

Mini-Project 101 Abide with Me Tasks

When this project was written it was Remembrance time. You're likely to know "Abide with Me" and it's a useful tune for getting your music brain working. There are plenty of Youtube recordings if you aren't sure of the tune or if you find your brain gets addled once you start having to work out what's going on in it. Here's one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmjuqZSH_aY

This Mini-Project takes you through the steps you need to be able to work out the note lengths and pitches used in the tune – and then write it out on manuscript paper. You don't need an instrument, just these sheets, the answer sheets, the music sheet and a pen/cil.

The Project isn't designed to catch you out. If you don't feel you know much about working out the notes in a tune follow all the steps. With any luck you will learn stuff as you go. If you've got confidence and expertise, still do all the working out, but don't take too long about it. If you get something wrong look at it again to see where you went wrong.

Each time there is a question you'll find the answer on the Answer Sheet.

Bits in italics are extra help

1. Start by singing the hymn, alone or with the video – here are the words for the first verse.

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, Lord, abide with me.

Some people are really good about finding a note to start on that means they don't have to go too high or too low as the song carries on. If you found that didn't quite work out for you, try again, but this time follow this guidance:

- *the tune doesn't use many different notes, so it isn't too critical where you start it*
- *the tune starts around the middle of the set of notes it uses – so start somewhere in the middle of your vocal range*

2. The tune is an archetypal hymn tune – nothing too exciting or unexpected happens, and it walks along at a steady pace. This makes it good at its job – it's quick to learn and not challenging to sing. Just what you need in a hymn.

It is in 4 time, and starts on beat 1. This task is going to be about being able to sing the verse while you keep a steady beat going.

Place your dominant hand on a flat surface – as if you were going to play a keyboard, and make the beats by tapping with each finger in turn – thumb, first finger, middle finger, ring finger, thumb, first finger, middle finger, ring finger – 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4.

The speed you need to do the tapping is the speed you want to sing "falls the e-ven". In that bit of the verse, the words go exactly with the beat.

Sing the verse and keep the 1 2 3 4 going with your fingers -all the time.

If you find that a bit tricky, practise it until you can keep both things going.

If it's hard for you, build up to it. Just tap the beat, not worrying about whether it is 1 2 3 or 4.

3. Now you are going to work out how long each of the notes in the tune is by using the beat as a measure.

Look at this graphic representation. There are 4 rows – one for each line of the tune.

- The top line of each row is divided into 4 lots of 4. That's 4 bars each with 4 beats in it.
- The bottom line has the words, divided into syllables because that is how they match the notes. Each syllable is placed under the beat you sing it on.
- The middle line shows how long the note for that syllable lasts – that's just logic – it lasts until the next syllable starts. The middle line gives you a graphic representation of the rhythm.

Your job is to write the syllables under the correct beats and then use that information to draw in the lengths of the notes. The tune only uses notes which are 1, 2 or 4 beats long.

If you find this difficult, take it slowly. Complete the first line, and make sure you are happy with that before you tackle the second line. It sound obvious, but check you are splitting the words into syllables – it's easy to get into a tangle if you write a 2 syllable word under one note by mistake.

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
█		█	█	█		█									
A	-	bide	with	me,			fast								

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
█		█	█												
The		dark-	ness												

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
												█			
												me.			

4. Now you've completed the graphic representation, use it to help you answer these questions:

- what do you notice about the rhythm for the first 3 lines?
- what do you notice about the rhythm of the last bar of each line?
- how does the rhythm of line 4 relate to the rhythms of each of the other lines?

5. The first line of the tune only uses 6 different notes. They are the first 6 notes of a major scale. Choose a note fairly low in your range, and, starting from that, count 1 2 3 4 5 6 as you sing up the notes.

This is the same as the start of the theme for Eastenders. Of if you know your Elizabethan music, it's the start of La Volta. If neither of these help you, go for Doe a Deer from The Sound of Music – doh ray me fah so la.

Sing up and down the 6 notes to get them thoroughly into your ears. (Making sure you sing 6 5 4 3 2 1 on the way down!)

a. Abide with Me starts on note 3. That's what you sing for “A”, the first syllable. Which notes do you sing for “bide with me”? They either stay the same or go up or down by step.

b. What about the note for “fast”? You should be able to hear that it goes up and it goes up by quite a bit – it's a jump. It can't be higher up than note 6 because you know there are only 6 different note, but which one is it? Use this diagram to help you work it out, or to check you have got it right if you have already decided (which is great!)

6	You can see it this a vertical representation of singing up and down the first 6 notes of the scale.
5	It can often be helpful to have something to see and even touch (don't be shy about pointing at the numbers as you sing them) to help the ear. We know that vision is our most used sense. Make use of it! Point to no.3 and sing the opening notes: “A-bide with me” 3 3 2 1. Do the same again and sing the note for “fast”. Sing that note strongly to really get it into your ear. Straight away sing quickly up – 1 2 3 etc. Which number has the same pitch as the note for “fast”? Repeat the process to check you are right.
4	
3	
2	
1	

c. Now you are going to work out the notes for the rest of line 1: “falls the e-ven-tide”. Most people can do this, but many make mistakes through going too fast.

