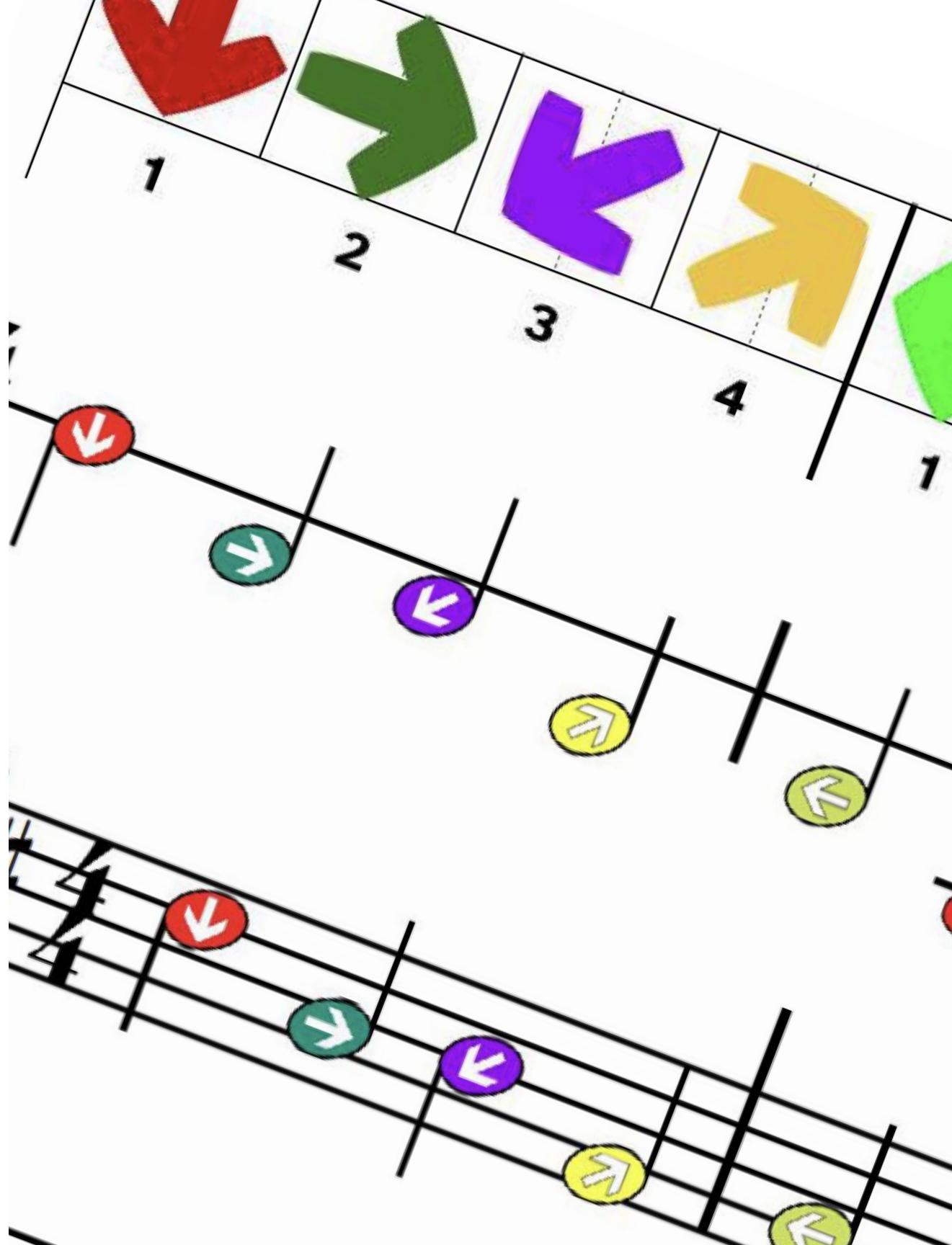
