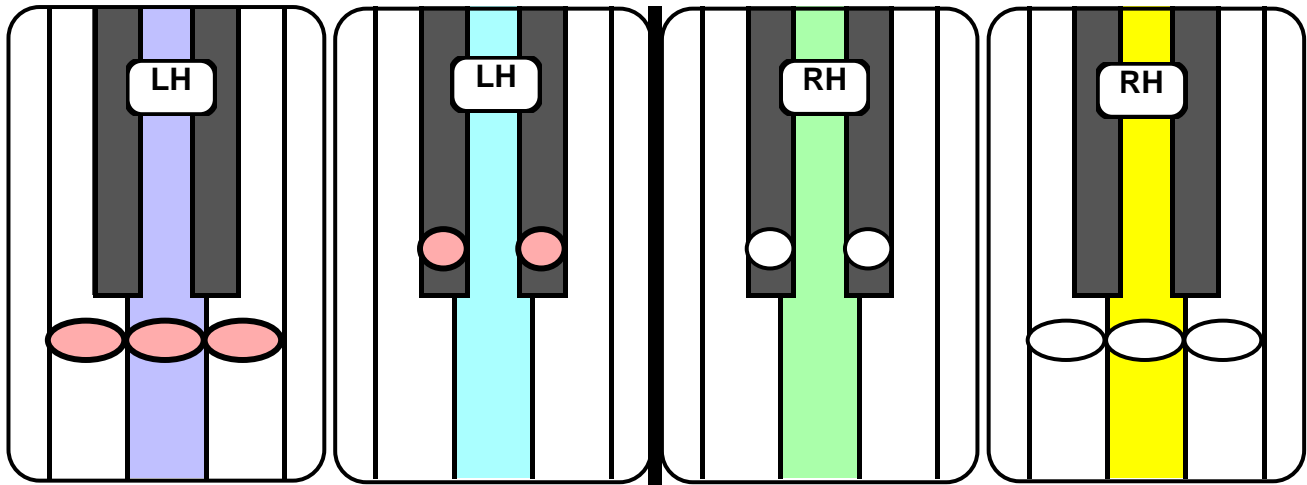


# Basic Keyboard Skills

**PK-25**

**Focus on Patterns**



**From the Music  
Innovators Workshop**

## **Introduction**

*This keyboard prep instructional series is based on keyboard map notation that graphically shows you where to place your fingers on the keyboard to play a piece of music (pitch). It also shows you graphically when to play the keys (rhythm). It is a preparatory series that provides you with the ability to play intermediate and advanced pieces, and also provides a foundation of playing skills that you can draw on when you decide to continue your studies by reading and playing from traditional notation.*

*This unit is mainly about sound patterns and how to play them on the keyboard. The sound patterns in this unit and the next will help you prepare to play songs and other keyboard pieces. Songs and pieces are large sound patterns made up of bunches of smaller patterns of many different kinds, put together one after the other. When you put your patterns all together, you will be making beautiful and wonderful music!*

*Let the patterns that you play in this unit help you get comfortable placing your fingers on the keys and moving them with ease. Keep your fingers flexible and relaxed. Let the weight of your hands extending through your finger tips (and the side of your thumb) help you make the sounds on the keys. No need to hit the keys with your fingers, except when you want to make really loud sounds. Remember, making music on the piano deals with three main things (and many other lesser ones as well):*

**1 - Pitch.** *Pitch has to do with how high or low each sound is. Each key that you play has a different pitch. On the keyboard, playing from left to right takes you to higher pitches. Playing from right to left takes you to lower pitches. This instructional unit is mainly about reading the pitches (notes) and finding (playing) these pitches on the keyboard.*

**2 - Time.** *Time has to do with when you play each sound and how long each sound lasts. To do time correctly, you must press a key at the right time, and must hold it down the right length of time. We use the words, "tempo" and "rhythm" to talk about musical time. Several of the following instructional units deal with musical time.*

**3 - Fingering.** *You have 10 fingers. You use all of them to play the piano. To play each sound, you use only one finger at a time on the key that you play. This means that you must select one of your fingers to play the key. Selecting which finger to use is called "fingering." Sometimes the sheet music tells you what finger to use. Most of the time, you decide for yourself which finger to use. You will learn more about fingering in later units.*

*Learning to do all these things well and comfortably is much of what learning to play the piano is about. This unit will help you get off to a good start.*

Octave Group With Names and Addresses												
Groups	Low Group					High Group						
Names / White Keys	C		D		E	F		G		A		B
Addresses / Black Keys		1		2			3		4		5	
Name Clues	C o l o r		D o u b l e		E n d	F r o n t		G o a l	G o a l p o s t	A b o v e		B a c k

**Names and Addresses of the Keys** A set of useful skills that you will develop in this unit is the ability to find the keys on the keyboard by knowing their names and/or addresses. They provide another way of finding on the keyboard the keys that the music diagram tells you to play.

