



Natalie Eastman, Owner
A Higher Note LLC
500 Dodds Avenue
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info@ahighernote.com

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Private Lessons Agreement & Policies

Effective Beginning August 31, 2020

Hello!

I'm delighted *for* you and excited *with* you that you're taking the steps to develop your musicality, or that of your child if that is the case! And I'm blessed to be sharing part of your journey as Instructor. Thank you.

During 2020, we transitioned to a Flat-Tuition Payment system. If you are curious as to why we made this change, please [jump to the brief article I wrote below called "Why A Flat-Tuition Payment Structure?"](#) Please note that you will need to sign a copy of the Agreement found [here](#).

This handbook-style document contains not only the Agreement you will need to sign, but quite a bit of additional information. Yet, please don't be overwhelmed. Just read through it carefully and as soon as you're able, so that you can get started with lessons.

For your convenience, you'll find a **Table of Contents** on the next page. All pages are hyperlinked, so you can zip directly to the page you need.

My goal is to make taking lessons and your experience working with me, as well as my business A Higher Note LLC (AHN), as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

Let me know if you have any questions.

I look forward to working with you!
See you soon,

Natalie

Owner, A Higher Note LLC



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Why A Flat-Tuition Payment Structure?

This particular section is totally optional to read, but in case you're interested in understanding why we decided to move AHN to a Flat-Tuition Payment system, here's why:

*THE BIG IDEA:
Because everyone wins with this payment structure.*

Here are just a few of the supporting details and reasons *why* everyone wins and why we changed:

1. It is a huge win-win for simplicity and ease for both parties.
2. Students are encouraged to take a committed view of their lessons, so that it's a commitment: to their own development, to their relationship with their Instructor, and to their practice and performance. To learn a new skill, to become proficient at it, and certainly to develop those skills to a high potential, one needs to take the mindset and approach, both in the lesson and for home practice, that it's a long-term undertaking – and hopefully an enjoyable one! It's typical for the teacher-student arrangement to continue for several years or more, so that the maximum possible knowledge, skill, and understanding can be transmitted. Generally, the teacher assumes – and at A Higher Note LLC, our assumption is – that you will continue taking lessons until your playing and performing goals are met, or until (1) the teacher is unable to maintain the current teaching load; (2) the student needs or wants to quit for financial, personal, schedule, or other reasons; or (3) the teacher and student mutually agree the student is ready for an area or level the teacher can not provide. The Flat-Tuition agreement model encourages this commitment-to-development view.
3. There is less talk about money and more focus on music, since everyone always knows either that they are already paid-in-full for the entire year or they know [what they owe for that month's payment](#).
4. Students have the flexibility to choose to pay for the entire year up-front, which gains them a BONUS of two extra lessons. Be sure to [read about that BONUS here](#).
5. Paying the same predictable amount each month opens up the possibility for students to set up **online monthly automatic payments, through one of these means:**



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1. **Zelle**, which we prefer over PayPal as an Electronic Transfer of Funds (ETF) service.
 - Payers can set this payment up within Zelle as a recurring monthly payment to either info@ahighernote.com or to our phone number, 740-513-1427. Set it up once to send the payment to AHN around the 28th of each month, so that it's in the AHN account before the 1st of the upcoming month, and it runs automatically. *Set it and forget it.*
2. **Bill Payments with their banks.**
 - With an online “Bill Pay” setup, AHN receives hard copy checks in the mail. Students who send payments this way don't even have to pay postage because their bank covers it.
 - Setup is also very simple: students simply enter A Higher Note LLC's name, address (500 Dodds Ave.; Chattanooga, TN, 37404), etc. into their account's bill pay section.
 - Set it up once to cut the check to AHN around the 24th of each month, so that it's there before the 1st of the upcoming month, and it runs automatically. *Set it and forget it.*
6. Standardized Studio Closures create several positive outcomes:
 1. Everyone knows when the AHN Studio's closures for holidays and breaks are.
 2. Standardized Studio Closures help stabilize the teacher's business income.
 - When studios allow students to take “vacation weeks” of their own (choose when not to pay for lessons), the teacher will inevitably experience dramatic decreases in student attendance pay in summer months, especially June, July, and August.
 - If students choose when to pay and not to pay, the teacher is effectively forced to take approximately 3-6 weeks vacation each year, except that the vacation time is sprinkled throughout the year instead of taken in lumps as it should be (so it really isn't vacation time). Imagine if high school teachers were told that their “free period” and lunch hour each day was now going to be deducted from their salary since it now counts as “vacation time!” A teacher in this scenario will struggle to maintain consistent professional income and consistent scheduling.
 - Unlike other professionals such as plumbers, contractors, auto mechanics, and others, music instructors must rely on very small



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group of clients each week for their livelihoods, which means empty slots can't be filled by new clients who call each week. If a student wishes for a teacher to commit a time slot to them each week, the student must commit to paying for it each week.