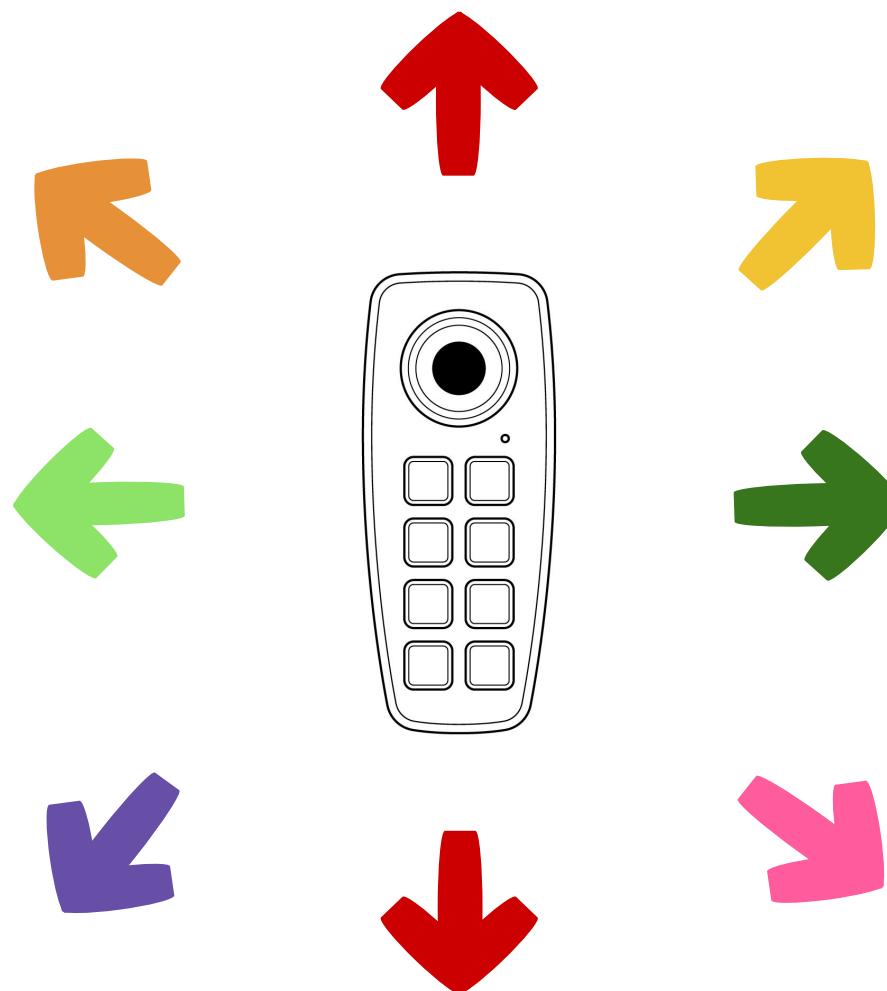


