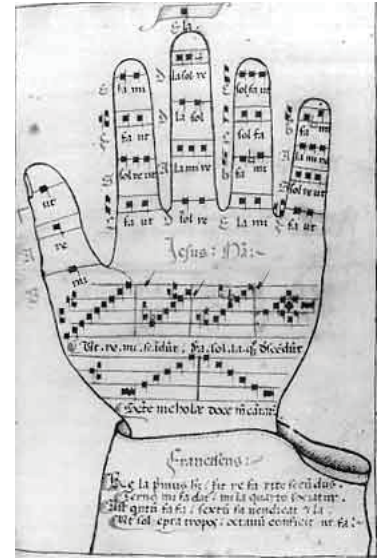


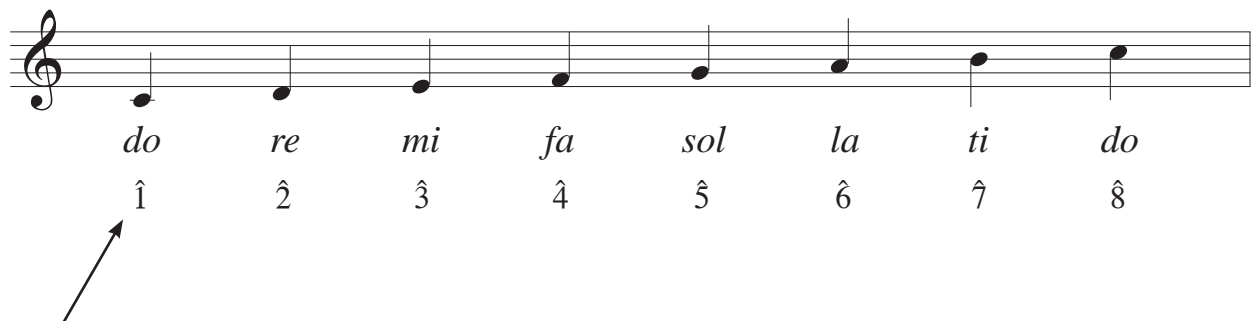
## Singing Melodies with the Solfège Syllables

Another major skill we are going to work on in this class is *sight-singing*, the practice of looking at a melody, imagining what it sounds like, and singing it out loud. We'll use a system of naming the notes in the scale as an aide to figuring out what things sound like -- these are the solfège syllables.

Solfège has been in use since the Middle Ages -- the theorist and choirmaster Guido d'Arezzo (ca. 992-1033) was a famous proponent. His method involved mapping the syllables to the joints in the hand, so that he could point to his hand to illustrate how a melody would go.



The Guidonian hand was pretty complicated, in part because there were only six syllables and you could match them to different parts of the scale. Happily, our contemporary system is a lot simpler. If we see a melody in C major, we'll name the notes in the scale like so:



(These numbers with carets are another way to indicate scale-degrees.)

### The European System (“Fixed do”)

You may know that in many languages these are simply the names of the notes - instead of saying “A, B, C...” and so many people say “la, ti [or si], do...” These folks are using a fixed do system in which “do” always means C, no matter what the context.

We are going to use an American variant of solfège which I will explain on the next page...

## Movable Do

Since we already have names for the notes, many American educators apply solfège syllables in a slightly different way - they want the same part of the scale to always have the same name. For instance, say we are working on a melody in F major. B♭ is in the key signature, and we can hear that F is the “home note” that we keep returning to. We’ll call F “do” and the rest of the notes in the scale will fall into place like so:



(Of course, we haven’t gotten into scales and key signatures, so there’s no need to worry about this just yet. We’ll start out with a bunch of melodies in C major and name the notes like I diagrammed on the previous page.)