

Playing-first piano methods

Where five approaches place each skill — and what reading becomes

THE QUESTION THIS MAP ASKS

What does reading *become*, when the student can already play the piece before they see the page?

All five rest on the same premise: **a student who reaches notation already holding repertoire and a working musical vocabulary meets it in a more grounded state.** What differs is *when* that grounding is built, *how much* of it, and *what notation is* for once it arrives. **Five answers to one question — not a ranking, and not a spectrum.**

STREAMS
what each method
cultivates

- Improvising
- Playing by ear
- Singing & movement
- Composing / arranging
- Ensemble / accompanying

Reading —
where it sits
the answer to the question above

● signature ◐ developed ○ light — deferred / minimal

FRAMEWORK	METHOD	METHOD	METHOD	METHOD
No Book Beginners Tim Topham · adopted onto an existing practice	Simply Music Neil Moore · shape & pattern, then create	Suzuki ear + fixed graded canon	Music Moves / MLT Gordon → Lowe · audiation, sing + move	Yamaha (YMES) Yamaha Music Foundation · group class, fixed-do solfège
Improvising	◐	—	●	◐
Playing by ear	◐	●	●	●
Singing & movement	○	◐	●	●
Composing / arranging	◐	—	◐	●
Ensemble / accompanying	◐	◐	○	●
Deferred, then integrated flexibly	Deferred — resequenced, not withheld	Deferred — ear first, then notation	Deferred — after audiation	Integrated, not deferred

Scored *within* a method, not across them — more ● is not a more complete method.