- Students wishing to come for an every-so-often lesson (*ad hoc*) or short series of lessons as a check-in or to deal with a specific problem or a few lessons to try it out, they may do so at the Standalone Lesson rate. [Read more about Standalone Lessons here.](#)
 - For example, professional musicians often desire or need anywhere between one and seven or eight sessions because they experience a particular issue in performance that they need to sort out with an instructor or coach. Or, they may struggle to schedule regular lessons because of travel and session schedules, so they schedule lessons *ad hoc*. AHN can support musicians in these situations with Standalone Lesson fees.
 - As another example, a student might want to take anywhere between one and several lessons to see if they like the fit with the instructor. AHN can also support this student's desire using Standalone Lessons. The student is then in full control over whether they would like to step into the 12-month, Flat-Tuition Payment Agreement.



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Agreement Form

This is an agreement between
Natalie R. Wilson Eastman
 A Higher Note LLC Teacher
 and

ADULT STUDENT: _____

OR

FINANCIALLY-RESPONSIBLE ADULT: _____

Name of Student (or person responsible for paying)

ON BEHALF OF MINOR STUDENT: _____

Student's Name

DATE: _____

BY SIGNING, YOU ARE INDICATING YOUR AGREEMENT TO ALL TERMS, POLICIES, AND CONDITIONS DETAILED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

⁵⁰⁰ I have read, understood, and agree to the terms and conditions of the A Higher Note LLC music studio.

⁵⁰⁰ I understand that my payment options are either a one-time, up-front payment for the entire year or the 12-month Flat-Tuition plan. is essentially an automatic, multi-payment subscription-style plan. The payments are made monthly, preferably automatically (see full document below for options) for all twelve months of the studio year, no matter what month of the year I enroll. Payments must be received by AHN before the 1st of each month. By choosing to enter this Agreement, I am responsible for completing all monthly payments regardless of whether or not I participate in, or finish the program. *(If your monthly payments lapse, we will reach out to you and give you a 7-day grace period to make arrangements for the amount in arrears and to show that you have reinstated your regular monthly payments via Zelle, bank-direct check, or PayPal.com. Please send us your new information, as applicable to the situation. If you do not get your information and payment arrangements up-to-date during that grace period, studio program access will be suspended. If you are not able to bring your account into good standing within 7 days after that, then we will reluctantly turn your details over to our friendly collections partner.)* **Please feel free to contact us any time if you have any questions or concerns.**





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Major Details of the Agreement

This is an agreement for forty (40) total lessons, which are to be taken within a one-year period (twelve contiguous months); paid in either one total payment or monthly over a 12-month period; and subject to the conditions outlined in this Agreement.

Here are a few of the major details that define this Agreement:

- This is an agreement for **forty (40)** total lessons to be taken within a 12-contiguous-month period of time, subject to the published [Studio Holidays and Closures schedule](#), and **paid for** either in a one-time/Annual Payment or as monthly Flat-Tuition payments for twelve months.
 - Whether paid annually or monthly, both fee schedules create dependable income for my business and lets everyone know what to expect.
 - Either fee schedule simplifies your payments and simplifies everyone's accounting.
 - The up-front, Annual Payment rate reflects *added value* to you through two BONUS lessons of the same length as your usual lessons.
 - The Flat-Rate monthly subscription rate reflects (1) a savings from the standalone lesson rate, and (2) an average of all 40 lessons across a 12-month period. Monthly flat-tuition payment schedule spreads out the payments for you.
 - In the event that the 12-month payment agreement is broken before the 12 months are up, a cancellation fee of up to \$425 will apply and will be added to your account. This penalty includes back-pay for the difference between subscription-rate-per-lesson and the standalone-rate-per-lesson, plus a small administrative fee.
- This agreement includes forty (40) weekly lessons per each 12-contiguous-month period of time.
- For multiple lessons per week, please inquire. It is possible to take more than one lesson per week up to the limit of 40 lessons *per annum*.
- Studio Holiday & Breaks are listed under the [section entitled "Studio Closures: Holidays/Breaks."](#)
- Participation in online or in-person recitals will incur an extra fee, which will be charged to your AHN Studio account at MusicTeachersHelper.com. See section on Recitals.
- This agreement includes AHN's optional student [practice-incentive system](#). This system is designed to reward students for consistent practice with simple, fun small prizes.



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AHN Studio-Year Dates

The Studio Year agreement includes a total of forty (40) lessons for each student, no matter the month in which the student begins, and is subject to the Studio Closures (see below).