Arrownotes Your Quick Start Guide

Everything you need to start reading and playing music with Arrownotes – fast, inclusive, and classroom-ready.



Arrownotes simplified notation.



Creative Confidence

Arrownotes is a vibrant, accessible way to start reading and writing music – for teachers and students alike. Each scale degree maps to a coloured arrow, helping beginners and diverse learners quickly see and remember note relationships.

These simple visual cues build confidence, creativity, and collaboration from the first lesson by reducing reliance on traditional notation.

Scale up to traditional notation

Arrownotes progresses across three levels that gradually introduce traditional notation themes, so every arrow and colour links cleanly to standard note names, rhythms, and staves.

By Level 3, learners can read conventional scores with confidence – seamlessly connected to the wider music world.

Meet Arrownotes



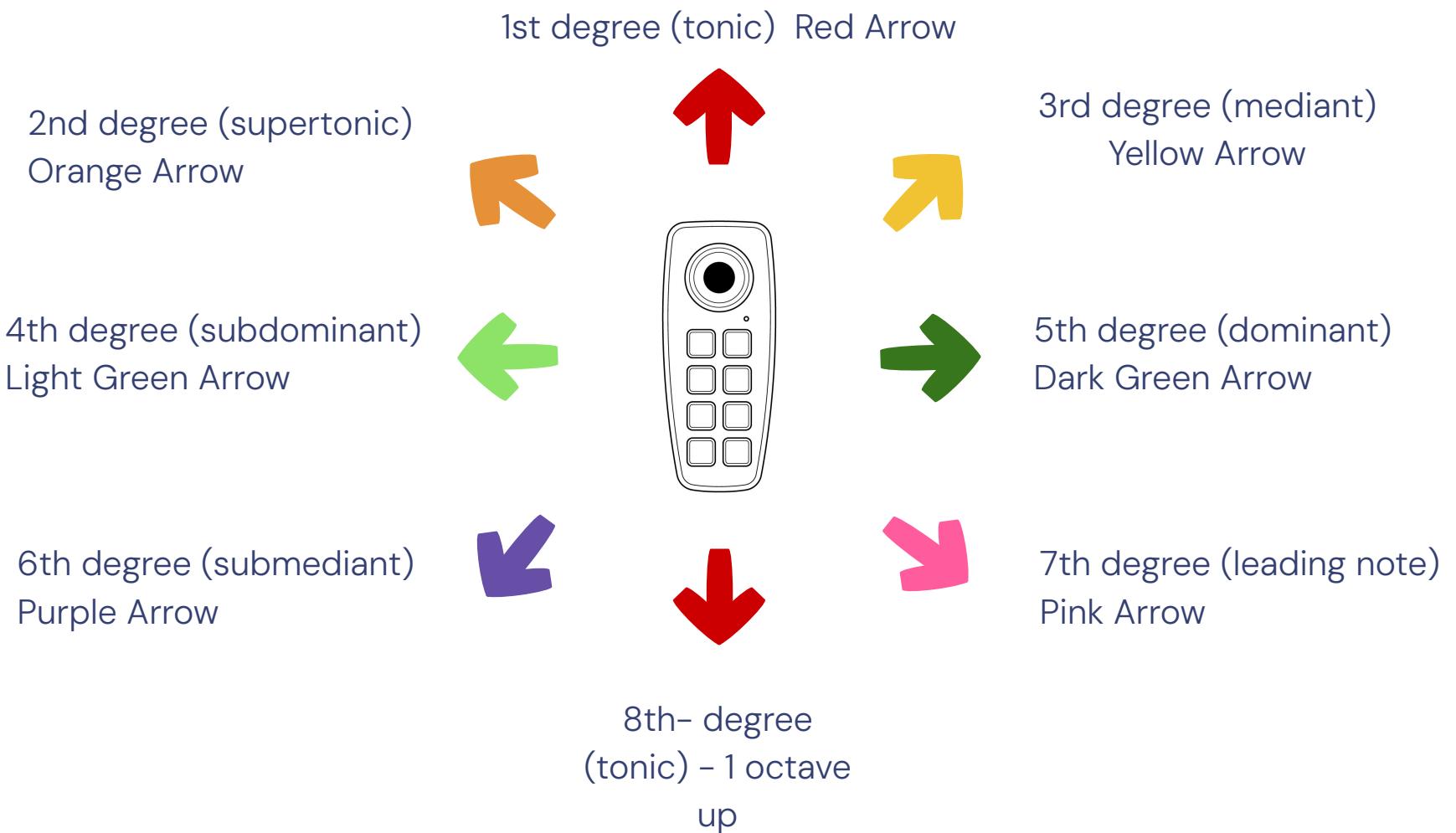
Direction = Note

Each arrow points to a note of the scale. In C major, \uparrow is C, \nwarrow is D, \nearrow is E, \leftarrow is F, \rightarrow is G, \swarrow is A, \downarrow is B, \downarrow is C (octave).



