

Beginner *String Ensemble* Series

By Loreta Fin

VIOLA
BOOK 1



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MESSAGE FOR STRING TEACHERS

For many years, I have been trialing, testing and tweaking this 1st year beginner method.

- It is a **sequential** learning method
- It supports the **Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)** *General Capabilities for Instrumental Music*
- It is aligned with the **Queensland Instrumental Music Curriculum, 2016**, Department of Education and Training - **Level 1: 3 Dimensions and 10 Curriculum Objectives**
- It is designed for use in **mixed group classes** (I have a new 60+ mixed string class every year)
- It can also be used for **individual tuition**: Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass - each book stands alone.
- It is ideal for use in **Years 2 to 3** (7-9 yr olds), unlike other methods, which are aimed at 10+ year olds.
- Print is clear and pages are not too busy
- Instructions are limited, but are clear and repetitive.
- Teachers can choose to add as much or as little information as they like.
- Works alongside most classroom music programs which use Kodaly or Orff-based pedagogy.

BOOK 1 is designed to be taught mostly aurally, no staff-reading is used.

There is lots of singing: letter names, showing the fingers, clapping rhythms and tone-names.

It gets the students playing tunes almost straight away. All pieces are based on Chords I, IV and V, so making up accompaniments on piano or guitar is very easy. Often, a simple keyboard or digital "drum beat" can be used in class, freeing the teacher to get around the class. It also means NO MUSIC STANDS and FEW CHAIRS, as Violins/Violas can stand while playing, and sit cross-legged, to do the singing. The book is used as a reference for home practice. It also means the mixed class can work together, free of "clef" issues in this crucial "setting up" phase. The letters are the same for all instruments!

A suggested guideline for the first year might be:

SEMESTER 1:

Term 1 - usually **pizzicato only** to be used, up to page 15, singing DEF#/ ABC# - just in time for Easter.

Term 2 - introduces the bow and D Major Scale. Once the left hand has been set up, the bow can be added and the Term 1 tunes are easily played. Then, there are lots of new and well-known tunes.

BOOK 2 can be used as an individual tutor book for older students or it goes straight on from Book 1.

SEMESTER 2: Terms 3 and 4

Literacy: After Book 1, the students are already very familiar with:

- What is the **name** of the note?
- **How many fingers** do I use?
- **Which string** is it on?

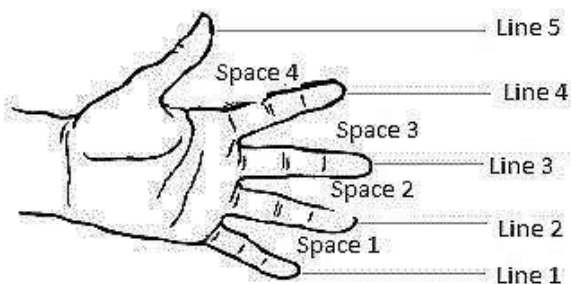
All that is left is: **What does it LOOK LIKE?** Now the **Note-Reading is so easy!**

Using the **Hand Staff** is a fabulous way to be able to "talk in 3 clefs" at once.

I RECOMMEND YOU

GET THE STUDENTS USED TO COUNTING UP FROM LINE 1 TO 5 AND FROM SPACE 1 TO 4, AS PER THE DIAGRAM

Then, students can all sing and read the notes simultaneously on their Hand Staff, in their own clef



Book 2 uses staff reading, with exercises and original tunes. It mainly focuses on the common strings, but all strings are introduced by the end of the book. Various notes, rests, terms, signs and symbols are explained.

I hope you and your students enjoy using this method and I hope it helps to make your job easier.

Dear String Player,

You are about to start an exciting journey, which will teach you many things you didn't know before. The most important thing is to make music and have fun. Playing an instrument is something you can enjoy for the rest of your life, no matter what you do when you finish school. You will learn how to listen carefully, how to play with others in a string orchestra, and how to work towards improving each week.

