

Guide to Suzuki Violin Book 1 Teaching Points

Who is This Guide for?

It is intended primarily for parents of young children studying violin with a qualified Suzuki teacher. Parents can browse through previously-learned repertoire to remind themselves of the important points which can be practiced and consolidated through review. Or browse through upcoming repertoire to see what sorts of challenges lie ahead.

Non-Suzuki teachers interested in using the Suzuki repertoire as an adjunct to their traditional teaching might also find this guide useful. It might help them to appreciate the way in which the repertoire, rather than studies and exercises, introduces key musical and technical concepts. And Suzuki teachers might use this guide as a way of exploring other teachers' approaches to similar challenges and technical points in the repertoire.

Please note: this guide does not cover the Pre-Twinkle phase.

But This Isn't Exactly How We've Been Doing Things...

There is no one correct way to teach Suzuki Book 1. This guide represents the collective experience and opinions of several teachers in dealing with "average" young Suzuki students. No student is ever average! The timing of the introduction of skills is a personal matter for each teacher to work out in relation to each particular student. Even Dr. Suzuki was always learning and changing the way he taught to suit particular students, and as accumulated experience suggested something new might work better. Do not panic if your child is working on Allegro and hasn't been taught "independent fingering" yet. This does not necessarily mean there is anything wrong with the teaching he is receiving. There are millions of different ways of implementing the Suzuki Method.

This is Not a Cookbook!

It is impossible to write a "how-to" guide to the Suzuki Method which will work in every, or even most cases. The Suzuki Method is made up of two main components:

- The Philosophical Foundation...a philosophy of life and education, a belief in every child's potential. (See [An Introduction to the Suzuki Method](#) and read Suzuki's "Nurtured By Love" for more)
- The Pedagogical Framework...a way of putting the philosophy into the practice of teaching the violin. This framework can be further subdivided into the basics and the particulars.
 - The Basic Suzuki Teaching Style: an environment of love and support which involves the parent as well as the student and teacher, an emphasis on listening and ear training, the use of positive rather than negative reinforcement, subdivision of tasks into small, achievable steps and so on...

- The Particulars: when is a new fingering pattern introduced, how much bow should be used for certain notes, what is the best way to begin teaching a new piece, and so on. The particulars are the concern of this guide.

The Disclaimer

This guide is not a replacement for the experience and expertise of a good Suzuki teacher. It is in no way intended as a teacher-training course. It is not guaranteed to be free of errors or misjudgments. We take no responsibility for any conflicts which might arise between parent and teacher as a result of this guide, as every attempt has been made to explain that this is only one of many possible approaches. This guide is purposely not concerned with posture, pre-Twinkle teaching, basic Suzuki teaching style or the underlying foundation of the Suzuki philosophy.

Twinkle Variations and Theme

- | | |
|---|---|
| Preparation and Preview: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any and all "pre-Twinkle" games and exercises. • Open string rhythms. |
| Special Technical Points: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major scale • All variations use small amounts of bow in the middle. • Quick accurate placement of three fingers. • Careful, quick preparation of both fingers and bow: <i>set</i> the bow. • Ringing staccato tone |
| Special Musical Points: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate rhythm. • A-B-B-A form (eg. <i>bread, cheese, cheese, bread, or apple, banana, banana, apple</i>). |
| New Ideas (Review, Group Class, etc.): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme can first be done with bow division (quarter note gets half-bow, half note gets whole) and later with bow speed (use all whole bows, but slower on half note). • All can be transposed to other keys as appropriate. |
| Comments: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant review of Twinkles really pays off! |

Lightly Row

**Preparation
and
Preview:**

- Bow division on open strings: half, half [in lower half], whole, half, half [in upper half], whole, etc..
- A => C-sharp => E pattern (possibly with independent 2nd finger).

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- Bow division: matching tone in upper half and lower halves of bow.
- (Independent 2nd finger.)
- Clean string crossings.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- The concept of different endings to similar phrases ("walking up" ending and "hopping up" ending).