“Rolling/Ongoing Enrollment” Conditions

Students may enroll at any time, but the Flat-Tuition payment system will begin on the first day of the next full month.

- Lessons that take place outside of the framework of a complete month will be treated as “Standalone Lessons” (see below) and the Flat-Tuition subscription rate would apply beginning on the first of the next full month.
- For example, if a student contacts AHN on March 15 and wants to start immediately, any lessons occurring March 15-31 will be subject to the Standalone Lessons fee schedule (see below) and the Flat-Tuition Subscription rate would begin April 1.

Studio Closures: Holidays & Breaks

Please note that A Higher Note LLC music studio will be closed and NO LESSONS WILL BE HELD on the following dates:

- All Saturdays and Sundays, except by agreement and only with great exception.
- * Labor Day
- * AHN Studio Fall Break (Oct. 8 in 2021)
- Thanksgiving Break (November 22-26 in 2021)
- Christmas/Holiday Break (December 20, 2021, through January 2, 2022)
- * Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 17, 2022)
- * AHN Studio Winter Break (February 18 in 2022)
- * AHN Studio Spring Break (March 25–April 4, 2022)
- * Good Friday (April 15, 2022)
- * Memorial Day (May 30 in 2022)
- AHN Studio Summer Break (July 1 through August 26, 2022)



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* Lessons that fall on the asterisked no-lesson dates in the list above will be rescheduled by mutual agreement between student/guardian and instructor:

The Studio WILL BE OPEN and LESSONS WILL BE HELD on President's Day (February 21, 2022) and on any other federal state or local holidays, religious observance holidays, election days, or local-school-district pupil-free days that fall within the AHN Studio 2021-2022 Calendar Year as published. Any Student wishing to cancel or reschedule a lesson on any of these days should see the cancellation and rescheduling procedures outlined below in this Agreement.

Canceling or Rescheduling Lessons

The glorious advances made in online-meeting software such as Zoom - and highly specialized voice-lesson software services such as VoiceLessons.com - have made it very easy, as well as advantageous in many ways, to run all lessons online during the Covid19 Pandemic. These software-as-a-service companies also make it possible to pivot to online quickly in the case of bad traffic predicted, extreme weather, or a mild feeling of being just-slightly-under-the-weather. Simply call to let your Instructor know to be ready for an online lesson that day. Rescheduling is an option when you have an irreconcilable conflict with your lesson time, so just ask. If we're able, we'll try our best to accommodate your needs.

Even in the case that you'll be out of town, in many instances you can figure out how to keep your lesson online. Most students can take their instrument and books/tools with them. If you're a piano student and it's a short term trip, your Instructor can work with you on theory, sight reading, and other skills for that lesson. If you're able to locate a piano you're permitted to use in the location where you will be staying (hopefully, a decently-quiet spot), you can conduct your lesson online. Try your best to work out the particulars so you can maintain your lesson consistency. Stay in communication with your Instructor.

Still, extenuating circumstances might arise that cause the need to cancel a lesson and request to reschedule. In those cases, the following procedures are in effect.

Any Student wishing to cancel or reschedule a lesson on any of these days may follow this procedure and must observe these policies:

- You must call (leaving a message is acceptable) or text with at least 24 hours notice to request to reschedule your lesson or your lesson that week will be forfeited as a Student/Payor-initiated cancellation.
- Exceptions: onset of illness that day or accident. If you're throwing up or have a fever, we will be more than happy to reschedule your lesson, as well as grateful for your good judgment and consideration for your Instructor.



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- In the case of a request to reschedule that is made with at least 24 hours notice, your Instructor and you can communicate to find a mutually-agreeable makeup time. The MusicTeachersHelper.com studio software helps us track these occurrences.
- Limit to the number of rescheduled lessons:
 - Students are allowed five (5) advance-notice cancellations (more than 24 hours notice) **per AHN Studio Year** (September 1 of one year through August 31 of the following year) before your account will come under review. After that, the following policies will apply:
 - For Agreement students, you will simply forfeit lessons going forward.
 - For Standalone Lesson students, you'll either need to pay for any cancellations that arise, no matter the reason for the cancellation request), or suspend your lessons.

COVID-19 NOTICE:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all lessons will be taught online via Zoom (or other online conferencing software selected by Teacher, such as VoiceLessons.com) until further notice. During the course of the 2021-2022 Studio Year, the Teacher may, in her sole discretion, as informed by guidance and mandates issued by the Tennessee state government; the Montgomery County government; the Center for Disease Control (CDC); administrators and health officials of the McCallie School, where the Teacher's home studio is located; and recognized experts in vocal health, training and performance, offer students the option of lessons at the Teacher's home studio. If lessons are offered at any time at the Teacher's home studio, the Teacher will implement appropriate procedures and protocols to ensure the health and safety of both Student and Teacher, and will communicate such procedures to Student in advance of the lesson. Online lessons are available for any student throughout the entire 2021-2022 Studio Year, regardless of whether In-Studio lessons may be offered at the Teacher's home studio at any time. There is no difference in price between Online and In-Studio lessons.