Remember, **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**. It is much better to do a little bit each day, rather than a lot just once a week. Ten minutes a day for 5 days a week is plenty to begin with, and by the end of the year, you should be able to manage 15 or 20 minutes a day.

Loreta Fin

**Have fun and
Happy String Playing !**



Taking Care Of Your Viola - *notes for students and parents*

- **HANDLE YOUR VIOLA WITH CARE!** It is very **FRAGILE**, so repairs can be expensive.
- Do not let anyone else play with your viola. It is not a toy.
- Always keep your instrument safe in the case when you are not playing it. **Before you pick up your case, make sure the latches are closed.**
- Make sure you remove your shoulder pad before putting your viola away. The lid of your case should close easily without pushing it down.
- Keep your viola clean! After playing, wipe off the rosin dust, smudges, fingerprints, etc., with a soft clean cloth.
- Always wash your hands before playing your viola.
- Never leave your instrument in a car on a hot day.
- If a string breaks, or your bridge is leaning over, take it to your teacher. If the bridge breaks or there are any cracks or splits, they must be repaired by a professional repairer.

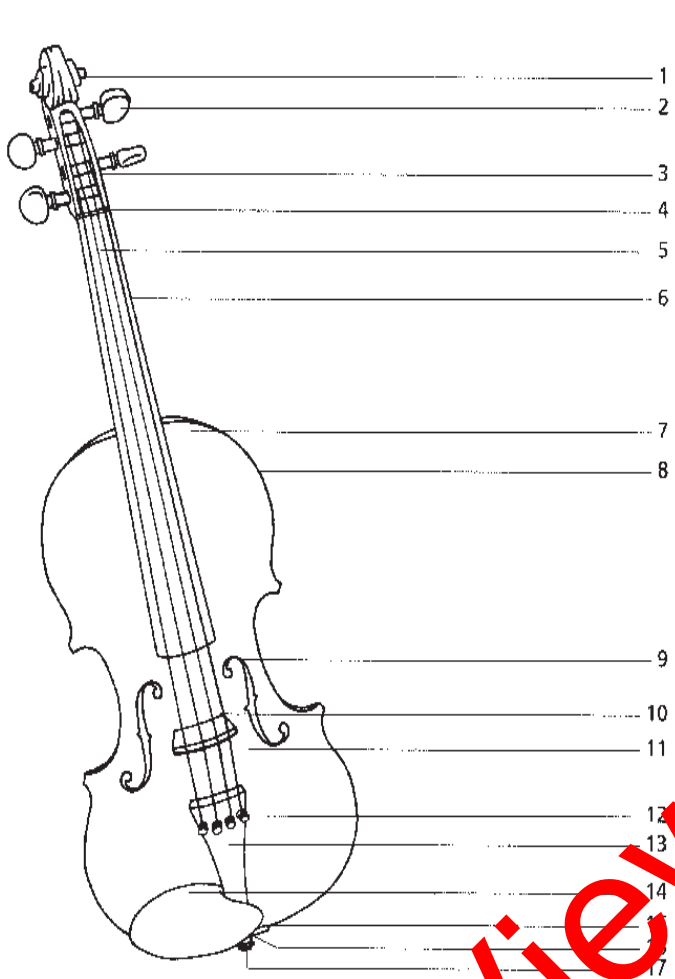
Taking Care Of Your Bow

- **HANDLE YOUR BOW WITH CARE!** Your bow can easily be broken if you drop it or step on it, etc.
- Keep your bow clean! Wash your hands before playing.
- Never touch the bow hair. Your bow will not work if it is dirty.
- Resin your bow hair regularly.

