

Summer Practice Suggestions

- A few weeks of private lessons are best! (Summer is such a good time for lessons, because the student can really focus on learning skills instead of preparing performance music.)
- Go over to one of the music stores (Rick's Music World, Rick's in Cumberland, Axelrod, or online at JWPepper.com) and buy some of the easy movie theme books or pop tunes books for messing around. Some come with CDs for accompaniment.
- Have friends come over and that they play together. Perhaps even find some easy duet books.
- Play through old music or practice sight-reading by playing through old lesson book exercises that haven't been played in a while.
- Work through the lessons in the lesson book that haven't yet been done, as if a teacher had assigned them. Practice them for a week before moving on. (This isn't as good as having a teacher because no one is checking to see that new things are done correctly, but at least it provides some structure!)
- Practice the chromatic scale at every practice session!!
- Purchase some music software to mess with (some need midi keyboards, some don't - check specs!)
 - *Music Lessons* helps students get better at note reading & learning key signatures, and teaches about more advanced theory like creating chords & some ear training
 - Alfred's *Essentials of Music Theory* for the serious musician
 - *Smart Music Studio* has computer accompaniments to solos that actually follow the student's tempos!
 - *Band-In-A-Box* is great for practicing jazz improvisation with a backup band
 - *Making Music & Making More Music* for messing around with composing for students who haven't done any composing (see comments below.)
 - *Music Ace & Professor Piccolo* are both for the younger set, but I find that middle school kids enjoy and learn from them, too.

There are many music writing programs if you like to compose and want to be able to write out music so it looks professional. You can start with the basic freebie from Coda, *FinaleNotePad* or go right to one of their programs with more bells and whistles. We use *PrintMusic* at school. *Sibelius* is another excellent program & very intuitive (Finale is the industry standard & what I use, but can be difficult).