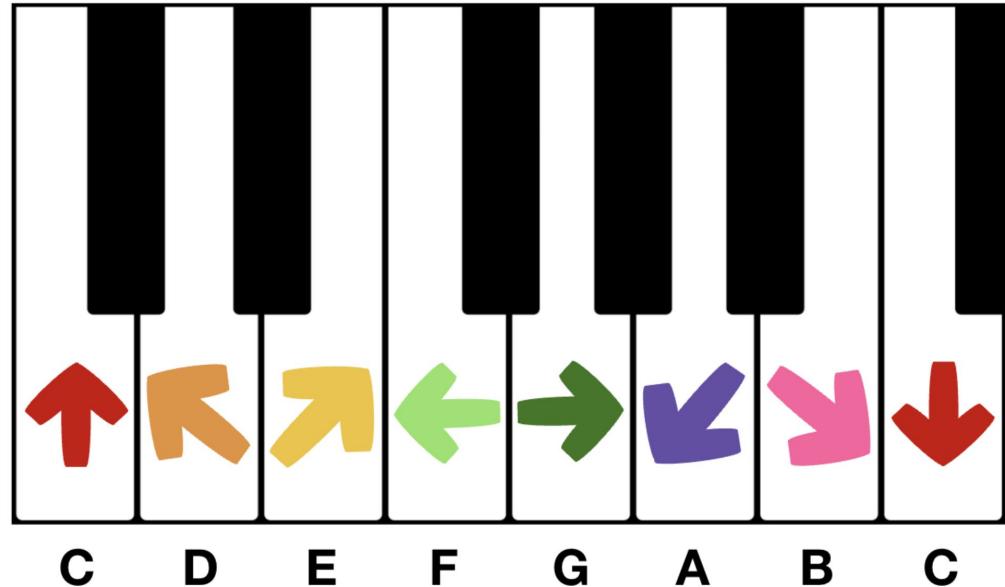
Colour Cues

Colours always match directions to reduce cognitive load – use direction, colour, or note name interchangeably.



- ⓘ For anyone working in education – the colours match chroma notes so you can use Boomwhackers or any other tuned percussion too.

Level 1 Focus



- ⓘ There are 3 levels in Arrownotes but we will focus on level 1. We can represent any note value in any scale, along with expression and dynamics in all 3 levels. They are in place to give Arrownotes users a pathway to traditional notation should they wish to learn new instruments. It also allows for traditional instrumentalists to collaborate with CMPSR players.

We read pitch by arrows and colours. The picture at the top shows how the directions and colours relate to the notes in a C major scale on the keyboard.

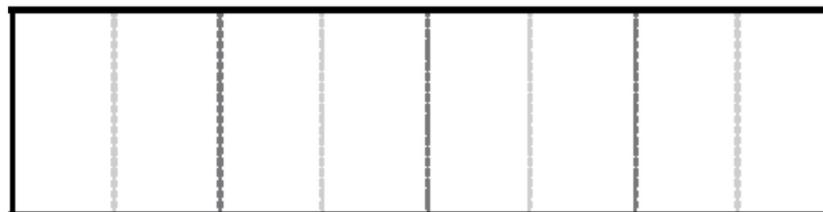
Can you play the notes in the picture below? They are from a well known children's nursery rhyme so the timing will become clear.

Feel the Beat Grid

Timing is shown by blocks on a simple 4/4 grid.

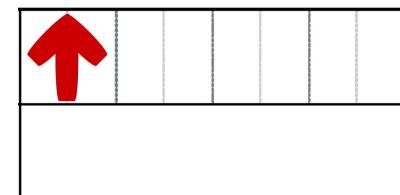
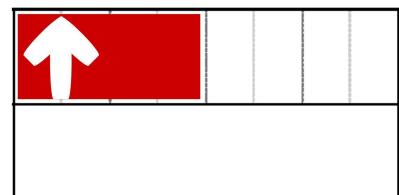
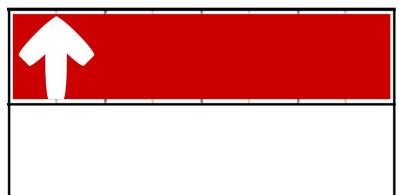
1. Simple Grid

Each beat is represented by a square. The number of squares in each bar shows the number of beats. This example is in 4/4



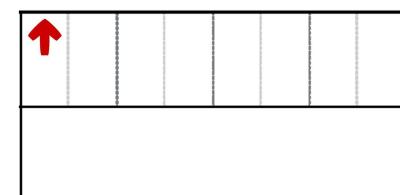
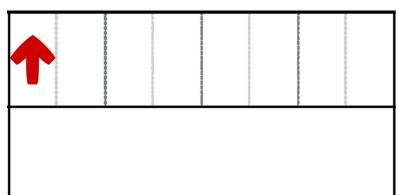
3. Every Note Value

On this grid we can show all note values from whole bars (Semibreve) down to 1/16 notes (quavers).



