



Penelope Roskell's Essential Piano Technique



Useful Information for Parents

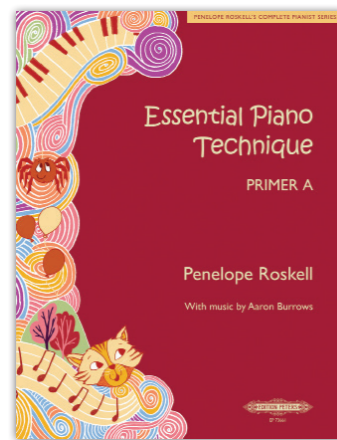


Essential Piano Technique: An Overview

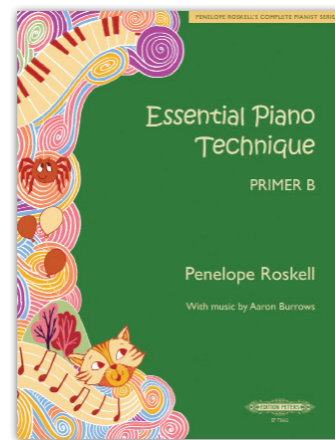
The **Essential Piano Technique** books aim to help your child become an independent, creative, well-rounded musician. There are five books in the series, guiding a pianist from beginner to mid-intermediate level.

The books reflect current research into best practice in piano teaching and learning. The aim is to teach strong technical foundations in a creative and fun way which will prepare your child for a lifetime of enjoyable music-making.

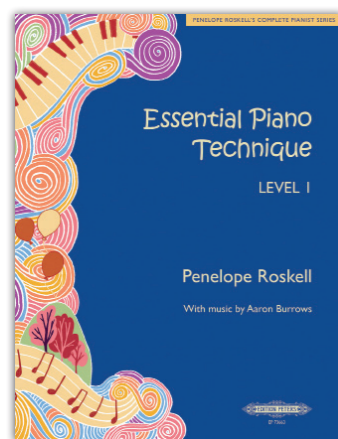
We offer a very broad approach to 'technique' – which includes all the skills a young musician needs to master the piano and play expressively. The techniques are taught in a logical, step-by-step progression and are fully integrated with music throughout. The engaging pieces will give your child a rich experience of a wide range of music.



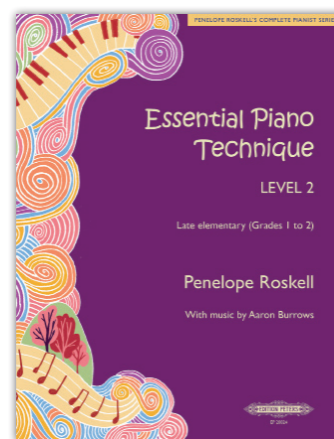
Primer A
*Beginner level,
from the first lesson*



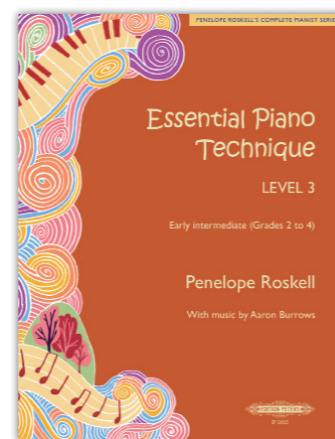
Primer B
*Early elementary
(to Initial level)*



Level 1
*Elementary
(Initial level to Grade 1)*



Level 2
*Late elementary
(Grades 1 to 2)*



Level 3
*Early intermediate
(Grades 2 to 4)*

Why do these books not start with the traditional 'middle C approach'?

If you learnt piano yourself as a child, you may have started just playing the notes around the middle register of the keyboard, with both thumbs playing on middle C. Research has shown that this approach is far from ideal. It encourages tight shoulders, pulled-in elbows and a twisted hand position, which can all lead to multiple problems later on, including tension and even playing-related injuries. Playing around the whole keyboard with the 'bobbing touch' will develop freedom of movement and a better quality of sound from the first lessons.

How will my child learn to read music?

In the **Essential Piano Technique** books, the student follows a pattern-based learning approach. Instead of focusing on naming each note individually, pianists learn to recognise patterns and play groups of notes within one gesture. This approach builds confidence, not only in note-reading, but eventually also in sightreading and memorising more complex pieces.

The books are technique and repertoire books. They are not intended to cover all aspects of theory and note-learning. Your teacher may choose to supplement these with a method book, or with material of their own. The books have been designed to work effectively alongside most modern method books.

Will these books prepare my child for piano exams?

The series has been designed to prepare students thoroughly for UK and international exams. Your teacher will be able to advise whether exams are the best way forward for your child and when they are ready to take an exam. Some teachers prefer to avoid the exam system altogether and instead may offer, for instance, the opportunity to perform in an informal concert.

Students who rush too quickly through the exam system often miss out on developing crucial musical and technical skills. After taking an exam, students benefit from spending time exploring new pieces and honing all the skills they will need for the next level. With all the required skills in place, they will then be able to learn their new exam pieces quickly and with confidence.

Won't this take longer than the traditional methods?

Teachers and parents are surprised by how quickly a child can progress with this approach. A child who spends a little more time getting all the fundamentals right at the beginning will also avoid spending a lot of time and effort correcting bad habits later on.

My child has special needs – can they use these books?

Teachers find these books suitable for most students with special needs. For instance, as the activities are very varied, the books appeal to students who find it challenging to sit still and focus on one activity for a long time. Do talk with your teacher about how best they can adapt the material to suit the learning style of your child.

My child is already at intermediate level. Why are they studying Primer B?

Some students manage to reach a fairly advanced level grade-wise without mastering some of the most fundamental techniques. Your child may already feel frustrated at their lack of agility, evenness or quality of sound. They will derive huge benefit from revising some of the techniques described in the earlier books. This is not a step backwards. Think of it as a chance to spring forwards!

How can I support my child's learning?

You don't need to be musically knowledgeable to support your child. You can help your child in many different ways:

- Buy the best instrument you can afford and find a stool that can be adjusted to suit your child as they grow.
- Find a regular quiet time to practise when they are least tired and have as few distractions as possible.
- Be on hand to help your child practise when needed. Check the teacher's practice notes and the teaching tips in the book. Also encourage your child to explore the extension activities.
- Encourage the student to perform their pieces for you. Praise their achievements, however small – children learn best when they are enjoying their studies.

The Complete Pianist

Penelope Roskell shares a lifetime's experience of teaching, performing and ground-breaking research into healthy piano playing. Containing more than 500 pages of text, 300 videos and 200 exercises newly devised by the author, this is the most comprehensive book ever written on piano playing.

The Complete Pianist has something new to offer to all pianists and keyboard players – student and teacher, professional and amateur.

'An encyclopaedic masterpiece of pianistic wisdom'.
Piano Magazine USA

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