

## Using different sounds on the keyboard

Typical keyboards have many sounds on them. It is often bewildering to go through them and find the best sounds for a job. Much more difficult is knowing the best way to play them once we've found them. As a result many people play safe and stick to one or two sounds—often pianos. Below is a table to help you with some of the most basic sounds you may want to use:

Sound	Other possible names and description of sound	Appropriate songs	How to use the sound
<b>Pad</b>	Synth pad, or a variety of prefixes before 'pad'. Warm pads and soft pads are often quite nice. Some pad sounds may have little bells or attacks on the beginning whereas others could have a very slow attack.	Usually most suited to slower or more reflective songs although they can be used to add power in hymn type songs.	Sustained chords are the name of the game here. You can also use individual notes. Try to experiment with different sizes of chords. For example, you don't always need to use 6 notes—one or two will often do. Play larger chords to build up the texture of the music.
<b>Strings</b>	As the name suggests these are whether samples or synthesised strings. It's often best to go for the ones that are a whole section of strings. They may be called symphonic strings, soft strings or other similar names. Individual instruments (e.g. violin) don't always come across very well.	Again these are most commonly used in slow songs but can be effective in most styles. If you listen to recordings of pop or rock music you'll often hear a string section!	You can use strings in much the same way as you'd use a pad but this isn't always the best way to deploy these sounds. High counter melodies work especially well on strings. Try to use a lot of scales (often at speed!) interspersed with sustained notes and flowing melody. Try not to play too low as this could interfere with other instruments.
<b>Hammond organ</b>	Emulations of electro-mechanical instruments from the 50's, 60's and 70's. Hammond organs are regularly heard in pop, rock, jazz and gospel music. You may therefore see them called rock organs or jazz organs etc.	Generally a great choice for fast rocky pieces. Some lighter sounds also work well in more reflective music but be careful about this—it can just sound cheesy!	Again high sustained notes work well on Hammond organs. A glissando up to a high note which is then held is extremely characteristic. It is also common to hear chords (or a simply melody) played under this held high note. Try to use a lot of grace notes as these sound particularly good. The last thing to try is rhythmic punching of chords in the higher registers—try to alternate hands in a complex rhythm and it can be very effective. Don't use the pedal.
<b>Electric piano</b>	Samples or synthesised versions of electro-mechanical piano's. There are several types—normal 80's electric piano (may be called a CP80), Fender Rhodes piano's or the Wurlitzer electric piano.	A good alternative to a piano when you're bored! Worth a try in almost any style.	Start off the way you would with a piano. The only thing to be careful of is that the sound of both Rhodes and Wurlitzer pianos changes when they're played hard. This can be very annoying if you do it accidentally but experiment with using this sound on purpose and it will be great!