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Payments & Fees

The Flat-Tuition Agreement provides you the opportunity, essentially, to choose between either an annual, whole-year payment or a subscription-style plan of automatic, monthly payments of equal amounts over the course of the twelve-month year.

The payments are either made annually or monthly for all twelve months of the studio year, preferably automatically (see full document below for options). It does not matter what month of the year the Student enrolls.

Responsibility to Pay

Payments must always be received by AHN before the 1st of each month. By choosing to enter this Agreement, I am responsible for completing all monthly payments regardless of whether or not I participate in, or finish the program.

If your monthly payments lapse, we will reach out to you and give you a 7-day grace period to make arrangements for the amount in arrears and to show that you have reinstated your regular monthly payments via Zelle, bank-direct check, or PayPal.com. Please send us your new information, as applicable to the situation. If you do not get your information and payment arrangements up-to-date during that grace period, studio program access will be suspended. If you are not able to bring your account into good standing within 7 days after that, then we will reluctantly turn your details over to our friendly collections partner.



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Annual Payment – Bonus Available!!

The annual payment is one payment for the entire year and paid up-front before the lessons begin.

If you choose to pay annually, we will provide you with TWO bonus lessons of the same length as your usual lessons! These must be claimed/requested by you and scheduled with your Instructor by mutual agreement at your mutual convenience. The two BONUS lessons may be taken any time during your contiguous 12-month enrolment year!

One-Time Payment Amounts:

- 1-hour lessons - \$2880, *or* \$2965 if paid by PayPal.
(Lesson refund rate: \$65)
- 45-minute lessons - \$2160, *or* \$2223 if paid by PayPal.
(Lesson refund rate: \$47.50)
- 30-minute lessons - \$1440, *or* \$1483 if paid by PayPal.
(Lesson refund rate: \$30)

Flat-Tuition Monthly Fees:

- 1-hour lessons - \$240/month, paid over 12 months by subscription (\$248/month if paid by PayPal).
(Lesson refund rate: \$65)
- 45-minute lessons - \$180/month, paid over 12 months by subscription (\$186/month if paid by PayPal).
(Lesson refund rate: \$47.50)
- 30-minute lessons - \$120/month, paid over 12 months by subscription (\$124/month if paid by PayPal).
(Lesson refund rate: \$30)



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Standalone Lessons

Don't want a 12-Month Agreement? A Higher Note LLC's solution is Standalone Lessons. "Standalone lessons" are individual lessons, with no obligation to continue.

Standalone lessons can be helpful in the following types of instances:

- Students wishing to come for an every-so-often lesson (*ad hoc*) or short series of lessons as a check-in, to deal with a specific problem, or take a few lessons to try it out, may do so at the Standalone Lesson rate.
 - For example, professional musicians often desire or need anywhere between one and seven or eight sessions because they experience a particular issue in performance that they need to sort out with an instructor or coach. Or, they may struggle to schedule regular lessons because of travel and session schedules, so they schedule lessons *ad hoc*. AHN can support musicians in these situations with Standalone Lesson fees.
 - As another example, a student might want to take anywhere between one and several lessons to see if they like the fit with the instructor. AHN can also support this student's desire using Standalone Lessons. The student is then in full control over whether they would like to step into the 12-month, Flat-Tuition Payment Agreement.
- If a student/parent desires to enter into the Annual/Flat-Tuition Agreement, this must happen on the 1st day of a month, to simplify our calendar and accounting. If the student and/or parent wants to start lessons before the 1st of a month, those initial lessons may be taken at the Standalone Lesson rate.
 - For example, it's March 12 and Susan wants to start taking singing lessons. She decided she would like to enter into the Flat-Tuition Agreement, but wants to get started immediately. Her fees would be as follows:
 - Any lessons taking place between March 12 and 30 would be at the Standalone Lesson Rate.
 - At any time during March before she has signed and started under the Agreement's terms, Susan would not be subject to its terms.
 - On April 1, the Agreement would kick in. Some time on or before March 30, Susan would either make Annual total payment for the year or make her first monthly, Flat-Tuition Payment.