**Standard Names for the Keys of the Keyboard** The yellow row of NAMES near the top of the diagram displays the universally accepted names of the WHITE keys of all octave groups and of the notes that stand for these keys. The names of the notes for the white keys are the 7 letters of the alphabet: A thru G. They are among the most helpful tools that you have for learning to play. Because they are so important, we have developed a set of clues that will help you remember the letter name of each white key. These clues are shown on the next page. You will learn about the STANDARD names of the black keys in later lessons that teach you about the notes of the Grand Staff.

### Addresses of the Black Keys

One of the main uses of notes is to show you which keys to play. This use of notes is all about FINDING the keys on the keyboard. Finding a key means that you must know it's LOCATION. You must know WHERE it is. This is the reason for the ADDRESSES. The addresses tell you where the key is. You find black keys by knowing their addresses. These addresses are simply 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, from left to right, as you can see highlighted in blue in the diagram above. You find white keys by knowing which black keys they are next to.

You don't need any clues to locate the black keys. You simply need to remember how they are numbered. You first need to locate an octave group. This is essential. Then you simply number the 5 black keys from LEFT to RIGHT. Keys 1 and 2 are in the "low group" at the low (left) end of the octave group. Keys 3, 4, and 5 are in the "high group" at the high (right) end of the octave group - as you can see in the diagram above. With a little practice, you will soon be able to look at a black key and know its number without any counting at all.

## Clues for Remembering the Names of the White Keys

**How do these clues for the white keys work?**

*The clues are visual in nature. They need to be visualized to be helpful.*

### Color (Change) for C Key

*This clue focuses on the Change in color from one octave group to the next (reading left to right). C is the first key in the new color when going up from one octave group to the next.*

### Double for D Key

*This clue depends on seeing black keys 1 and 2 as double black keys. The key between them is the Double white key (because it is between them).*

### End for E Key

*This clue depends on recognizing low key groups on the keyboard. Each End key is at the right end of a low key group.*

### Front for F Key

*This clue depends on recognizing high key groups on the keyboard. Each Front key (reading left to right) is at the front of a high key group.*

### Back for B Key

*This clue also depends on recognizing high key groups on the keyboard. Each Back key is at the back of a high key group.*

### Goal for G Key; Above for A Key

*This clue focuses on the goalposts (middle key of each set of 3 black keys). The goalposts form borders between musical alphabet sets: the white key on its left is G, the last key of an alphabet set; and the white key on its right (Above) it is A, the first key of the next alphabet set.*

*It will help to think of all goal posts as marking off the locations of complete alphabet sets, A thru G. The Goal key clue, evokes the idea that there is a goal to get to from the beginning to the end of the alphabet. The key address Alpha, evokes the idea of a new beginning for the alphabet.*

**Key Location Flash Cards -- Question  
Side**

<p><b>Where is Key C?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is Key D?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is Key E?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is Key F?</b></p>
<p><b>Where is Key G?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is Key A?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is Key B?</b></p>	<p><b>What does a "Goalpost" on the keyboard do?</b></p>
<p><b>What does "down" mean on the keyboard?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is a "Low Key Group" on the keyboard?</b></p>	<p><b>Where is a "High Key Group" on the keyboard?</b></p>	<p><b>What does "up" mean on the keyboard?</b></p>

