

# A Guide to the Keyboard

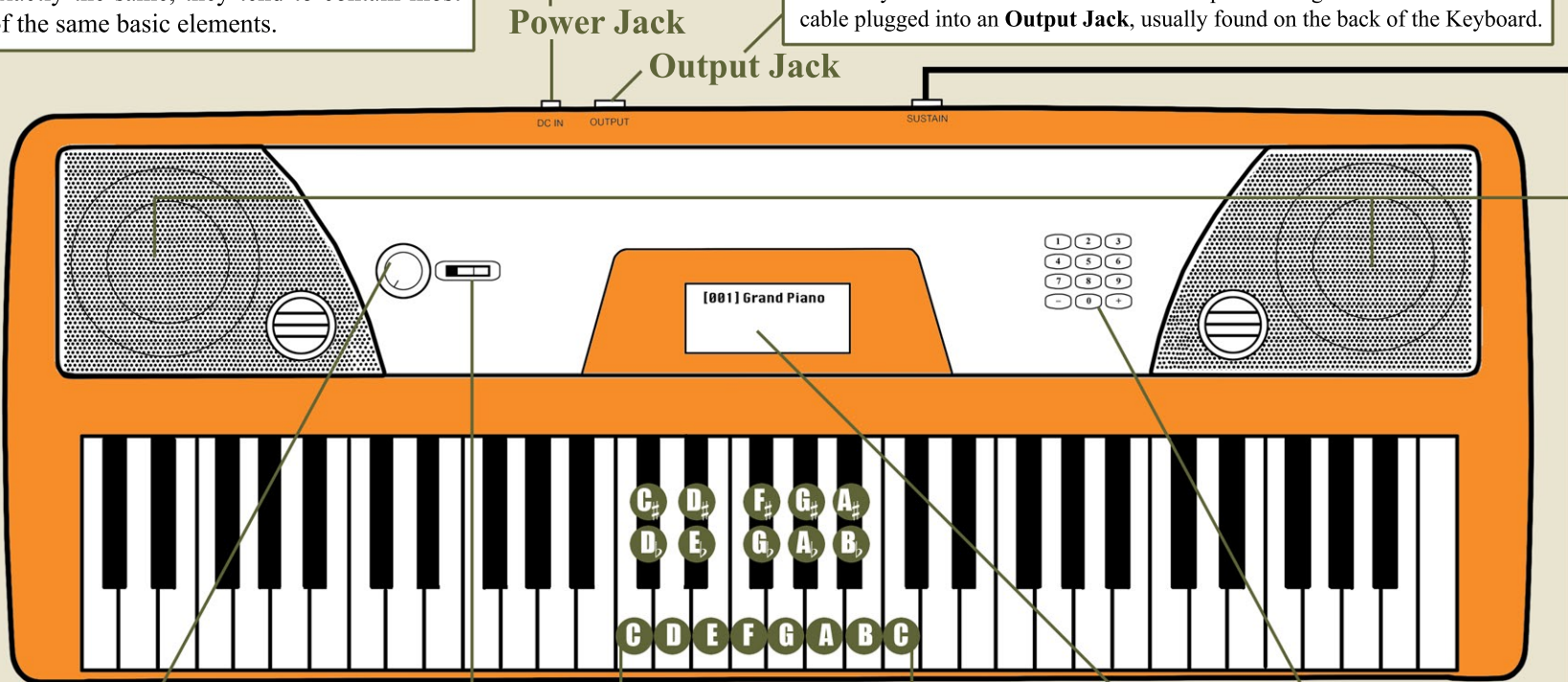


Keyboards are generally the most versatile and varied of all musical instruments. While the *keys* themselves are the same on most Keyboards, the other elements of each kind of Keyboard can differ greatly. Electronic Keyboards, such as the one shown here, are probably the most common type used in most bands, and while they seldom look or sound exactly the same, they tend to contain most of the same basic elements.

All *Electronic* Keyboards need power to function. Some can be powered by batteries, but most need to be plugged in to a power source via a **Power Jack**. Not all Keyboards use the same kind of power cable, and it is very important to use the right cable for each Keyboard to avoid damaging the instrument.

Most Keyboards can be connected to an Amplifier using a standard instrument cable plugged into an **Output Jack**, usually found on the back of the Keyboard.

Electronic Keyboards often contain dozens, if not hundreds of different sounds. They can be used to sound like pianos, organs, or other Keyboard instruments, but they can also be used to emulate almost any other instrument.



**Speakers**

Some Electronic Keyboards have built-in **Speakers**, so they can be played without being connected to an Amp. However, these speakers are usually not very powerful, and tend to be best suited to home practice.

A **Sustain Pedal** is a foot operated pedal, which, when pressed, causes notes to keep making sound after the keys themselves are released.

**Volume Knob**

Electronic Keyboards almost always have some kind of **Volume Knob** or Slider, which tends to be located somewhere on the left side of the top of the instrument.

Most Keyboards also have an independent **Power Switch**, sometimes found on the top of the Keyboard and sometimes on the back. In some cases, this switch is combined with the Volume Knob.

**Power Switch**

The **Keys** of every Keyboard, electronic or acoustic, are tuned to the same Notes and arranged in the same way. The exact number of keys can vary, (usually between 25 and 88) but they are always laid out in the same repeating pattern of black and white keys. This pattern can be used to identify which note is which. As indicated on this Keyboard, black keys are found in alternating groups of two and three. For every group of *two* black keys, the white key to the immediate left is always C, the first black key is C# or Db, the white key in the middle is D, the second black key is D# or Eb, and the white key to the right is E. For every group of *three* black keys, the white key to the immediate left is always F, the first black key is F# or Gb, the left middle white key is G, the second black key is G# or Ab, the right middle white key is A, the third black key is A# or Bb, and the rightmost white key is B. This pattern can be used to identify every note on a Keyboard of any size.

**Keys**

**Display Screen**

**Voice Selector/  
Sound Bank**

**Sustain Pedal**

Some kind of User Interface (UI) system is a very common feature of Electronic Keyboards. The basic elements of this system are a **Voice Selector**, which is often a number pad as shown here, or a dial of some sort, used to navigate a Keyboard's **Sound Bank** (the collection of possible sounds contained in the Keyboard), and a **Display Screen**, primarily used to indicate which sound (or voice) is currently selected.