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Description & Policies:

- Standalone lessons may be used for...
 - Vocal consultations
 - Short-term vocal coaching sessions
 - Other instrument lessons
 - Trial lessons. This is for students (or parents, as applicable) who want to try out a lesson or two or three before committing long-term.
 - Lessons taken before a student's Agreement kicks in on the 1st of a month.
- No practice-incentive prizes or additional student publications, where applicable, are included in standalone lessons.
- Standalone Lesson students may participate in online or in-person recitals, subject to being sufficiently prepared for one by their AHN instructor and to the regular recital fees, which will be added to their studio account on MusicTeachersHelper.com.

Standalone Lesson Fees

- 1 Hour - \$75 (If paying with PayPal: \$78)
- 45 minutes - \$57.50 (If paying with PayPal: \$60)
- 30 minutes - \$40 (If paying with PayPal: \$42)



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Making Payments

Whether making a one-time/annual payment or monthly Flat-Tuition payments, Payors for the account may make payment(s) through one of these means:

Electronic Payment

1. **Zelle**
 - Zelle is an ETF service like Venmo and PayPal, but it is free for AHN's transactions, because it is a service our bank provides.
 - *We prefer Zelle over PayPal as an Electronic Transfer of Funds (ETF) service.*
 - Note that Zelle will not work for some institutions. You can find out if your institution participates by visiting their website: Zellepay.com.
 - Payors can set up their annual or monthly payment within the Zelle app to either info@ahighernote.com or to our phone number, 740-513-1427. If choosing the monthly Flat-Tuition structure, you may set up your Zelle payment as a recurring monthly payment. Set it up once to send the payment to AHN around the 25th of each month, so that it's in the AHN account before the 1st of the upcoming month, and it runs automatically. *Set it and forget it.*
2. **PayPal**
 - We prefer Zelle for electronic payments, because it is free for AHN's transactions, as described above. However, if you need to pay with PayPal, you may do so, but we pass along the service charges to the Payor as a convenience fee.
 - Please see the "For Paying with PayPal" amount for each lesson fee under [the "Payments" section](#). This will be automatically assessed to your AHN Studio account on MusicTeachersHelper.com.

Check

1. **As a Bill Payment through their bank's online banking services**
 - With an online "Bill Pay" setup, AHN receives hard copy checks in the mail. Students who send payments this way don't even have to pay postage because their bank covers it.
 - Setup is also very simple: students simply enter A Higher Note LLC's name, address (500 Dodds Ave.; Chattanooga, TN, 37404), etc. into their account's bill pay section.





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- Set it up once to cut the check to AHN around the 24th of each month, so that it's there before the 1st of the upcoming month, and it runs automatically. *Set it and forget it.*

2. **Personal Check that you send monthly**

- Mail check to: A Higher Note LLC, 500 Dodds Ave.; Chattanooga, TN, 37404
- Send the check to AHN around the 20th of each month, so that it arrives and can be deposited before the 1st of the upcoming month.
- To make this option as “set-it-and-forget-it” as possible, you may (optionally) write twelve checks for the payment, post-dating them for the future months, and give them to AHN for depositing at the proper future time.



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First/Next Steps for New Students

- 1. Register.** **Here's the registration link to establish your AHN Studio account.** Make sure you've registered with our studio administration software online called Music Teacher's Helper (MTH). Within your MTH account, you can access your lesson calendar, receive lesson reports, communicate with me, log your practices so I can see/comment on your practice notes, and view your invoices. If you haven't registered yet, please do so immediately. If you have registered, then by now, you should have received a confirmation email and perhaps even received a reminder for your first lesson, if it has been placed on the official AHN calendar. Once you've registered on MTH, the system will alert me that you have registered and I will add you into the studio as a new student/family. At that point, we can put you on the calendar. However, note that according to our policies the lessons are not secured until paid for in advance.
- 2. Confirm.** Review the tentative day(s), time, and length of your lesson(s) as we've discussed them previously by phone, email, or text. If you have any questions whatsoever, call or text immediately, especially if it's the day of your lesson. You'll want to be sure I'm expecting to see you when you're expecting to see me!
☺
- 3. Know the Policies.** Save and read these policies. You can save the page on AHN's website: <https://ahighernote.com/policies-general/> and/or print this document for future reference.
- 4. Pay.** If at all possible, please pay using Zelle. Read the "Making Payments" section for more information.
- 5. Forms.** Make sure you have read, completed, and returned the "Agreement to Practice" form and any other forms your Instructor has requested (<https://ahighernote.com/forms/>).
- 6. Flash Cards:** If you don't already have a strong grasp of music theory, and/or if you don't already have your own set of music flash cards, please order these: <https://amzn.to/2Pe4OkS>. All students, including singing students, learn basic music theory to support their sight reading.
- 7. Books and/or Materials**
 - a. Books.** Your Instructor will assign books and resources based on your proficiency with the instrument when you start your lessons.
 - b. General Practice Helps for All Music Students and Musicians:**
 - i. A Music Stand.** Very, very helpful for your practice space. Adjustable is best. Clips for holding music are really nice.



