to be. Type your letter. Click away from it.
 - **Always save your work.** Be sure it is saved on the desktop with your last name as the title. (Shortcut for saving is: control 'S'.)
5. To format your measures (put them in groups of 4), click on the right barline at the end of the 4th measure. It should turn purple. Hit return, now you should have 4 measures in the first line. Do this every four measures so that you have 4 lines containing 4 measures each. Label each section with an A, B, C, and D.
6. To put a double bar at the end of each section, click on the right barline at the end of each section, Go to **Create**, down to **barline**, and over to **Double**. Now there is a purple double bar there. Click away from it or hit the '**esc**' key. Save your work!
7. Now you are ready to cut and paste your sections into a Rondo. So you will need to open a new document. Save it a 'My Rondo". Go to your first document. Select the A section. To do this click in the first measure, hold down the shift key and copy it (control C) Click into the first measure of 'My Rondo". Paste your section there (control V). Now you should have your first A section. Go back to your 'rondo sections' document. Click on the first measure of the B section, hold down the shift key and click on the last note of the B section. Copy it (control C) go to your "my Rondo" document, click in the first empty measure after the A section, paste it (Control V). Continue until all sections are pasted in in Rondo form (ABACADA). Save your work. Your Rondo should be finished. Remember to delete extra measures if needed.

Sibelius for Lesson 10

Compose an ABA form piece (similar to Zoo Tunes CBPA)

1. Open a new document in Sibelius. Go through the startup menu to select Time Signature, Key, Tempo, (pickup notes if desired). Be sure to give your piece a title and list yourself as the composer.
2. Create an 8 measure A section. Label it.
3. Create an 8 measure B section. There should be a strong sol (5th step of the key you are using) in the middle of the B section. Copy and paste the A section again at the end of section A.
4. Create a double bar at the end of your first A section and at the end of your B section. There should be a final barline at the end of your second A section.
5. **Dynamics** are called “expressions” by Sibelius. To enter a dynamic click on the note where you want to add it to the music, then hold down the control key and type ‘E’, type the dynamic you want and it should appear under the note (tab key will advance you to the next note if you want to continue adding other dynamics) otherwise, click away from the dynamics and it should turn black.

If you want to create a **crescendo**, click on the note where you want it to begin, type ‘h’ (for harpin) and a small crescendo will appear below it. Hit the space bar to make the crescendo increase to where you want it to stop. Click away from it. For a decrescendo, click on the note, hold down the shift key and hit ‘H’.

6. **Tempo** can be changed by selecting the note you want it to change on, go to the **Create** menu, drag down to **Text** and over to **Tempo**. Your cursor will be blinking. Type your Tempo, click away from it or hit the 'esc' key. Save your work!
7. To add **Lyrics**, click on the first note to select it. Go to the **Create**, drag down to **Text**, and over to Lyrics, then over to Lyrics line 1. (Control L is the shortcut). Type your first word of syllable under the first note, hit the space bar to move forward to the next note. Save your work!!!!
8. An easy way to create a series is to copy a selection (select the first note, hold down the shift key and select the last note). Copy it (control C). Now paste it (control V) in the next measure and use your arrow keys to move the pattern up a step or down a step.

Publishing Student Work To publish student work, you will need to export the Sibelius file and create a Scorch and html file to make it viewable on the web.

1. Create your Sibelius file. Save.
2. Under the **File** menu drag down to **Export** and over to **Scorch Web Page**. Give your document a name and it will be saved with '.htm' tag. In the next window choose 'one system playback'. Be sure to save the Sibelius file (.sib) and the Scorch file (.htm) in the same folder. Save to your desktop.
3. To view your scorch file, look on your desktop. Open your .htm file. If Scorch is loaded correctly on your computer it should open and show your your music. If not, there is a link at the bottom of the page to click to go to a Sibelius website where you can download the free software.