Song of the Wind

**Preparation
and
Preview:**

- A major scale.
- Open E bow circles - round, quick and with set in middle of the bow before and after.
- 1 - 3 - 3 - 1 - E (F#-D-high A-F#-E) keeping 1st finger down and hopping 3rd finger from string to string.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- See previews (hopping 3rd finger, bow circles).
- Ringing high A.
- (Independent 2nd finger: A - C# - E.)

- Short, clean, ringing staccato like Twinkle Variations.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- Repeat.
- Listen for piano accompaniment at all circle bow places.

Comments:

- Awareness of sequence (an appropriate division of it) is musically important: | E-D-D-D | D-C#-C#-C# | C#-B-B-B |

Go Tell Aunt Rhody

**Preparation
and
Preview:**

- Twinkle Theme with changing bow speed on quarter and half notes.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

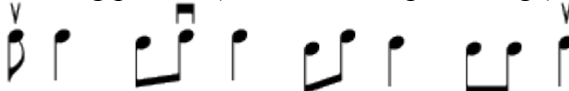
- Changing bow speed (both quarter and half notes have whole bows, but half notes have slower bow speed).
- This is the first piece to begin on a fingered note.
- Clean pick-up of 1st and 2nd fingers together, eg. at end of measure 4.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- Difference in "endings" (first with "tail" of two eighth notes and quarter note, second with plain half note).
- A gentle, singing piece (a lullaby).

O Come, Little Children

**Preparation
and
Preview:**

- Bowing pattern (in air and on open strings):


"and long lit-tle long lit-tle long lit-tle save"

- Tonalization work.
- "Toaster fingers" in measures 9-12 (B-D-C#-F#): when playing C#, 1st finger pops up and moves to E-string for F#.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- Up-bow start.
- Gentle stops between double up-bows, eg. in 4th full measure.
- Independent 3rd finger on E-string in last phrase - ringing A.
- Clean string crossings: a soft bow-arm with a strong right thumb.
- See previews.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- Tapered phrase endings.
- Phrase shaping in second half: crescendo to high A, diminuendo to end.

May Song


**Preparation
and
Preview:**



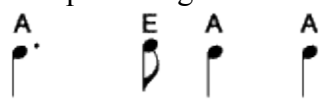
"Lightning-shaped bow-stroke" on open strings.

Say "miiiiid-dle, tip, frog".

Practice on open strings as:



And as:



**Special
Technical
Points:**

- Ringing high A. Place both 1st and 3rd (not 2nd) fingers in this case.
- Accurate rhythm and bow division (see previews). First dotted rhythm.
- Independent 3rd and 2nd fingers in measure 3. Independent 2nd finger in measure 1.
- Bow control and varying bow speeds

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- Middle sections similar to, but different from, Twinkle Theme.

**New Ideas
(Review,
Group
Class, etc.):**

- Can play together with Twinkle Theme.

Long, Long Ago

**Preparation
and
Preview:**

- D-string Twinkles.
- Review "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" (similar style piece).
- Hopping 1st finger, followed by placement of 3rd finger:
B (1st on A) - E (1st on D) - D (3rd on A)

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- First piece using D-string.
- Use left elbow motion to help intonation of hopping 1st finger (E-string should ring if 1st finger placement is accurate).
- Changing bow speed: save bow on half-note before "echo" so that "echo" is played in upper half of bow until last half-note.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- Dynamics.
- Listen for piano part in half-notes and half-note rests (it plays four eighth-notes).

Comments:

- This piece comes again in Book 2 in a different key, with a slightly different accompaniment and a variation.

Allegro

**Preparation
and
Preview:**

- Fast staccato long bows ("martelé").
- F# - G# - hiA - F# pattern in measure 2: lift 2nd and 3rd fingers quickly.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- G-sharp accurately in tune (first time for using this note in a piece).
- Stop bow at tip at the ☹️ pause and wait for the leader to initiate a quick bow circle to re-start together.
- Independent 3rd finger possible in measure 3.
- Control of "grand martelé" stroke is very important.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- Ritard and pause.
- Contrast of "exciting" and "singing" sections.

