



TEACHER RESOURCES  
Autumn 2024 (Vol. 2, No. 1)

***Share: How Do You Like to Improvise?***

1. Listen to Sean Chen’s video about improvisation (page 4).
  - Before playing the video ask: What does this pianist enjoy about improvisation? Pause at 1:21 and discuss.
  - Now listen for the two tips Sean gives for creating a unique sounding improvisation. Pause at 2:34 and discuss.
  - Then, listen to his improvisation for the two tips (sevenths and arpeggios).
  - Discuss: Are you drawn to improvisation like Sean? Do you like to spontaneously create your own music?
  
2. Compare this to jazz artist Miki Yamanaka (page 20).
  - Read interview item 1 and 2 aloud, or ask for volunteers to read.
  - Discuss: Do you feel like Miki did, when she first started, that it is hard to know what to play when you improvise? Point out that Miki is now known as a jazz improviser for her career!
  - Read and discuss item 4, her suggestions for young improvisers.
  - Read item 3, to learn how she improvises with others. Listen to some of her improvisation using the link to *Dandelion (Puff)* on page 2.
  
3. Present the different ways to improvise in the poll (page 16) and issue. *After discussing each way, tally the number of students who enjoy this style of improvisation.*
  - With a given repertoire piece: Once you’ve learned a piece, you can figure out its structure, and improvise your own version. Page 6, 10-11.
  - Using a chord chart or known melody: Create an arrangement of your favorite song and make it your own. Page 8-9.
  - To explore new chords and styles: Decide on a key (major or minor) and a meter (such as 4/4 time) and improvise! Page 14.
  - To create a mood or picture: Imagine a dark, rainy day, or a lake shimmering in the sun. See the back cover for the *Piano Inspires Kids* composition contest.
  - With a recording or backing track: Play along with the backing tracks on page 7.
  - Free improvisation: Like Sean Chen, just make it up as you go! Page 4.
  - With another musician: Like Miki Yamanaka, improvise with others. Page 20.
  
4. Add up the tallies and see the ratios.
  - Which one is the most preferred? And the least?
  - Which one would you like to try as a new challenge?
  - Discuss other ideas for ways to improvise. Consider submitting additional ways to improvise to *Piano Inspires Kids* in the poll at [kids.pianoinspires.com/submit](https://kids.pianoinspires.com/submit).

Watch Jeremy Siskind’s webinar [“Yes, You Can!”](#) to explore “breaking through student and teacher inhibitions” with improvisation on [pianoinspires.com](https://pianoinspires.com).