3. Play Along

Count a steady "1-2-3-4". Start at ~80 BPM. Clap first, then play all notes on ↑ Red C.



- ⓘ If you stumble, halve the tempo. Rests are empty blocks; triplets fit three notes in the time of two (use sparingly at Level 1).

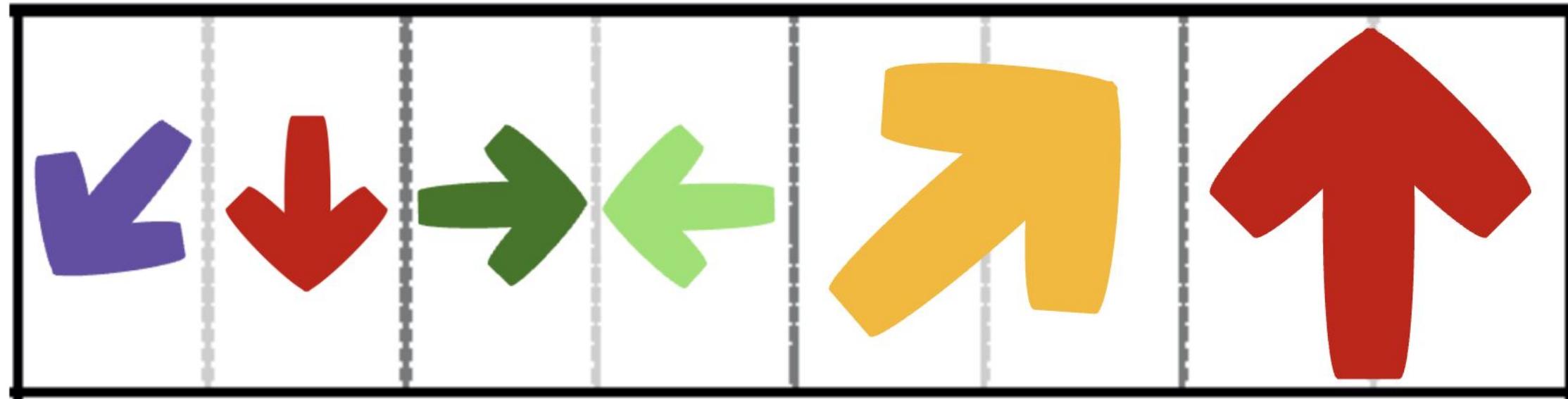
First Melodies

By combining note timing and note direction we can play melodies.



Time to Play

- 1) Take a simple 2-bar Arrownotes line.
- 2) Count in "1-2-3-4" and point as you play.



Create with U-Compose

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

U Compose is an editable document that allows you to create your own Arrownotes notation.

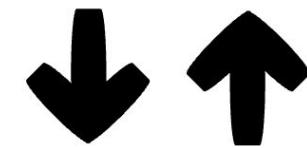
You can use the grid, or start without, giving you and your students complete creative freedom with composition.

All note values are ready and able to be copied into your new composition.