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1. **Higher quality:** <https://amzn.to/35pMcYh> (Note: no clips to hold music in place, but does have decent-sized shelf at the bottom.)
2. **Medium Quality & Portable:** <https://amzn.to/3osP6TF> (Has clips.)
3. **Lower Quality:** <https://amzn.to/2LCIumM> (Note: just something to prop music against if you don't have anything else. No clips. Not super-durable, gets mixed reviews on quality. But better than nothing.)

ii. Metronome

1. **App/Digital.** You can certainly use an app. Just make sure you can hear it. They vary in volume. Low or not-adjustable volume makes it rather useless and frustrating.
2. **Tuner/Metronome. Example:** <https://amzn.to/2JVEiOC>. Look for adjustable volume, visual cues, and the ability to choose whether or not to emphasize the downbeat of each measure.
3. **Non-portable, but cool, usually pretty loud, and visually helpful:** <https://amzn.to/3s10sjl>

iii. General Music Flash Cards. [Music flash cards](#).

c. Singing Lessons Materials.

- i. At first your Instructor may not assign any books. We'll be working with you to get to know your voice and you. After a while, you should expect to invest both money and time into your music library. You might expect to invest in some of these (and perhaps all, eventually, but that would be over the course of time):
 1. Method books, sheet music, music theory books, or other tools.
 2. Background/accompaniment tracks
 3. [Music flash cards](#), etc.
- ii. From time to time, your Instructor might also provide you with digital documents, which you will need to print, read thoroughly, use as a tool, and/or keep in your lesson folder.

d. Piano, Guitar, Bass, Ukulele, etc.

- i. **Guitar.** You will need a tuner, metronome, picks (mediums are usually good), set of spare strings appropriate to your guitar





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(medium or light gauge are usually good for learning), and [general-music flash cards](#). Helpful but not required items: a music stand, a guitar strap, guitar-chord flash cards or a chord cheat sheet or [chord book like this](#), a capo, and a peg winder.

- ii. **Piano.** You will need a piano or keyboard either in your practice space or one to which you have daily or several times each week access. You'll need a metronome and the [general-music flash cards](#). There may be other resources your Instructor requests that you purchase, borrow, or otherwise obtain.
 - iii. **Ukulele.** You will need a tuner, metronome, spare strings, and [general-music flash cards](#). A strap and picks are helpful, as are ukulele-specific chord flash cards or a "[cheat sheet](#)" like this, although these are not required.
 - iv. **Bass.** You will need a tuner, metronome, spare bass strings (eventually), and the [general-music flash cards](#). A strap and picks are helpful, as are bass-chord flash cards, although these are not required.
- e. To prepare, read more below at "[All Students: Preparing for Your Lessons.](#)"



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All Students: Preparing for Your Lessons

How to Connect for Your Internet Lesson: Zoom Instructions

We connect for Internet lessons through a software called Zoom. Once you've **registered** with the A Higher Note LLC studio on our MTH and made your first tuition payment for the lessons, I will send you an invitation that will contain a link for a Zoom meeting. It's very easy - you simply click on the link a few minutes before your appointed lesson time and enter the session by following the prompts.

Connecting for the First Time

The first time you do this, plan on a few extra minutes to load the software. Zoom will make a small installation on your computer and it takes just a couple of minutes. The entire process should never take you more than 5 minutes, and will usually take less. If you are using a device such as a tablet or phone, you will need to download the Zoom meeting app onto your device.

Setting-up Your Lesson Space

You'll need to consider the setup for the location in which you'll take the lessons and/or practice, whether those activities occur in the same space or different spaces. Students should find a place to practice that is free from distractions and properly equipped to do their work.

Please, don't be overwhelmed by the list below. Just read through it and think about...

- Gathering items you already have and about what you might need to purchase.
- What you absolutely need right now in order to start your lessons and what you need to get over time.
- Your lesson and practice space(s) as it is (they are) and how you can easily optimize it (them) further for your lessons and practice.

In the end, do what you can. Over time, do all you can.

Supplies and Setup Best-case Scenarios:

1. **Light.** Plenty of light *ON* you, rather than behind you, to avoid being backlit.
2. **Quiet.** Quiet, uninterrupted location.