**Carefully Cut These Cards Apart at the Double Lines**

**Key Location Flash Cards -- Answer Side**

**Key F is at the Front (low end) of the High Key Group. (Or, below key 3)**

**Key E is at the high End of the Low Key Group. (Or, above key 2)**

**Key D is in the miDDle of Double Keys 1 and 2. (Or, above key 1)**

**Key C is the first key going up from one octave group to the next.**

**The Number 4 keys serve as "Goal Posts" -- separating alphabet groups from each other.**

**Key B is at the Back (high end) of the High Key Group. (Or, above key 5)**

**Key A starts a new Alphabet just Above the goal post.**

**Key G ends the alphabet just below the Goal post. (Or, above key 3)**

**"Up" on the keyboard means "to the right" (to a higher key).**

**A "High Key Group" is the group of 7 keys at the high (right) side of an octave group.**

**A "Low Key Group" is the group of 5 keys at the low (left) side of an octave group.**

**"Down" on the keyboard means "to the left" (to a lower key).**

## Fun With Words and Numbers

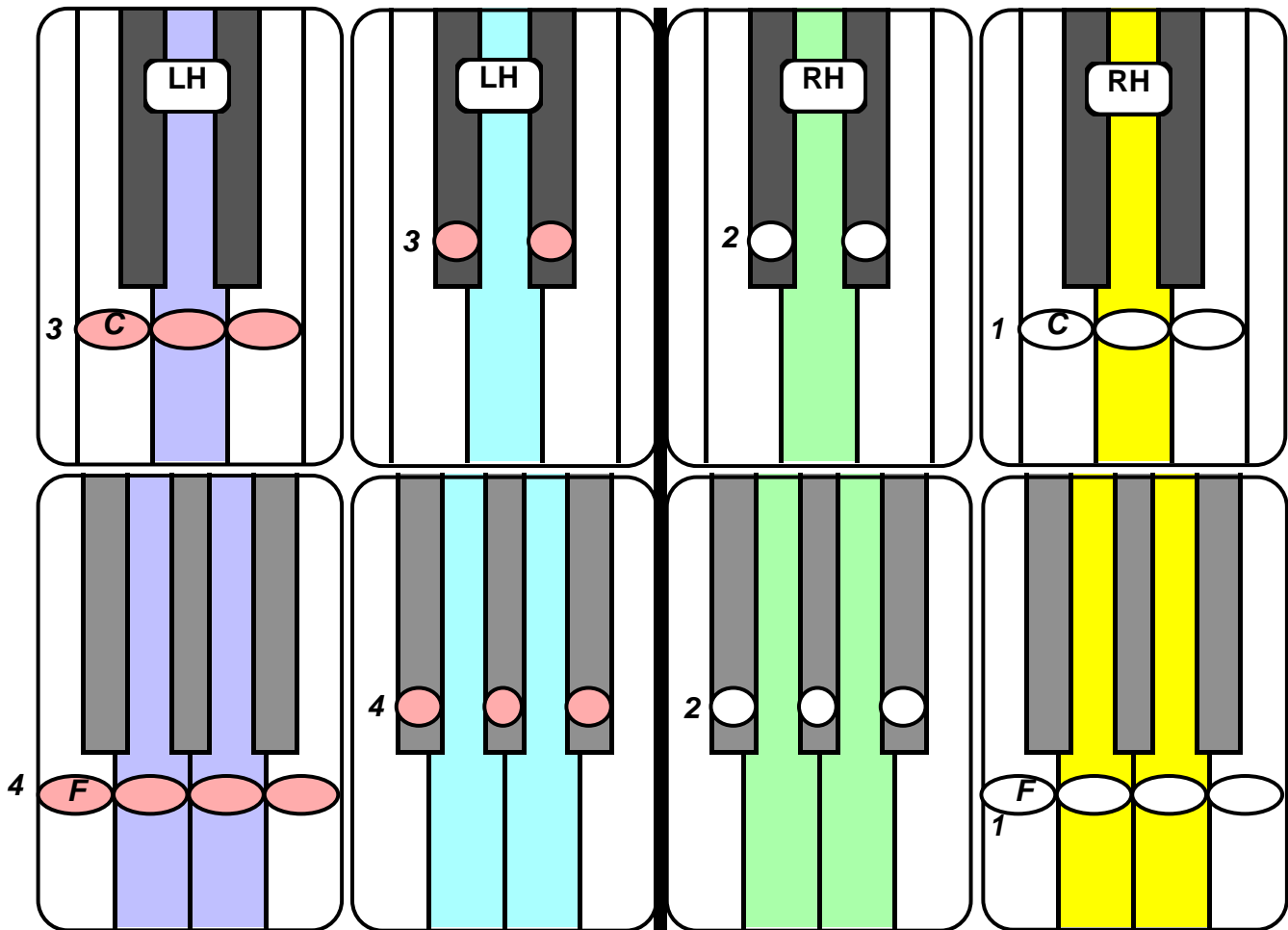
## Prep Exercises on the Black and the White Keys

**Instructions:** Here are some easy exercises to help you get started. You'll play the four exercises on the left with your left hand (LH) and the four exercises on the right with your right hand (RH). The numbers next to the notes are **FINGER NUMBERS**. The the **LEFT HAND** plays the notes **BELOW** Middle C (in the Indigo and Blue octaves). Often you will find that the notes for the left hand are colored **PINK**. The **RIGHT HAND** plays the notes at Middle C and above (the Green and Yellow octaves).

Begin each exercise with the note on the left (next to the finger number). Play the notes in order from left to right. Then continue playing back and forth, repeating each exercise several times.

### Steps for Playing Each Exercise

1. Decide which **HAND** to use.
2. On that hand, find the **FINGER** to start with.
3. On the keyboard, find the starting **OCTAVE GROUP**.
4. In that group, find the starting key.
5. Put the starting finger on the starting key.
6. Line up your other fingers over their keys.
7. Press the starting key, to begin playing.