Write in the pitch numbers for the notes you have worked out so far (“bide” up to “fast”)

3			
A	-	bide with	me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.

Work out the note for “falls”. Start at the beginning and go steadily. Sing to the numbers or the words, whichever is easier for you. Relate the pitch for “falls” to the pitch for “fast”. Is it the same, higher or lower? If it's different, is it a step away or a jump?

Carry on working out each note in turn and writing it in.

Big Clue. There are no jumps. Some notes may be the same.

d. What do you notice about the first and last notes in the line?
Put together what you have learned about both the rhythm and the pitch to work out which note takes up most of the line.

6. The obvious thing to do would be to work out line 2, but who wants to be obvious? You're going to work out line 3: "When other helpers fail and comforts flee". If you haven't realised why that's a good idea, you will soon.

It's not always easy to compare one section of a tune with another when you are working purely by ear. As soon as you have finished one bit it's in the past and can be difficult to recall after some intervening notes. That's one reason why having a means of writing a tune – or visualising it graphically is very helpful.

Sing from the beginning of the hymn and into the first half of the third line - "When other helpers". Sing it quickly (this is to help you retain a memory of what has gone before).

Now sing line 1 out loud, line 2 silently and the first half of line 3 out loud. (The point of the silent singing is so that you don't hear any sound between lines 1 and 3).

a. What do you notice about the first half of line 1 and the first half of line 3?

b. Now you can write in the pitch numbers for the first 2 bars of the line:

3			
When	o - ther	help - ers	fail and com-forts flee

That leaves the second half of the line to work out: "fail and com-forts flee"

c. Line 1 will help you – a lot, but it's not identical. Compare by singing lines 1 and 3 to work out how they compare. How do they relate to each other?

d. Now you can write in the numbers for the pitches for the rest of line 3.

7. Line 4 next. Work out this line with no more help than these clues:

This line only uses 4 different notes

The note for "help" is the same as the note for "flee" at the end of the previous line

All the notes go by step apart from one jump.

a. Go steadily, and work out the pitch numbers for this line.

2			
help	of the	help – less, Lord, a -	bide with me.

a. Sing the last three notes. What do you notice about them and the opening of the hymn?

c. Which of these nursery rhymes start with the last three notes of "Abide with Me"?

Frère Jacques

Twinkle Twinkle

Three Blind Mice

d. Which of these Christmas Carols starts with the same jump as you've got between "Lord" and "a"?

Good King Wenceslas

Hark the Herald

Little Donkey

8. Finally it's time for line 2.

a. You can work out the first half "The dark-ness deep-ens".

No clues – and this time you haven't got the number of the first note. Sing from the beginning to check you have the note for "The" correct. Compare it with the note for "tide".

The	dark - ness	deep - ens,	Lord, with me a - bide.

The second half of line 3 has one tricky bit in it. It's the note for the "a" of "abide". The tune changes key here, just for that note and the next one, and the note for "a" is in the new key but not the one you're in for all the rest of the tune. It's a semitone higher than the equivalent note in the rest of the tune.

b. So, with that bit of help, work out the numbers for the second half of line 2. Still work slowly so you can be accurate. Compare the note for "Lord" with the one for "ens". It mainly goes by step, but watch out for a jump. For the raised note ("a") you could write its number and #.

c. There is one other bar in the whole tune that has the same shape as the first bar in line 2 – same shape but different notes. Which bar is that? And is it higher or lower?

9. Now you have all the ingredients you need to write out the tune in music manuscript. You've got the rhythm in Question 3 and the pitches for the four lines in Qs.5, 6, 7 and 8.

You know from Question 3 that there are only 3 different note lengths in the tune.

They are one beat notes, two beat notes and four beat notes.

In this tune, a one beat note is a crotchet, a two beat note is a minim and a four beat note is a semibreve.

You can see examples of the notes and where the pitches need to go on the music pdf.

Music handwriting:

- distribute your notes in the bar proportionately. If a note starts half way through the bar, place it half way along
- always start each note with its head – the oval that identifies the pitch
- make the note heads as large as possible – fill the space or use up lots of space round the line
- if the note has a coloured in head, do the colouring next
- if the note has a stick draw that last without taking your pen/cil off the paper (notes shouldn't look like the letter "d" with a spare bit of stick)
- sticks go up on the right when the note head is in the lower part of the stave. All the note heads in this tune are in the lower part of the stave so all your sticks should go up to the right

a. The more ink / pencil lead a note takes to write the shorter it is. Put the notes in order from shortest to longest:

crotchet

minim

semibreve

b. Use the music pdf sheet to write out the tune and the words – lining them up. The tune is written out for you in the lower part of the sheet so you can check your version. You might want to cover that up!