Baroque and Renaissance Music for Alto Recorder

thefingeringchart.com

Ten pieces of medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music for alto (treble) recorder, easiest first, from L'Homme armé to Bach's Air on the G String. Five of the ten are in their original key; Greensleeves, Come Again, Canon in D (opening), Minuet in G and Minuet in G Minor are moved to a key that fits the alto recorder. The last page shows the fingering for every note used, F4 to G6.

How to read it: each box is one note, with the letter on top and its octave number beside it. A gold bar under a box marks a long note (two beats or more). Grace notes and trills are left out. Hear every piece, slow or full speed, at thefingeringchart.com/recorder/alto/early-music/

1 L'Homme armé

EASY Medieval · anonymous French song, 15th century · G Dorian · 9 notes, G4 to A5 · 3/4 time

1 G4 G4 C5 C5 B♭4 A4 G4

2 D5 D5 G4 D5 D5 D5 C5 B♭4 A4

3 G4 D5 D5 D5 G4

4 G5 G5 F5 F5 G5 G5 D5

5 G5 G5 F5 F5 G5 G5 D5 G5

6 A5 G5 F5 E5 D5

Tip: Keep the half notes full and even, like a slow march, and tongue each repeated note cleanly. Line 4 jumps up an octave to the top of the tune, so take a good breath before it.

Music: anonymous French song, 15th century. The first section of the tune.

2 Pastime with Good Company

EASY Renaissance · King Henry VIII (early 16th century) · G Dorian · 6 notes, E5 to C6 · 4/4 time

1 B♭5 B♭5 B♭5 B♭5 A5 B♭5 A5 G5 F5 F5

2 B♭5 B♭5 A5 G5 F5 G5 F5 E5 F5 G5

3 B♭5 B♭5 B♭5 B♭5 A5 B♭5 A5 G5 F5 F5

4 B♭5 B♭5 A5 B♭5 A5 G5 F5 G5 F5 E5 F5 G5 F5

5 G5 A5 B♭5 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 B♭5

6 C6 B♭5 A5 G5 F5 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 B♭5

7 G5 A5 B♭5 B♭5 A5 G5 F5 G5 A5 F5 G5

Tip: The long first notes should ring for their full length; count three beats on each dotted half. The second section climbs a step at a time; keep it light and steady, like a dance.

Music and words: King Henry VIII (early 16th century). Top line from the Henry VIII Manuscript, c. 1513.

3 Belle qui tiens ma vie

EASY Renaissance · from Orchésographie by Thoinot Arbeau (Langres, 1589) · G Dorian · 9 notes, D5 to D6 · 2/2 time

1 G5 G5 F♯5 G5 A5 B♭5
2 B♭5 D6 C6 B♭5 B♭5 A5 B♭5
3 G5 G5 F♯5 G5 A5 B♭5
4 B♭5 D6 C6 B♭5 B♭5 A5 B♭5
5 B♭5 A5 A5 G5 G5 F♯5
6 D5 E5 F5 G5 G5 F♯5 G5
7 B♭5 A5 A5 G5 G5 F♯5
8 D5 E5 F5 G5 G5 F♯5 G5

Tip: A pavane walks; it never hurries. Keep the half notes long and the quarter notes even, and lean slightly on the first beat of each bar so the dance steps can follow it.

Music: from Orchésographie by Thoinot Arbeau (Langres, 1589). Top voice of the four-part pavane.

4 Greensleeves

MEDIUM Renaissance · traditional English tune, 16th century · D minor (moved to fit the alto recorder) · 12 notes, A4 to C6 · 3/4 time

1 D5 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 A5 G5 E5 C5 D5 E5
2 F5 D5 D5 C♯5 D5 E5 C♯5 A4 D5
3 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 A5 G5 E5 C5 D5 E5
4 F5 E5 D5 C♯5 B4 C♯5 D5
5 C6 C6 B5 A5 G5 E5 C5 D5 E5
6 F5 D5 D5 C♯5 D5 E5 C♯5 A4
7 C6 C6 B5 A5 G5 E5 C5 D5 E5
8 F5 E5 D5 C♯5 B4 C♯5 D5

Tip: Swing the dotted rhythm gently: long, short, long. C♯ comes up in every other line and B♮ in the second half; practice those two fingerings on their own first.