**New Ideas
(Review,
Group
Class, etc.):**


- Learning to cue the accompanist after the ☹️ pause is a new skill to learn a bit later (needed for solo performance of this piece).

Perpetual Motion

Preparation and Preview:

- A and D-major scales.
- 4th finger exercises.
- Transpose other early pieces to D-major.
- Review Twinkle Variation D for double bows.

Special Technical Points:

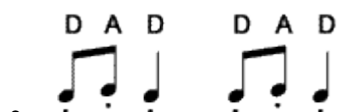
- Practice doubles first as: 
- Use of 4th finger possible here (eg. measure 2)..
- Match tone of all short staccato strokes (between tapes).
- Ringing accurate intonation.
- Co-ordination of left and right hands, especially in doubles.
- "Walking fingers" a the end of measure 10.

Special Musical Points:

- Steady tempo. Singles and doubles at consistent tempo.
- Memory: overall form is A - A' - B - B' - C - C - A - A'
A and B sections have "e-e" endings and "a-a" endings.

Allegretto

Preparation and Preview:



- Practise bowing/string-crossing pattern, beginning with down-bow and beginning with up-bow.



- Then practise with independent fingers.
- Hopping 1st finger from D-string to G-string.
- Clean staccato strokes, clear string-crossings.
- First G-string piece.
- "Walking fingers" (see preview).

Special Technical Points:

- > Accents on quarter notes.

Special Musical Points:

- Ritard and  as in Allegro.

Andantino

Preparation and Preview:

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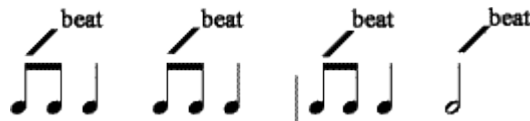
Contrast of beat emphasis and bow stroke with Allegretto. Andantino uses "lightning-shaped" bow stroke with emphasis on the first eighth-note.

Special Technical Points:

- Use of 4th finger when staying on D-string, versus open A when going up onto A-string.
- Prepare 3rd finger and bow while waiting on \frown .

Special Musical Points:

- Feel the piece in $\frac{2}{2}$ rather than $\frac{4}{4}$ time:



- Appropriate "musical" wait on \frown pause.
- Contrasts in mood.

Etude

Preparation and Preview:

- G major scale, 2 octaves and G-major tonalization: placement of 1st and 3rd finger together without 2nd on descending patterns.
- First and second "endings" and "bridges".



- preview for doubles.

Special Technical Points:

- First G-major piece: very careful to take care with intonation.
- 1st finger is often an "anchor" finger to help intonation. 1st and 3rd fingers often work together.
- Left-right co-ordination in doubles.
- Matching staccato strokes.
- Keep steady tempo.

Special

- Clean, prepared string crossings.
- Memorizing: think in sections. Watch especially the "first ending"

**Musical
Points:**

(BDGA), followed by second section which begins with two more BDGA's.

- Notice G-major descending scale patterns.

**Memory
Aids:**

Use with caution as these may serve to further confuse some students.

- **Henrietta Popaletta** words to Etude:
Henrietta Popaletta had a special friend to play called
Wilhemena Windowcleana, she had brought along her football
Henrietta Popaletta picked it up and threw it back to
Wilhemana Windowcleana and it crashed right through the window

Mother came right down the stairs and called to father
Father came right down the stairs and quickly picked up
Henrietta Popaletta, picked her up and spanked her hard (!) and
send her off to bed.