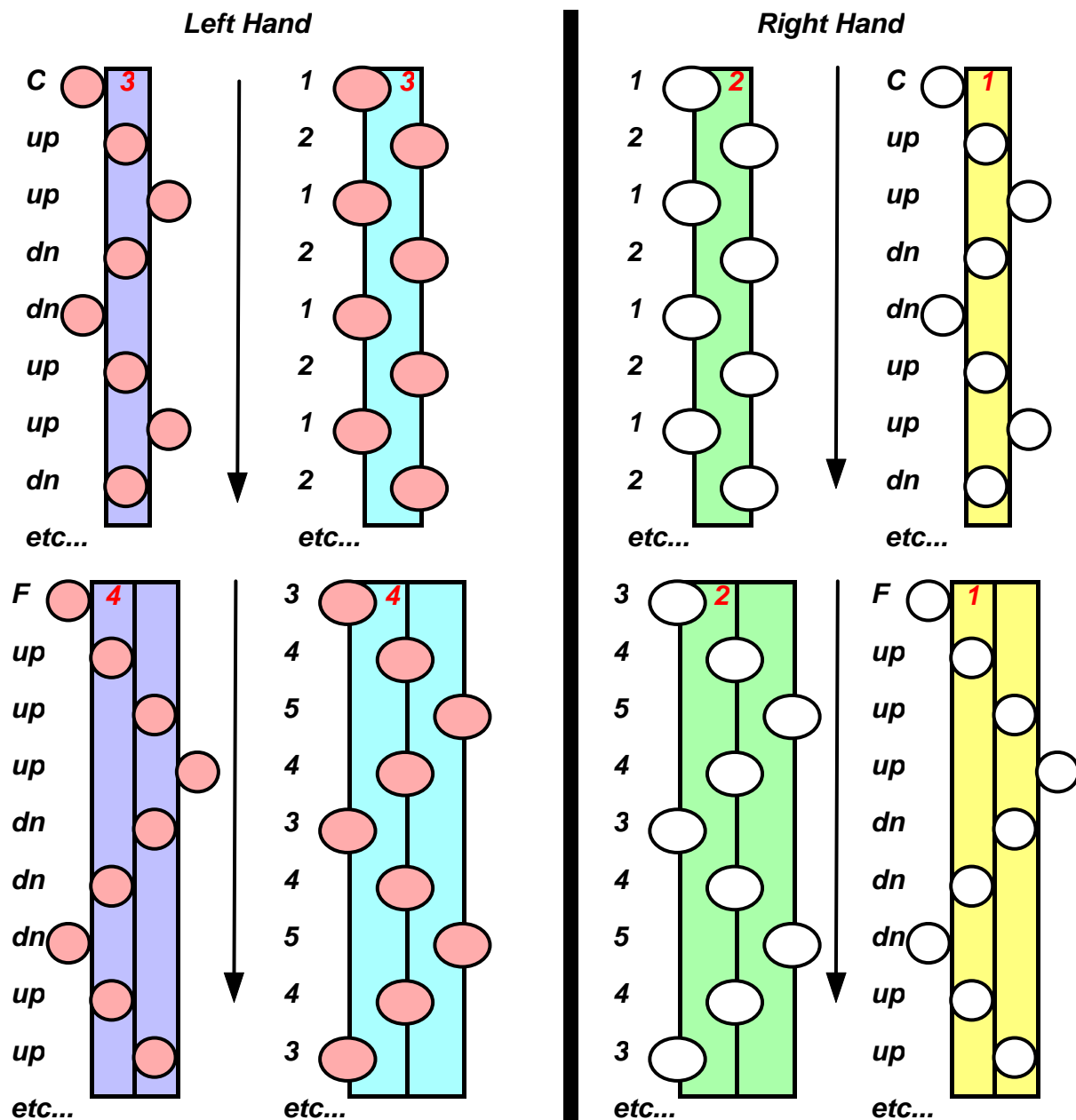




## Preparatory Exercises on the Musical Staff

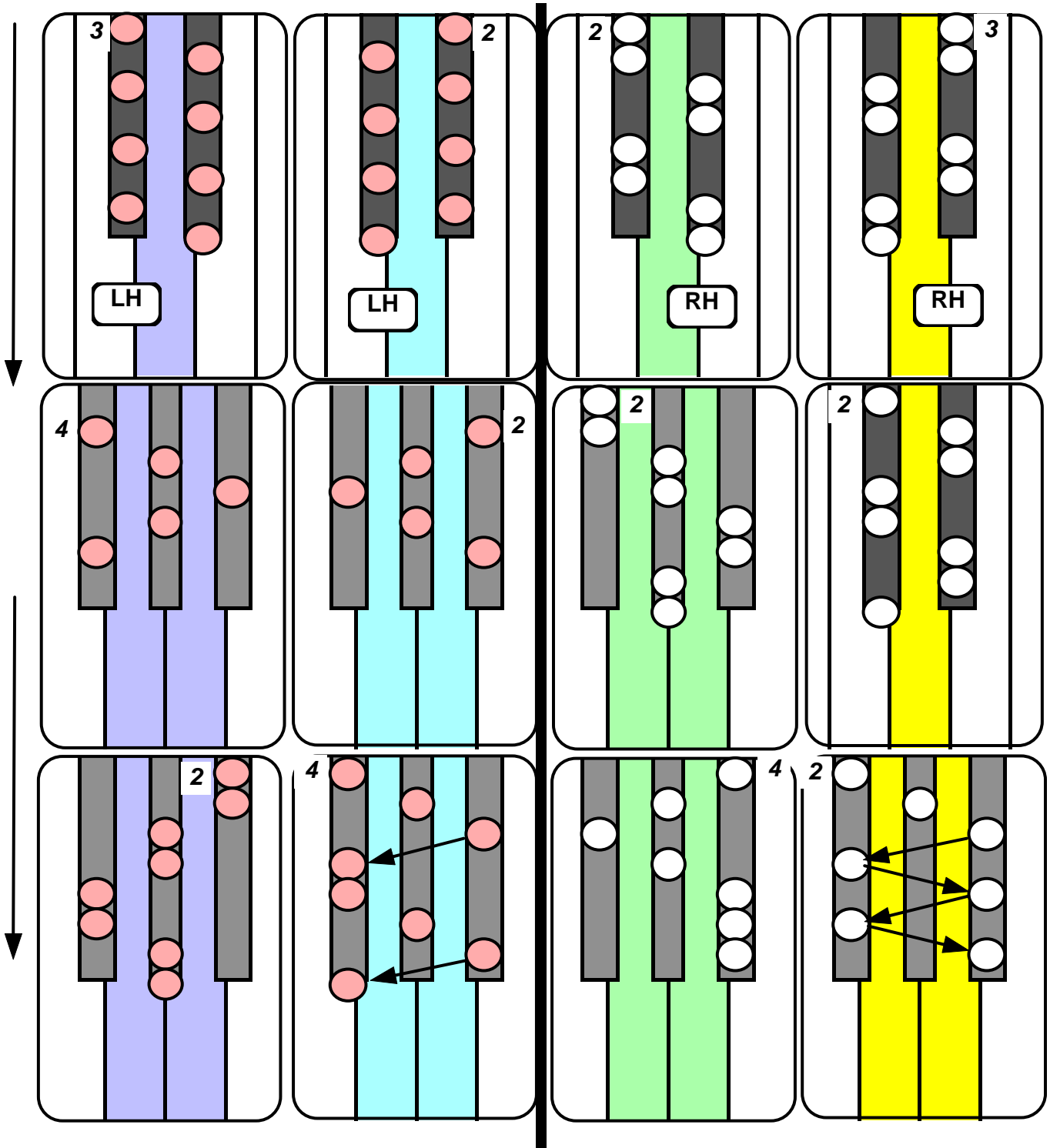
These are the same exercises shown on the previous page, that is, they **SOUND** the same. They look different because the diagrams of the keyboard on this page are less complete than the diagrams on the previous page. On the musical staff below, the vertical lines stand for the black keys and the spaces beside the lines stand for