Music: traditional English tune, 16th century.

5 Come Again

MEDIUM Renaissance · John Dowland, from The First Booke of Songes or Ayres (London, 1597) · F major (moved to fit the alto recorder) · 9 notes, C5 to D6 · 4/4 time

1 A5 B♭5 C6 C6 D6 C6 B♭5
2 B♭5 A5 C6 C6 B♭5 A5
3 A5 G5 G5 A5 F5 G5
4 G5 G5 C5
5 F5 D5 G5 E5 A5 F5 B♭5 G5
6 C6 C6 B♭5 A5 G5 A5 G5 F5 F5 E5 D5 E5 F5

Tip: Treat the rests as part of the music: stop cleanly, breathe, and come back in exactly on the beat. Hold the long high note at the start of line 6 for its whole length, with steady air to the end.

Music: John Dowland, from The First Booke of Songes or Ayres (London, 1597). Top voice.

6 Canon in D (opening)

MEDIUM Baroque · Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706) · C major (moved to fit the alto recorder) · 12 notes, A4 to G6 · 4/4 time

1 E6 D6 C6 B5 A5 G5 A5 B5
2 C6 B5 A5 G5 F5 E5 F5 D5
3 C5 E5 G5 F5 E5 C5 E5 D5 C5 A4 C5 G5 F5 A5 G5 F5
4 E5 C5 D5 B5 C6 E6 G6 G5 A5 F5 G5 E5 C5 C6 C6 B5

Tip: The first two lines are the famous slow tune; play them smoothly, with no gaps between the notes. Lines 3 and 4 run in eighth notes and cover almost the whole recorder, so practice them slowly first.

Music: Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706). The first violin part, bars 3 to 10 of the Canon.

7 Minuet in G

MEDIUM Baroque · Christian Petzold (1720), from the 1725 Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach (BWV Anh · B♭ major (moved to fit the alto recorder) · 14 notes, F4 to D6 · 3/4 time

1 F5 B♭4 C5 D5 E♭5 F5 B♭4 B♭4 G5 E♭5 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 B♭4 B♭4
2 E♭5 F5 E♭5 D5 C5 D5 E♭5 D5 C5 B♭4 A4 B♭4 C5 D5 B♭4 C5
3 F5 B♭4 C5 D5 E♭5 F5 B♭4 B♭4 G5 E♭5 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 B♭4 B♭4
4 E♭5 F5 E♭5 D5 C5 D5 E♭5 D5 C5 B♭4 C5 D5 C5 B♭4 A4 B♭4
5 D6 B♭5 C6 D6 B♭5 C6 F5 G5 A5 F5 B♭5 G5 A5 B♭5 F5 E5 D5 E5 C5
6 C5 D5 E5 F5 G5 A5 B♭5 A5 G5 A5 C5 E5 F5
7 F5 B♭4 A4 B♭4 G5 B♭4 A4 B♭4 F5 E♭5 D5 C5 B♭4 A4 B♭4 C5
8 F4 G4 A4 B♭4 C5 D5 E♭5 D5 C5 D5 F5 B♭4 A4 B♭4

Tip: A minuet is a dance in three, so feel one strong beat at the start of each bar and keep the eighth notes light and even. The second half goes up to the high notes, so check those fingerings before you start.

Music: Christian Petzold (1720), from the 1725 Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach (BWV Anh. 114).