- **Remember -** To tighten the bow hair - turn the tension screw to the right (clockwise)
To loosen the bow hair - turn the tension screw to the left (anticlockwise)
SAY: Right to Tighten - Left to Loosen
Always loosen your bow before putting it away



Parts Of Your Viola



1. Scroll
2. Peg
3. Peg Box
4. Nut
5. Fingerboard
6. Neck
7. Top
8. Ribs
9. F Hole
10. Bridge
11. Sound Post (inside)
12. Fine Tuner
13. Tailpiece
14. Chin Rest (jaw rest)
15. Saddle
16. Tail Gut
17. Button

Parts Of Your Bow



1. Tip/Point
2. Stick
3. Hair
4. Winding
5. Ferrule
6. Frog/Nut
7. Screw

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The String Family

The violin, viola, cello and double bass are all part of the STRING FAMILY.

- Each instrument has 4 strings.
- These are called OPEN STRINGS.
- If we put the fingers of the **LEFT** hand on the strings, we can play different notes.

Holding Up The Viola

- With the back of the viola facing you (not the bridge), hold the left curved side near the neck (not the neck itself).
- Carefully lift the viola and rest it on your left shoulder.
- Turn your head to the left, as if you were looking at something over to the left.
- Try not to lean over or stretch your neck too far - just turn your head.
- Rest your left jaw in the chin rest, but don't hunch your shoulders. Breathe out and relax.
- Your teacher will check your shoulder pad or chin rest if it is uncomfortable.

Making a Sound

- We can use the **BOW** on the strings with our **RIGHT** hand to make a sound.
- We can also pluck the strings with our **RIGHT** hand to make a sound- **THIS IS CALLED PIZZICATO.**
- We never do it the other way around, even if we are **LEFT** handed.
- **TO GET READY FOR PIZZICATO, WE SAY- "WATER PISTOL AND LETTER C"**
- **AT THE SAME TIME SHAPE YOUR RIGHT HAND LIKE A WATER PISTOL AND THEN LIKE THE LETTER C.**

The Open Strings

Let's learn the names of the OPEN STRINGS.

Violin and Bass Open Strings

- The thinnest string on the violin is called E.
- The thickest string on the double bass is called E too.
- We can remember the order of the strings by saying -
Elephants Are Dirty Grubs
- Pluck the Strings as you say this 5 times.
- Violins and basses, pluck each open string 4 times, starting from the E string.

Viola and Cello Open Strings

- The thinnest string on the viola and cello is called A.
- We can remember the order of the strings by saying -
All Dogs Go Crazy
- Pluck the Strings as you say this 5 times.
- Violas and celli, start from the A string and go down
- Now start from the C string and go up

Play the “Name Game” using the OPEN STRINGS

Start on A String and play the rhythm of your name:

e.g. If your name was Mary Poppins this is how it would sound.

A A A A
MA-RY POP-PINS

D D D D
MA-RY POP-PINS

G G G G
MA-RY POP-PINS

C C C C
MA-RY POP-PINS

- **Now try your name!**
- **Also try plucking the names of your family and friends!**

Quiz:

What is it called when we pluck the string? _____

Which hand holds the violin or viola or cello or bass? _____

Which hand holds the bow? _____

Which hand does pizzicato? _____

Name the Four Open Strings on your instrument _____

Should I ever leave my instrument
in the car or out in the sun? _____

Should I leave my bow wound up when I pack it away? _____

Which instruments have a C String? _____

Which instruments have an E String? _____

Do all Stringed instruments have a G, D and A String? _____

The Crotchet, the Crotchet Rest and the Repeat Sign

A crotchet looks like this  You may also know it as *ta*.

We will give one count to each crotchet.

Draw a line of crotchets _____

This is a crotchet rest  We will be silent for one count.

You may also know it as *za*.

Draw a line of crotchet rests _____

This is a repeat sign :||

It means to go back to the beginning and play it again.

Let's do some open string exercises!

- Use PIZZICATO - Remember WATER PISTOL and LETTER C
- Pluck gently with the side of your pointer finger.
Don't use your fingernail!
- Every note in these exercises is a CROTCHET,
and will have one count.

1. D D D D | A A A A | D D D D | G G G G :||

2. G G G G | D D D D | A A D D | G G G G :||

3. D A D A | D D D D | D A D A | D D D D :||

4. A A D D | G D G D | A A D A | D G D D :||