- **Pick-up Note** words to Etude:
One pick up to **two** pick up to **three** and down the scale, pick up to
One pick up to **two** pick up to **three** and down the scale, pick up to
One pick up to **two** pick up to **three** and down the scale, pick up to
One pick up to **two** pick up to **three** and down the scale, ar-peg-gi-
O! and down the scale to end on fsharp (*said as one syllable*), ar-
peg-gi-
O! and down the scale to end on G, pick up to
One pick up to **two** pick up to **three** and down the low-er scale to
end on o-pen G.
- **The Etude Train**
It should be possible for most people to print the Etude Train
directly from their browser windows. Then cut and tape the train
cars together in order from top to bottom of the page to build the
train.

Minuet 1

**Preparation
and
Preview:**



• Bowing pattern with Twinkle, tonalization and scales.



• Preview pitch/fingering pattern with Twinkle rhythms.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- Changing bow speeds.
- Change from C-natural to C-sharp to C-natural.
(Use "toaster fingers" in measure 16: 2nd finger pops up as 3rd is placed.)

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- 1st and 3rd fingers work together often as in Etude.
- First of many pieces by J.S. Bach.
- Listen for piano accompaniment during half- and dotted-half-notes especially.
- "Plain" and "fancy" endings.

Minuet 2

**Preparation
and
Preview:**



• Preview bowing on open strings.

- Slurred triplets ("lollypops"): first as separate bows, then stopped slurs, then smooth slurs.



• Prepare first using Twinkle rhythm.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- Smooth slurs.
- D-sharp (3rd finger a half-step higher).
- Placing 1st and 3rd fingers together on A and E strings frequently

helps.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- "Walking fingers" in arpeggios.
- Phrase shaping and dynamics.
- Keeping track of where you are and repeats.
- Listen to piano accompaniment during dotted-half-notes.
- Save bow on dotted-half-note before return of measure 1 theme.

**New Ideas
(Review,
Group
Class, etc.):**

- This has a nice 2nd violin duet part for later performance.

Comments:

- The longest and most complex piece yet - be patient!

Minuet 3

**Preparation
and
Preview:**



Bow pattern, first with stopped slurs, then smooth.



Fingering pattern.

**Special
Technical
Points:**

- Slurs.
- Reinforcing all G-major intonation.
- Dynamics.
- C-natural to C-sharp to C-natural, as in Minuet 1.
- Places to hold fingers down as "anchors", esp. 3rd finger.

**Special
Musical
Points:**

- "1st ending" (F-sharp, etc.) and "2nd ending" (A etc.).
- Graceful, minuet feeling.
- Listen for piano accompaniment and beat in dotted-half-note.

Comments:

- This piece comes again in Book 3 with an additional minor section.

Happy Farmer

Preparation and Preview:

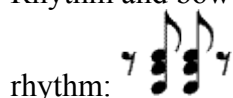


- Bowing pattern (Twinkle, tonalization, scales).

Special Technical Points:

- First and second endings ("two blind mice" and "a fat cat").

- Rhythm and bow division in dotted rhythm: hear piano right-hand



rhythm:

- Bow saves are important.
- Lower-half bowing.

- Staccato.

Special Musical Points:

- Form: A' - A' - B - A" - B - A"

Gavotte by Gossec

Preparation and Preview:

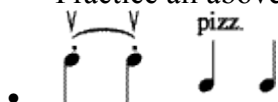


- eg. "Popcorn notes".

- "Noodle": the sixteenth-note run in the third section. Practice first with separate bows, then two-note slurs, then four-note slurs.



- Practice all above bits from fourth section separately.



- Ending of second section (last two measures).

- C# on G-string.

Special Technical Points:

- Quick clear finger action - "sparkling sixteenths".
- Good bow preparation for slurs and economy of bow stroke.

- Keep bow-hold for pizzicato. Pluck side of string over fingerboard with extended first finger.

**Special
Musical**

Points:

- "D.C. al fine".
- Ritard at end of second section, then "a tempo".

Comments:

- This is a key piece for many technical skills, and brings together many old and new skills. Detailed notes in the practising book and in the written music are very helpful.