8 Minuet in G Minor

MEDIUM Baroque · Christian Petzold (1720), from the 1725 Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach (BWV Anh · B minor (moved to fit the alto recorder) · 15 notes, F♯4 to D6 · 3/4 time

1 D6 C♯6 B5 C♯6 F♯5 F♯5 B5 B4 C♯5 D5 E5 F♯5
2 G5 A5 G5 F♯5 E5 F♯5 G5 F♯5 E5 D5 E5 F♯5 E5 D5 E5 C♯5
3 D6 C♯6 B5 C♯6 F♯5 F♯5 B5 B4 C♯5 D5 E5 F♯5
4 A5 B5 A5 G5 F♯5 G5 A5 G5 F♯5 E5 F♯5 B5 E5 D5
5 F♯5 D5 E5 F♯5 G♯5 A5 B5 C♯6 D6 B5 C♯6 D6 B5 C♯6 B5 C♯6 A5
6 A4 B4 C♯5 D5 E5 F♯5 G5 F♯5 E5 A5 D5 C♯5 D5
7 B4 F♯5 E5 F♯5 B4 G5 F♯5 G5 B4 F♯5 A♯4 E5 B4 D5 C♯5
8 F♯4 G♯4 A♯4 B4 C♯5 D5 E5 D5 C♯5 D5 E5 F♯5 B4 A♯4 B4

Tip: It starts on its highest note, so get that fingering ready before you begin. The A♯ in the last lines is the note that pulls the tune home to B minor; practice its fingering on its own first.

Music: Christian Petzold (1720), from the 1725 Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach (BWV Anh. 115).

9 Sheep May Safely Graze

HARDER Baroque · Johann Sebastian Bach, from the Hunting Cantata, BWV 208 (1713) · B♭ major · 10 notes, F4 to G5 · 4/4 time

1 B♭4 D5 C5 C5 D5 E♭5 G5 F5 D5 C5 B♭4

2 D5 B♭4 A4 G4 C5 D5 A4 G4 F4 F4

3 F4 A♭4 G4 G4 A4 B♭4 D5 C5 A4 G4 F4

4 F5 G5 F5 F5 D5 C5 B♭4 F5 G5 F5 F5 D5 C5 B♭4

5 E♭5 F5 D5 C5 B♭4 C5 A4 B♭4 B♭4

Tip: Keep it calm and singing: slow, smooth air and no hurry on the eighth notes. The dotted quarter notes should be held full length before the short note that follows.

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach, from the Hunting Cantata, BWV 208 (1713). The opening of the soprano part.

10 Air on the G String

HARDER Baroque · Johann Sebastian Bach, the Air from Orchestral Suite No · D major · 14 notes, A4 to C6 · 4/4 time