the white keys. Practice these exercises just like the previous exercises. Keep repeating each exercise pattern until you have played them several times (to get your exercise!).

In these exercises the red numbers are **FINGER NUMBERS**.  
The black numbers are the **ADDRESSES** of the black keys.



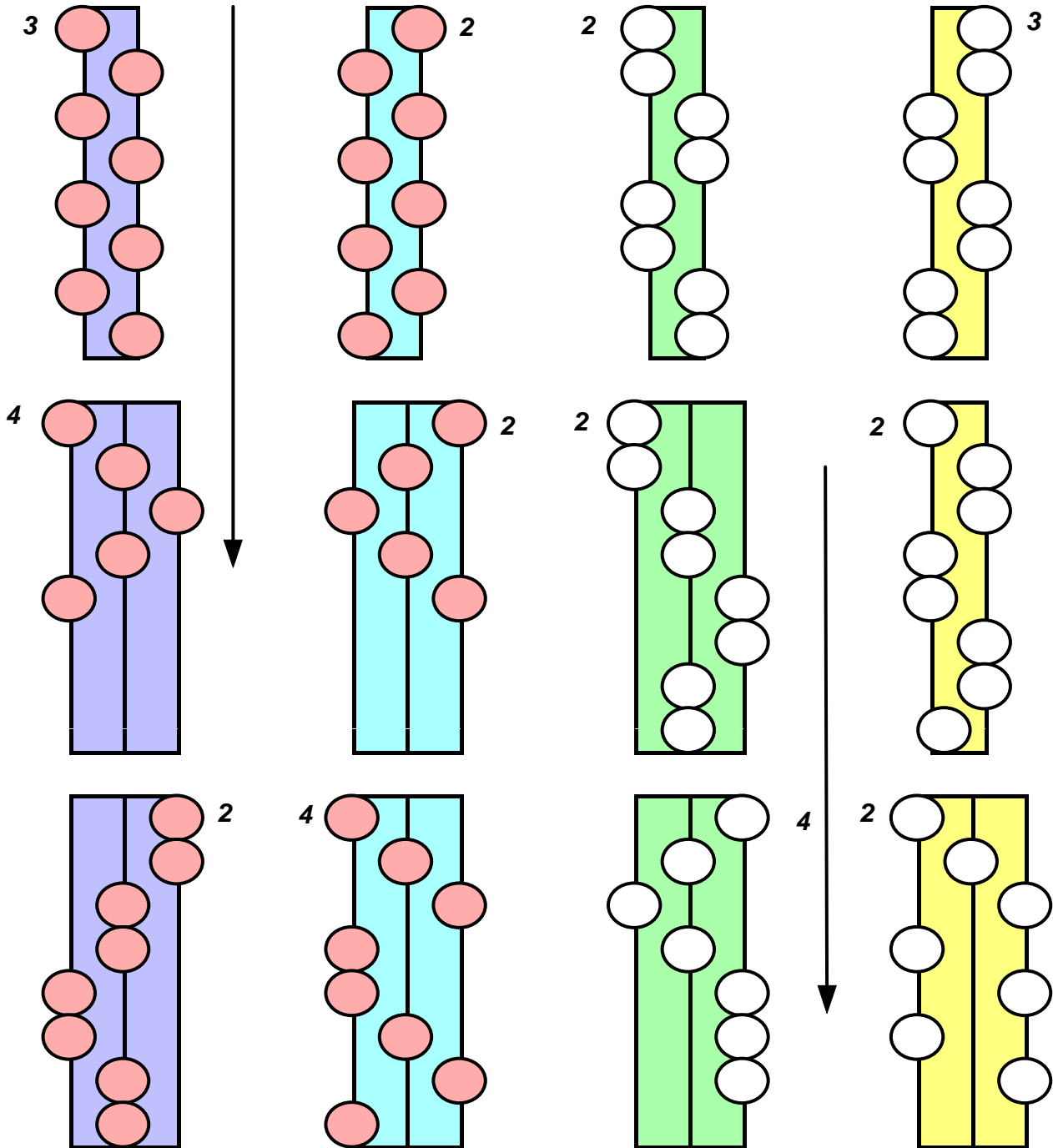
Be sure to notice that the vertical staff lines on these diagrams identify the **LOW** and **HIGH GROUPS** of the keyboard.

