



**KEYBOARD
ASSOCIATION**
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

40 PIECE Challenge

The 40 Piece Challenge!

Calling all teachers! Join hundreds of other teachers around Australia who have found success with the *40 Piece Challenge*, with the support of the ACT Keyboard Association. Together we can help students to enjoy playing piano even more - increasing their motivation to practice, improving their sight reading skills, broadening their repertoire and building skills for improved music exam results.

Register with the ACT Keyboard Association at info@actka.org to receive beautiful certificates for your students who succeed in learning 40 new pieces this year!

Where to Begin

Mix up the degree of difficulty of the pieces you assign to your students.

If your Grade 5 student learned 7 pieces last year, there is no way that they are capable of learning 40 Grade 5 pieces this year. Assign 1 or 2 Grade 5 pieces at the start of the year, but also assign repertoire that is Grade 3 standard, Grade 2 standard, Grade 1 standard! 40 pieces a year means in practice just over 1 new piece every teaching week - this won't be possible unless you have an appropriate mix of degrees of difficulty in the repertoire.

Start with a slew of material.

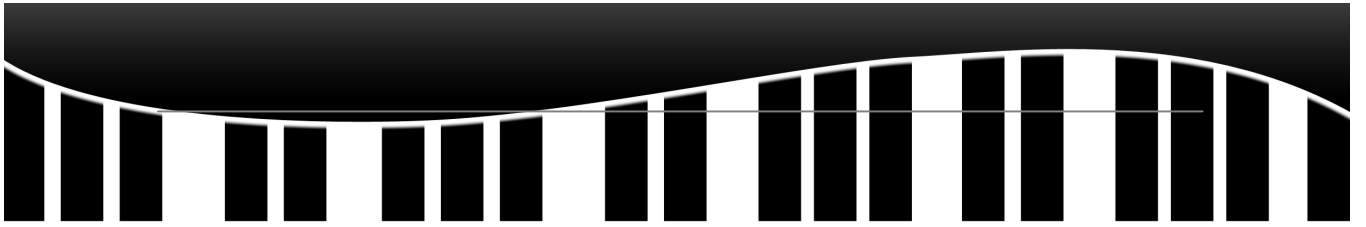
Let's stick with our hypothetical Grade 5 student. At the start of term 1, assign two Grade 5 standard pieces (meeting your student's expectations) but also give a couple of pieces from Grade 1 or Preliminary, along with another at Grade 2 or 3 standard. You'll be assigning another two pieces the next week (probably both at the Grade 1 end of the spectrum), and you need things to be moving right from the start.

Explain directly and clearly what your expectations are regarding each piece...

...particularly in regard to time frames. For a piece of music that's 4 or more grades below their current exam-standard, tell students they have one week to learn the piece, two weeks if there's some catastrophe like a house fire. Make it understood that these pieces are not supposed to take a whole term to master, that the whole point is to learn these easier pieces as quickly as possible and move on.

Expect a high level of achievement with each piece.

Near enough is good enough, but near enough means at tempo and with flow and with communicative intent, not a bald reading-through without any sense of what the music means. So performances need dynamics, articulation, voicing and balance, used of pedal (for piano students) and so forth! If this seems too big an ask you need to be looking at easier material, not at lowering your standards.



*The 40 Piece Challenge was created by Elissa Milne (Sydney) with the support of Hal Leonard Australia.
The ACT Keyboard Association is proud to support teachers in the Canberra region with this fantastic initiative.*