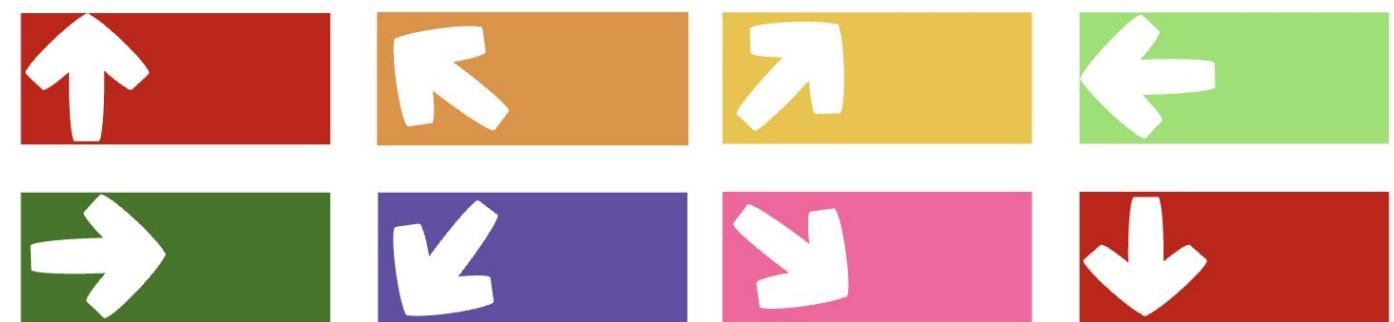
For Notes 1 beat or shorter



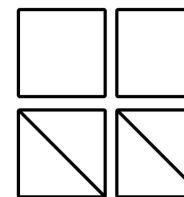
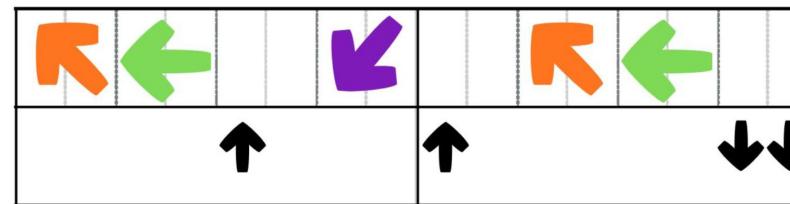
For Octave Changes



For Notes longer than 1 beat (copy the arrow and rectangle)



Octaves, Chords, and Accidentals



- 1. Octaves (Go Higher/Lower)**
Match the starting-octave colour on the score to your device. When you see a black \uparrow/\downarrow arrow under the bar, move one octave up/down exactly on that beat and keep playing.
- 2. Pad States (Sustain, Chords, Extensions, Inversions)**
Arrownotes shows pad states beneath the score (centre 4 pads on CMPSR / top 4 on Swipe). A slash = OFF, no slash = ON. Extension and inversion pads show colours to indicate the type.
- 3. One-Note Accidental**
CMPSR: press both octave buttons together—the LEDs turn white; your next single note/chord is flattened by one semitone, then auto-returns.
Swipe: press the middle Octave button (between +/-) to trigger a single-note accidental (-1 semitone), then auto-returns.

Put It Together (Short Performance)

This Arrownotes piece has four parts, each with its own instrument sound and starting octave. Choose a single part to play solo, or team up with friends and layer the parts for a fuller ensemble. Follow the arrows/colours, keep a steady 1–2–3–4 count, and shift octaves exactly where marked.

The image shows four staves of Arrownotes music, each representing a different instrument part. The staves are arranged vertically, with each part having its own unique color scheme and starting octave. The music is divided into measures by vertical lines, and each measure is numbered 1 through 4. The Arrownotes indicate the direction and timing of notes, and the octaves are marked with small boxes at the beginning of each measure.

Xylophone

Piano

Stacc Cello

Bass

Use with CMPSR & Swipe

Arrownotes works identically across CMPSR and Swipe. Add the Arrownotes overlay to CMPSR (use the notch to align). In Swipe, open Settings → CMPSR Settings for Player Type and pad access.



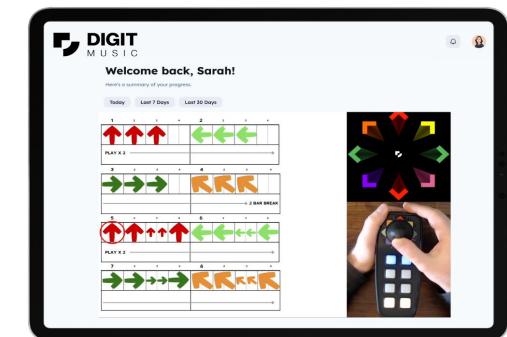
Troubleshooting

It sounds wrong: Re-check key = C major and the starting octave colour.

I can't keep time: Drop to 60–70 BPM; clap first, then play.

Accidental seems stuck: It isn't – only the very next note is flattened. You may be hearing sustain/chord colouring the sound (Pad 3).

Colours don't work for me: Use directions or degrees; colours are a helpful extra, not required.



- ⓘ Get more Arrownotes scores and resources at <https://www.digitmusic.co.uk/backstage>