## Exercises on the Black Keys



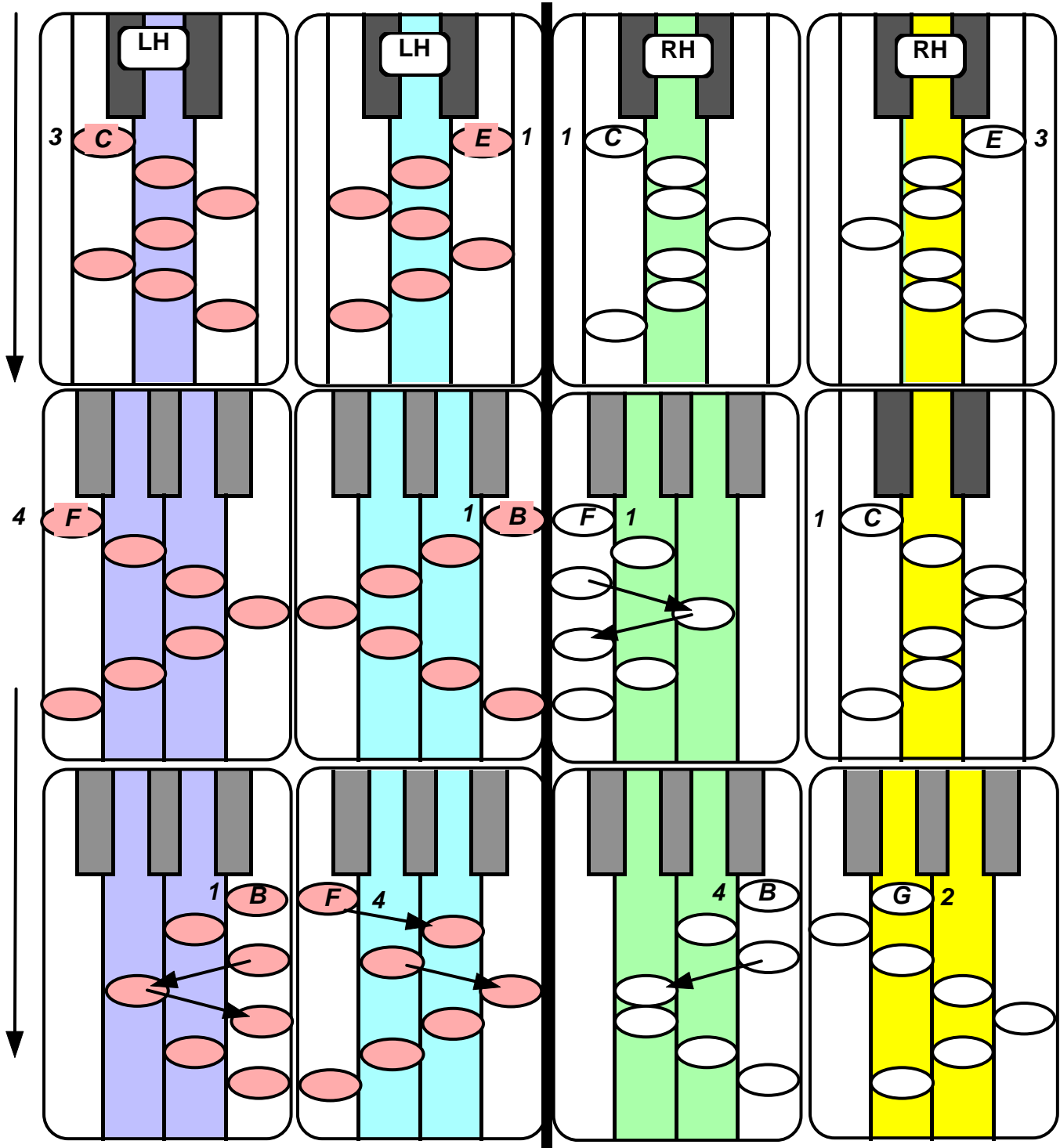
## Preparatory Exercises on the Black Keys of the Musical Staff

