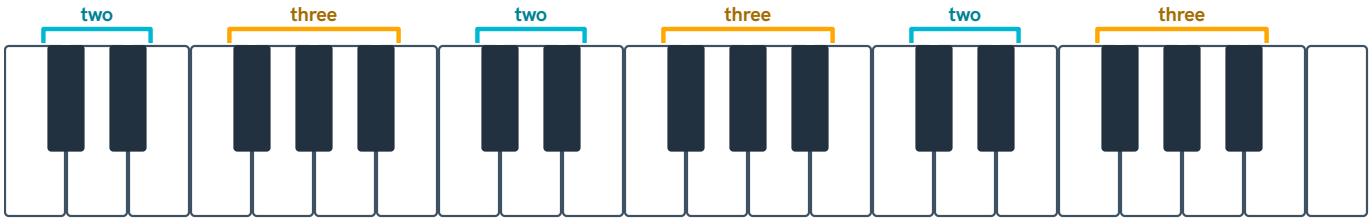
The piano keyboard

A piano has 88 keys but only **seven letter names**, A to G, used over and over.
The **black keys** show you where each letter lives.

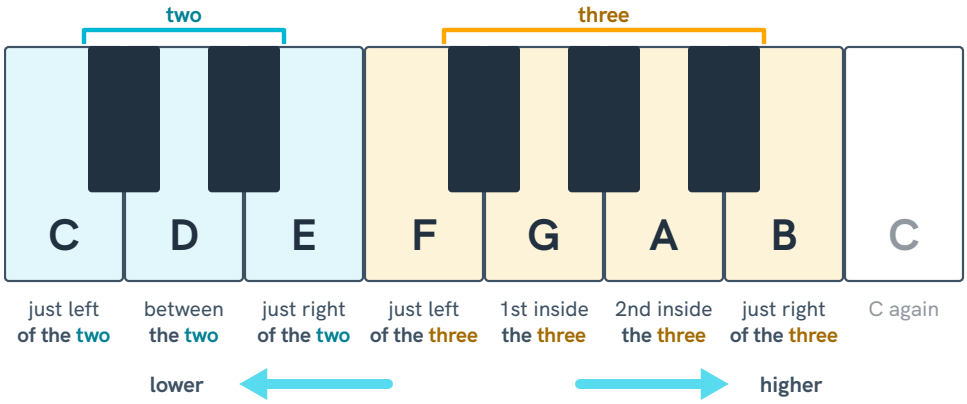
THE BLACK KEYS COME IN TWOS AND THREES

Look at the black keys first. They come in **groups of two** and **groups of three**, repeating all the way up the piano. (At the very bottom, one black key stands alone, between A and B.) These groups are your signposts: spot them at a glance, or find them by touch with your eyes closed.



SEVEN LETTERS, FOUND FROM THE BLACK KEYS

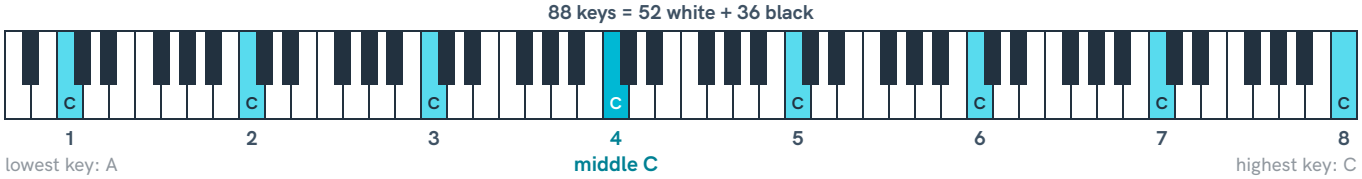
Seven letters name the white keys. Moving **right**, the letters go forward and the notes sound **higher**; after G comes A again. **C, D and E** sit around the two black keys; **F, G, A and B** sit around the three.



> **No black key between E–F and B–C:** these white keys are next-door neighbors, only a half step apart (Handout 353). The black keys borrow a neighbor's name plus a sharp or flat: C♯ and D♭ are the same key. One key, two names (Handouts 06 and 07).

EVERY C, AND MIDDLE C

C is the easiest key to spot: the white key just left of each group of two. A piano has eight Cs. Count up from the bottom: the **4th C**, near the middle of the keyboard, is **middle C**, where much of your first music begins.



Try it **Eyes closed:** find a group of two black keys by touch, then a group of three. **Eyes open:** play every F from the bottom of the piano to the top, then every G. Last, play the Cs from the bottom up, counting 1 to 8; then go back to number 4: middle C. Practice: **Exercise 51**. Next: where the keys are written — **Handout 351**.

© 2026 Tissimo. All rights reserved.