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3. **Google Drive**. See below for the Drive folder that contains some accompaniment for your lesson. It's best if you play it on your end. You can either have Drive handy on your device or download the files to the device of your choice.
4. **Audio Device**. A device that can access Drive on which to play the audio files and/or youtube video accompaniment when that's needed. This can be a desktop, laptop, or tablet. Only use a phone if you don't have any other option.
5. **Video Device**. There are also exercises on YouTube I'll use with you, especially from the classical method. YouTube is a treasure-trove of these resources!! Please explore YT for these, as you're able, and add them into a Playlist of your own for your practice. You'll need to play and view a YouTube video today, although I'll be singing it for you to demonstrate it.
6. **Power**. A power outlet nearby and power cable for your device, so there are no concerns about battery life during the lesson.
7. **Internet Access**. Broadband is best.
8. **Visibility**. Check the distance you're able to stand away from your laptop/desktop/device; make sure I will be able to see at least your entire torso all the way up to about a foot over your head.
9. **Space**. Make sure you have enough space behind you such that you could step back one or two steps so I can see you at full height when needed.
10. **Earbuds**. Have a pair of earphones handy (can be either Bluetooth or corded) in case of audio issues arise or just to be able to hear the accompaniment music better. You can either use both buds, or place one bud in an ear and keep the other bud out. That placement will help her hear both the accompaniment (I don't need to hear it; I want to hear her voice) and herself while singing.
 - Optional: Bluetooth speaker paired or corded to your device. This would be useful if your student takes singing lessons and needs to sing along with an accompaniment track during the lesson.
11. **Device Advice**. I don't highly recommend using a phone, for the sake of visibility (*the student's ability to see the Instructor, that is*); but do your best and use what you have available.
12. **Your Instrument**.
 - For singing students, it's nice to have a piano or keyboard available. This can include a virtual piano online.
13. **Books**. Any required sheet music/books.
14. **Mirror**. A full-length mirror. Required for singing students. Recommended for guitar, ukulele, or bass. Not required for piano.



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15. **Note-Taking.** At first, have some clean notebook paper available ready for taking notes from your lesson, so you'll know what to work on until your next lesson. When/if you become a subscription student, very early on in that journey we will work on vision and goal setting. I'll teach you to use my Practice Log/Journal. I crafted this system for myself and my intensive-coaching-program students and share it with my long-term students, as I believe it to be helpful and appropriate. If you're a short-term student taking Standalone Lessons, notebook paper will work fine. 😊
16. **Music staff paper.** Useful in lots of circumstances over time. This can be as simple as printouts of staff paper you get off the internet.
17. **Pencils.** Keep a stash of sharpened pencils handy for taking those notes.
18. **Music stand.** Very useful for all instruments. If your keyboard or piano does not have a stand, or doesn't have a secure/useful one, you'll need to figure that out by improvising. It's hard to play without a stand to hold your music.
19. **Metronome.**
20. **Tuner.** For all instruments requiring tuning.
21. **Practice Journal.**
 - To keep notes on your lessons.
 - To keep notes on your progress.
 - To keep and track goals.
 - To write down assignments and questions.
 - At each lesson, you'll want to have your notes from your recent lessons(s) or assignments for the week. For this, you can create a section in your practice journal. You can also purchase a practice record/assignment book, if you wish. There are many to choose from: here's an example of a [simple assignment log book](#). This may be too small for adults, especially those really going for it with their instrument. So, look for one you like, more importantly, will *use*.
22. **Pencils.** Keep a stash of sharpened pencils handy for taking those notes.

Files to download or have at-the-ready online:

Google Drive folder with necessary audio files and lesson instructions:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1lc5r4Pv2lnBEV9Xh_W_x86WAFT_e7sSg?usp=s_haring





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Materials Purchase Policy:

Please be aware that you will be asked as a student, or parent of a student where applicable, to provide materials to be used in your course of study. Your Instructor will inform you of the approximate cost. Materials may be purchased online, through [AHN site's recommended resources page](#), or at a local music store. In some cases, your teacher may provide personal copies of pieces, or copies obtained from the library. Please be sure to treat these items with care, as they must be returned. The approximate yearly cost of materials varies from student to student, but should not exceed \$75.00 annually.

Do Not Photocopy Music

Photocopying music is illegal! Photocopies will not be provided to the student except where allowable by law.



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Lessons & Practicing: Expectations & Guidelines

You Must Read and Sign AHN's "Agreement to Practice" Form:

- Adult Students: Please read and sign our "Agreement to Practice" form.
- Parents of Child Students: please read and sign and discuss with your student and have him or her sign our "Agreement to Practice" form.
- You can find the Agreement to Practice form here:
<https://ahighernote.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Agreement-to-Practice-AHN-20190107.pdf>

Expectations:

Students are expected to give their full effort in their lesson and in their practice at home. Only with full mental and physical participation will the student derive the fullest benefit from their educational experience.