These exercises are played the same as those shown on the previous page. They look different because the diagrams below show parts of the musical staff on which music is written. On the staves below, the vertical lines stand for black keys. Practice these exercises just like the previous exercises. Keep repeating each exercise pattern until you have played them several times (to get your exercise!).



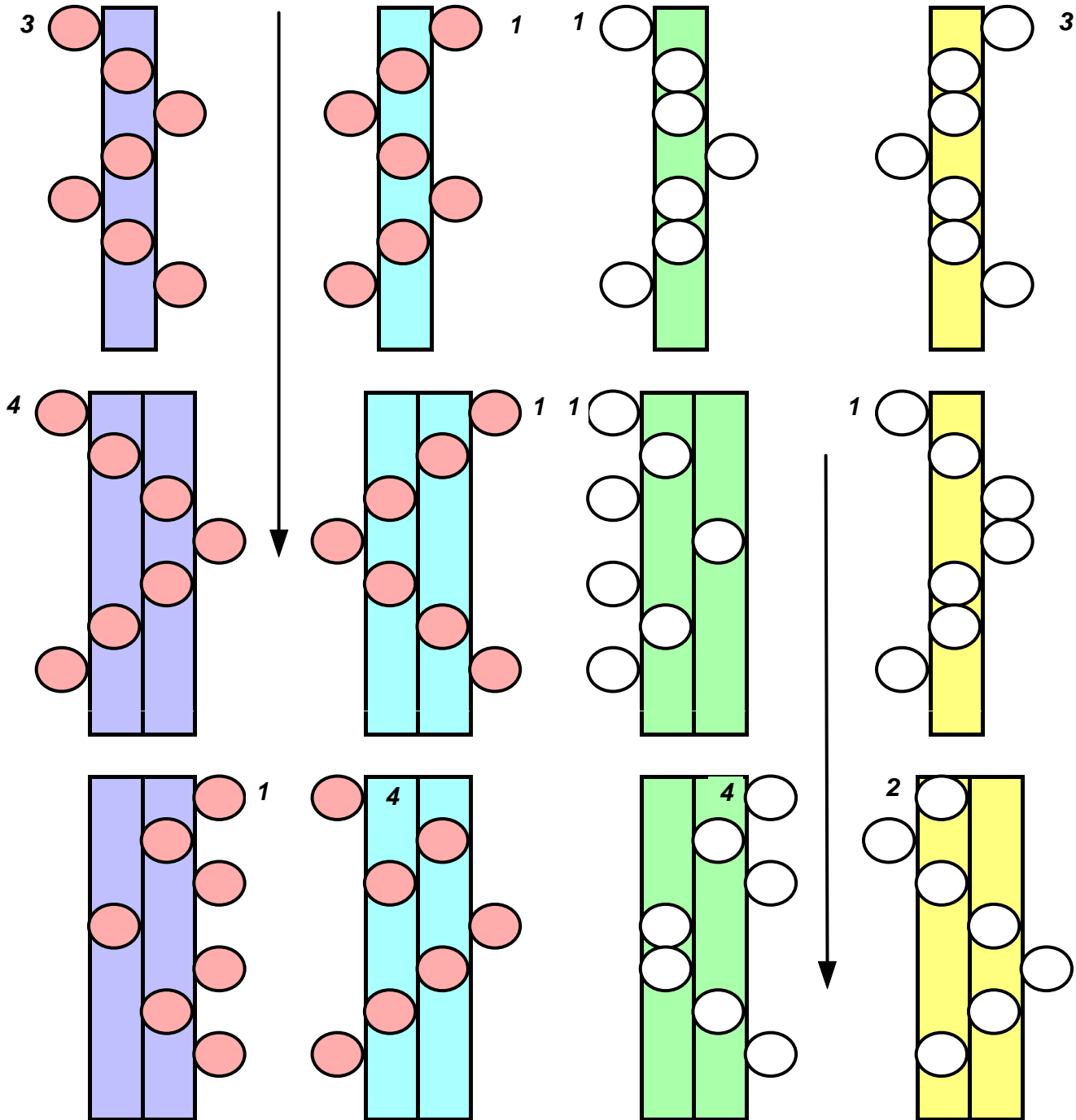
Be sure to notice that the vertical lines on these diagrams identify the **LOW** and **HIGH GROUPS** of the keyboard.

