

# Student Composition and Sibelius

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## **A. SIBELIUS APPLICATIONS**

1. Sibelius can be used with just computers (no MIDI keyboard or controller) using mouse and alphabetic entry.
2. Consider purchasing the Sibelius Student edition so every student has a copy on his or her computer.
3. Use the Sibelius demo version – it is totally functional, just will not save. It does have limited printing capabilities.
4. Don't just ask students to start composing. Rather, find or create files and lesson plans that students can manipulate or complete and eventually learn the composition skills required to write a song from scratch.

**TIP:** Take advantage of the liberal education discount offered to educators and churches. Purchase from an education music dealer such as SoundTree, Sweetwater, Kelly's Music, and others.

## **B. SIBELIUS WORKSHEETS:**

1. There are dozens of ready-to-use lessons that were introduced in Sibelius 4 called Worksheets.
2. In Sibelius, select File > Worksheet Creator. The first time it will take a while to load. After that it will only take a few seconds to load the files.
3. Select from several categories – there are 1700 worksheets to choose from. Review the more than 100 exercises in:  
02 Writing and Creating Music (117 files)

Notation and Adapting are mostly for reference.

Composing and Improvising are designed to be completed by students.

### **Choose From:**

- 01 Notation (37 of 37)
- 02 Adapting, Transposing & Arranging (9...)
- 03 Composing (50 of 50)**
- 04 Improvising (21 of 21)

4. When the selected document is in preview mode, press Previous to return and do another search.
5. If you press Done, Sibelius will create two files: a student file and an answer key. Both can be accessed from the Window menu and printed or edited as needed.
6. You can also add your own files to the Workshop creator with any file you create via: File > Add to Worksheet Creator. Use this to create your own curriculum materials.
7. Also check out the repertoire options. A lot of excellent material can simply be printed or used for composition exercises. I use this material to ask students to arrange a piano piece for 2 or more instruments.

Open sample file: Complete an 8 Bar Melody

**TIP:** Be sure to update to Sibelius 5.1 as it corrected some problems with Worksheets. In Sibelius, go to the Help menu and select “Check for Update.” The update is free and will download from the Sibelius website

**Basic Note entry without a MIDI Keyboard: Type notes into your score using computer keys**

1. Press escape key (ESC)
2. Select the empty measure with mouse
3. Type the letter **N**,
4. Choose the note value on keypad (box in bottom right of screen)
5. Type **a, b, c, d, e, f** or **g** on computer keyboard (or **0** on the number pad for rests)
6. Use Control (*Command*) + arrow up or down to change octave of note
7. Press ESC when done

**D. NOTATION LESSON PLAN SITES:**

1. SoundTree offers several excellent lesson plans that can be used with notation software.
  - a. [www.soundtree.com](http://www.soundtree.com) > click on “Teaching Resources” and then “Lesson & Projects.” Organize by TI:ME Strategy and then peruse the notation list.

Open file: AmazingGrace.sib.

2. metagazine.com has many archived lesson plans
  - a. [www.metmagazine.com](http://www.metmagazine.com) > click on the “Lesson Plan” link on the left.  
Open file: HotCross.sib.
3. The Technology Institute for Music Educators offers a huge database of lesson plans to members (\$40.00 annual membership fee).
  - a. [www.ti-me.org](http://www.ti-me.org) > click on Members Only (login and password required)
  - b. You can sign up for a trial membership and gain free access for a month: <http://www.ti-me.org/trial.html>

### Basic Note entry: Step time entry with a MIDI keyboard

1. Press escape key (ESC)
  2. Select empty measure with mouse
  3. Type **the letter N**
  4. Choose note value (on Keypad on screen) with mouse – or use numeric keypad on right of computer keyboard to select note value
  5. Play pitches on MIDI keyboard – type zero on number pad for rests
- Press ESC when done.

### E. SIBELIUS “IDEAS” (Sibelius 5 only):

1. Create or open a blank score (or you could create a template with some parts completed).
2. Click the light bulb icon in the menu bar.
3. Enter a genre into the search area (Jazz, African, Classical, etc).
4. Roll the mouse over the ideas to get a basic description.
5. Click and hold the mouse button to audition an idea.
6. Select an Idea and copy it to the clipboard (CTRL (⌘)+C)
7. Select the bar of the score where you want to paste the idea.
8. Paste the idea: CTRL (⌘) + V.
9. Refer to section 5.8 in the Sibelius Reference (Help > Sibelius Reference) for the steps to capture your own ideas to include for student composition.

Open file: 12BarBluesSAMPLE.sib



### **Basic Note entry: Live recording with a MIDI keyboard**

1. Check/change your recording options first: go to Notes > Flexi-time options.
2. Press escape key (ESC)
3. Select empty measure with mouse
4. Type the letter N.
5. Click the round red Record button or Control-Shift F (⌘-Shift-F)
6. Play live, but listen carefully to the metronome
7. Press ESC to stop recording
8. Type Control-Z (⌘-Z) to undo recording

### **F. OTHER SIBELIUS FEATURES:**

1. Plug-ins (such as Composing Tools and Text)
2. Scoring to Video

Free websites to download video files are located at:

[www.sibeliusbook.com](http://www.sibeliusbook.com) > click on “Chapter Files and Downloads” and then “Sibelius Book Web Links.” Several links to free video sites are listed next to Chapter 12.

Open file: hubble.sib

### **G. LEARNING RESOURCES:**

1. Robin Hodson’s quickstart:  
<http://www.sibelius.com/helpcenter/hintsandtips/index.html>
2. Watch the Sibelius Tutorial Videos available in Sibelius via the Help menu.
3. Use the built-in Reference available from the Help menu.
4. Book: *Sibelius a Comprehensive Guide* by Rudolph and Leonard
5. Summer TI:ME courses [www.ti-me.org/summer](http://www.ti-me.org/summer)
6. 12-week Sibelius online course: [www.berkleemusic.com](http://www.berkleemusic.com)  
(Tom Rudolph, author)

### **H. OTHER COMPOSITION SOFTWARE TO EXPLORE:**

1. Sibelius Groovy Music [www.groovymusic.com](http://www.groovymusic.com) for composing with students in grades K-8. It can be used in conjunction with Sibelius notation software
2. Sibelius Compass – includes an entire curriculum to teach composition with a non-notation approach (sequencing).