1 F♯5 B5 G5 E5 D5 C♯5 D5 C♯5 A4

2 A5 F♯5 C5 B4 E5 D♯5 A5 G5 G5 E5 B4 A4 D5 C♯5 G5 F♯5

3 F♯5 G♯5 A5 D5 D5 E5 F♯5 E5 E5 D5 C♯5 B4 B4 C♯5 D5 C♯5 B4 A4

4 C♯5 B4 B4 C♯5 D5 C♯5 B4 A4 C♯5 D5 C♯5 B4 C♯5 A4 A5 C5

5 B4 B5 A5 G5 F♯5 G5 F♯5 E5 D5 C♯5 B4 A♯4 B4 C♯5 D5 E5 F♯5 G5 F♯5

6 E5 D5 C♯5 B4 C♯5 D5 E5 D5 B4 D5 F♯5 E5 D5 B5 A5 G♯5

7 E5 A5 A4 B4 C♯5 D5 C♯5 B4 A4 D5 F♯5 E5 E5 G5 F♯5

8 F♯5 A5 G5 G5 A4 C♯5 E5 G5 G5 E5 F♯5 G5 A5

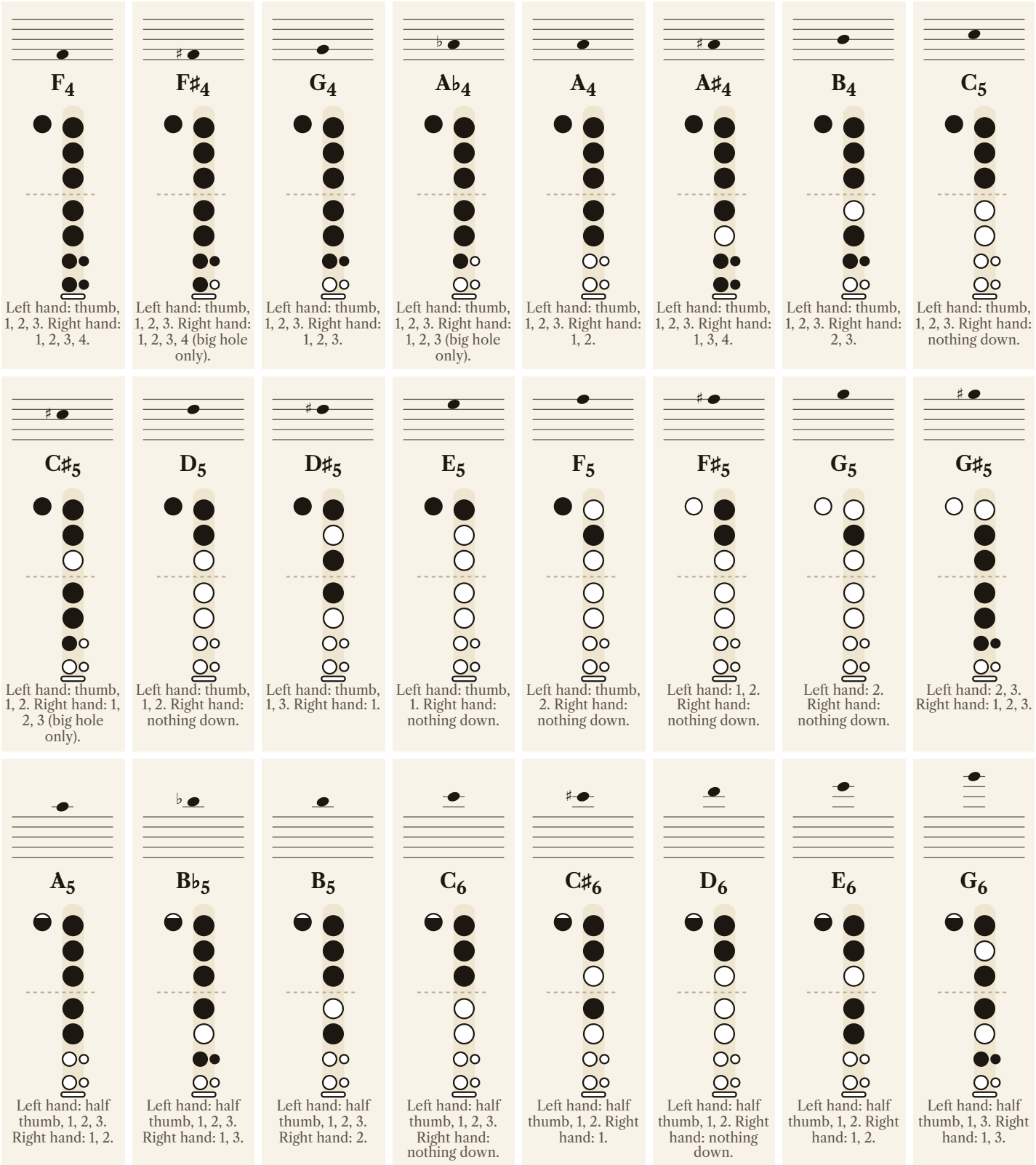
9 D5 F♯5 A5 C6 B5 D5 C♯5 E5 G5 B4 A4 E5 F♯5 G5 F♯5 E5 D5 C♯5 B4 C♯5 D5 C♯5 D5 D5

Tip: Very long notes followed by quick runs: hold each long note with steady air, then play the run evenly without rushing. Practice the fast notes slowly with the Slow button until your fingers know them.

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach, the Air from Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D, BWV 1068. The first violin part.

Fingerings for every note in these pieces

24 notes, from F4 up to G6. Alto (treble) recorder in F, baroque (English) fingering. Alto music is written at pitch, in treble clef. Filled holes are covered; open holes stay open.



Free to copy for students. The full alto recorder chart is at thefingeringchart.com/recorder/alto/