## Exercises on the White Keys



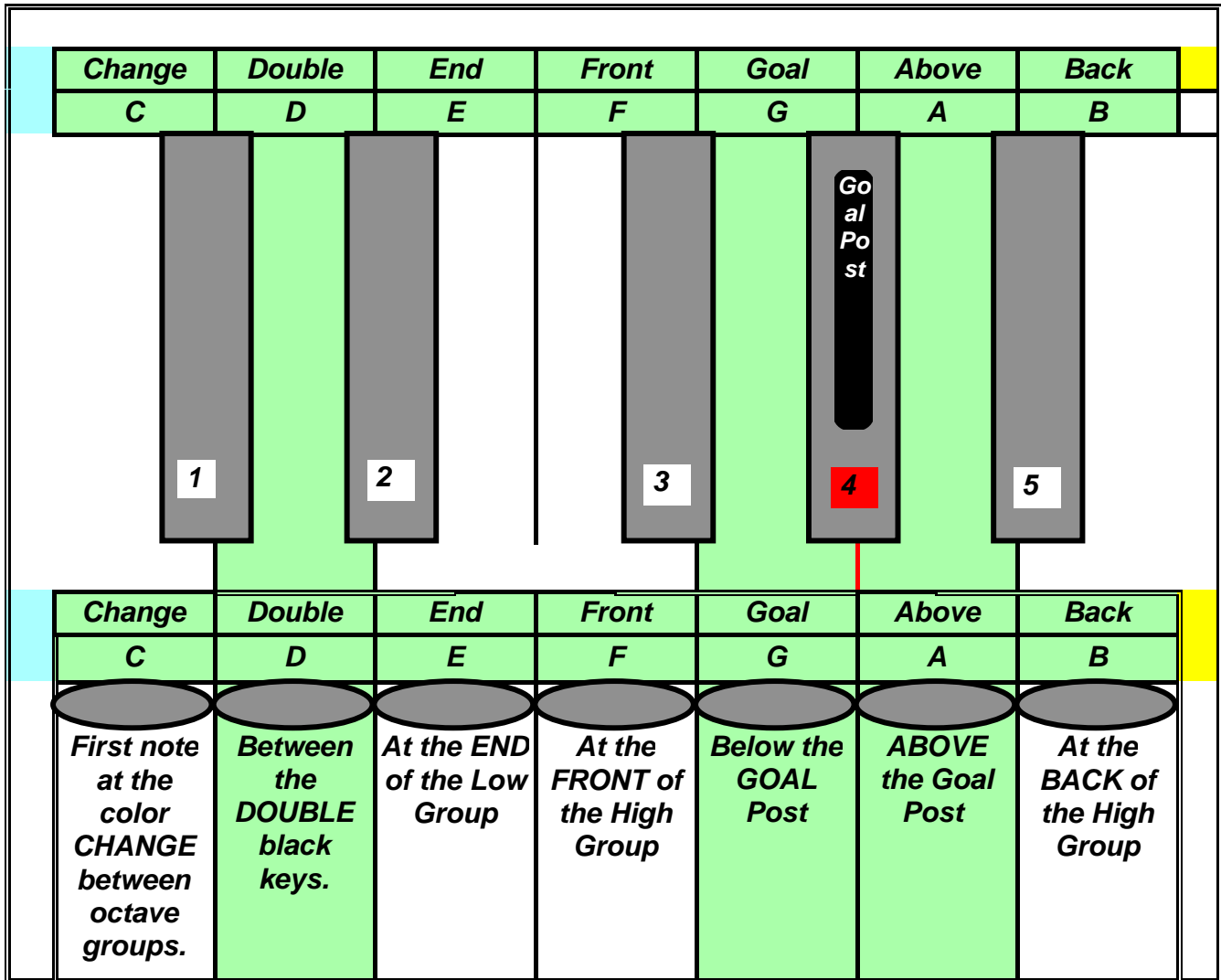
## Exercises on the White Keys

*These are the same exercises shown on the previous page, that is, they SOUND the same but don't show the piano keys. Practice them just like the previous exercises. Keep repeating each exercise pattern until you have played them several times (to get your exercise!).*



**Be sure to notice that the vertical lines on these diagrams identify the LOW and HIGH GROUPS of the keyboard.**

## Locations of the Key Names and Addresses on Keyboards and on Key Diagrams







































































































*The individual Capital Letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, are the traditional Names of the White Keys and their Notes.*

*The Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are the Addresses that we have assigned to the Black Keys and their Notes.*

## Worksheet for Practicing the Note Names and Addresses

In each empty box, fill in the name or address of the note on the small octave group staff to its left. The chart on the previous page can help you identify each note. Fill in the names from memory wherever you can. Also, practice playing the notes in each column. Play them in any octave group. (Copy 1)

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