You are expected to arrive on time and prepared for your lesson. This includes: having all materials, being sure to have younger students appropriately dressed, eliminating any possible physical distractions (eat before you come to lessons), and doing your best to be mentally prepared for your lesson.

You must supply any required materials for your lessons in a timely manner.

Students should never feel that they are being forced into a style or methodology that does not appeal to them. The language of music has many forms, and each of us has our own voice. We also encourage you to ask your Instructor about pieces that are of interest to you. We are happy to work together with you to promote your enjoyment of the music you create.

Yet, we also aim to help you develop your skills in the fullest way possible. To that end, your Instructor may want you to develop in a strategy, style, technique that's found in a genre outside of the one you want the most. We would ask you to trust your Instructor and the process. If you do not feel that your teacher is taking your personal taste into enough consideration, please be sure to discuss this with your Instructor. We know that over time goals do change. We are happy to accommodate your desires and needs. So, please discuss with your teacher any expectations or concerns you may have regarding your (or your child's) music education with your A Higher Note LLC Instructor.





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We also strongly encourage you to disclose any barriers to learning that you may have, such as a hectic schedule, learning or behavioral barriers, or environmental challenges within the home.

Child and Parent Behavior Considerations

Parents of younger students need to be aware that unruly behavior in a lesson or a group class will result in the child being ejected from the class without refund of tuition.

It's important to note that parents of younger students are welcome to sit in on lessons. We encourage it, so that the parent can actively guide the child's daily home practice. However, if the parent's participation becomes a distraction (i.e., the parent keeps jumping in and answering questions for the student, pointing things out to them because they feel the student is "taking too long," criticizing the student's efforts or performance, and/or other things parents often don't even realize they're doing), the Instructor will speak with the parent about it. If it persists, the parent may be asked to wait outside.

Practice: Guidelines and Additional Thoughts

Students should be practicing at least the same amount of time as their weekly lesson every day. What does this mean? If you are taking a half hour lesson, you need to practice at least a half hour per day *on the average*. Sometimes, we don't have time for practicing every day, and may fall into a habit of not practicing regularly. It is important that you realize as a student that you will only get out of lessons what you put into them. It is also important that you are honest with your teacher about how much practice you were actually able to do from week to week. This gives your teacher a better ability to understand your learning style, and may help to identify potential problem areas in your practice technique.

If a student practices frequently and as instructed, they will soon be able to witness the benefit of their study:

- Pieces and exercises will quickly become easier
- Understanding will become greater
- Focus and concentration will increase
- The student and their family will have a reason to be proud!

Many times, much of what the student experiences in lessons and practice will affect them outside of our study. There have been many adult students who have reported greater concentration and relaxation following home practice sessions and an overall



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sense of well-being because of their enjoyment of playing and/or their accomplishment. Parents have reported that their child-students have gotten better grades in school and are just generally more focused after beginning music lessons.

Expect improvement in focus, concentration and dexterity.

Lessons are formatted in a particular order. Parents of younger students are invited to participate in that process to be able to help their child practice successfully in the home.

Parents of younger students are expected to be encouraging and supportive of practice schedules and to communicate with the teacher regarding the student's practicing experience in the home. Be sure to [read about AHN's "Agreement to Practice" form](#).

AHN's Practice Incentive Program

All students, younger or older, are invited to participate in our Practice-Incentives Program! Originally, we designed this simple incentive/reward program for our younger students, but many older youth and even adults wanted to participate and found they enjoyed the simple incentive of a small prize when they filled their prize jar. How it works: for each completed day of practice outside of their lesson, the Instructor moves a "practice puff" from the Instructor's jar into the student's jar. Once the jar is completely full, the student gets to choose a prize from the prize box. A qualifying "practice session" involves completing assignments, achieving goals discussed with Instructor, and practicing assigned exercises and pieces. What doesn't count: "I sang/played a *lot* that day!" Even though we absolutely encourage playing and singing all the time, for a practice session to qualify as a practice session, it must fulfill those objectives and activities described above. Participation in this incentive program is optional; practice isn't.

Recitals

Performance in recitals is not mandatory, however it is highly encouraged. If you are not performing, please attend if at all possible and support the endeavors of your child's or your student-colleagues.

Participation in online or in-person recitals will incur an extra fee, which will be charged to your AHN Studio account at MusicTeachersHelper.com.

Parents of younger students are expected to attend any recital in which their student is performing. Occasionally, volunteer opportunities do arise for recitals as well. Please let your Instructor (or your child's teacher, where applicable) know if you are able and willing to help.





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- Standalone Lesson students may participate in online or in-person recitals, subject to being sufficiently prepared for one by their AHN instructor and to the regular recital fees, which will be added to their studio account on MusicTeachersHelper.com.



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