

# CONTENTS

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Teaching Guidelines .....	5
Kindergarten .....	7
First Grade.....	43
Second Grade.....	79
Glossary.....	115
Composer Biographies.....	119

## WEEK 4

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### **Etude op. 10, No. 12 in C Minor, "Revolutionary"** *Frédéric Chopin*

Chopin transformed the études, originally meant to be technical exercises, into concert pieces, though he still wrote them with the goal of improving piano technique. This étude, his 12th, was written at the same time as the November Uprising of 1831 in his native Poland.

#### **Questions:**

1. How does Chopin describe his feelings about the war-like events in Poland?
2. Can you hear how difficult it is to play? Which hand do you think is getting more exercise?

## FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

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**Frédéric Chopin** (March 1, 1810 - October 17, 1849) was a Polish-born musical prodigy who is known today as a piano composer of matchless genius. Although he only gave thirty public performances during his short life, he was well known during his lifetime for his haunting melodies and the expression in his playing. Chopin gave his first piano concert when he was eight years old. When he was twenty, he left Poland and moved to Paris, where he would spend most of the rest of his life. In Paris, Chopin was in great demand as a teacher, and made friends with other well-known artists of the day. Although Chopin was often ill, he composed many pieces of music during the 1830s and 1840s, before his death of tuberculosis at age 39.

**Adagio:** as an adjective, the Italian word meaning "slow"; as a noun, a slow piece of music

**Aria:** a song, usually with instrumental accompaniment, which is part of a larger work like an opera or an oratorio

**Arpeggio (also Arpeggiated Chords):** a chord whose notes are spread and played separately, either from the bottom or the top

**Baroque:** the period of Western music history between the end of the 16th century and ca. 1750; characterized by complexity and contrast

**Basso Continuo:** an independent bass line continuing throughout a piece, upon which the harmony is built

**Cadenza:** usually in a concerto, an improvised or written-out section played by the soloist, designed to showcase the soloist's skill

**Classical:** in Western music, the period between the middle of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century; characterized by clarity and balance, with a focus on form rather than emotions

**Concerto (pl. concerti):** a musical work, usually in three or four movements, for solo instrument and orchestra

**Consonance:** the combination of notes into pleasing harmony thanks to special relationships between their frequencies

**Dissonance:** the lack of agreement between two notes, resulting in musical tension

**Encore:** a French word used in English to describe an audience's request that the performer play another piece (The French do not use this word in this context.)

**Étude:** a short instrumental piece designed to be like an exercise