



# **Developing Sight-Reading Throughout the Year**

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## **Texas Bandmasters Association 2017 Convention/Clinic**

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# Teaching Sight-Reading Throughout the Year

*Sight-reading can be stressful and intimidating. Often we spend too little time on it to see meaningful results. With a plan in place and a dedicated mindset to develop sight-reading skills year-round you can improve your ensemble's musical literacy and build the confidence of the individual musicians. Tips and techniques to use year-round as well as the day of your evaluation will be presented.*

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*To successfully sight-read music, the musician must already possess the skills needed to perform the music.*

## Sight-Reading vs. Performance Preparation

Preparing or rehearsing for a music performance (All Region, Concert, Contest, Marching Show)

- Usually a long term project – few weeks to a few months
- Generally learning music that has skills that have not been acquired
- Several repetitions are required to acquire or learn the skills needed for performance
- The piece is rehearsed at a much slower tempo to facilitate learning
- The complexity of the music necessitates that small chunks of music be learned and pieced together for the entire performance
- Requires a generally higher level of polish and refinement

## Reading Music (Introducing a new piece, UIL SR, Reading Music)

- Musician already has the skills needed for successful performance
- Generally easier music than a performance – less demanding technically
- Can be read at performance tempo
- Can be completed with current skills
- Can be performed with minimal explanation and no rehearsal
- Performance quality and expectations
  - Not have to stop?
  - Great tone quality!
  - Correct notes/rhythms!
  - Phrasing?

## Why should you read?

- Develops a greater sense of ensemble awareness
- Allows students to practice and refine their listening skills
- Accountability – requires that students be musicians
  - All of the information is given on the page – or can be agreed upon aurally by the ensemble
  - Do I have the melody or am I accompaniment?
  - How loud do I play for balance?
  - What is the style of the piece?
  - What/where is the basic pulse/tempo?

*Many of our students signed up for band to play songs...*

### Why should you read? (continued)

- Opportunities for formative assessment for director to reinforce/refine/enhance/adjust curriculum and lesson planning
- Kids sign up for band to play tunes
- There is an inherent sense of satisfaction and enjoyment in playing all the way through a piece
- Pacing seems faster – what did you do in band class today?
  - Practice how to start a concert F for 30 minutes?
  - Sit quietly for 30 minutes while director worked with one section/player?
  - Everyone gets to play
  - Played a really cool tune – all the way through

### Begin with the end in mind

- What outcomes do you want?
- What skills do your students need?
- Develop and implement a plan

### What should you read?

- Rhythm lines
- Unison lines in a method book
- Any exercise that will become a part of your Daily Drill or Warm-up
- Duets
- Easy pieces of music
- UIL sight-reading pieces from previous years
- New pep tune, pop tune

### How to read a tune that is too difficult to sight-read

- Go at a slower tempo
- Play from rehearsal letter to rehearsal letter
- Turn on the met
- Turn off the met and count verbally during the reading
- Fingers first – director sing/count/demonstrate part (careful not to do this too often or always so that you are rote-teaching instead of reading)
- Meet the students where they are and give them what they need for success

*Make sure you  
ALWAYS  
associate the  
aural with the  
visual.*

## Echo singing/playing

- Make sure to ALWAYS associate the aural with the visual.
- Insist that the students LOOK at what they are HEARING.

## Establish a routine for sight-reading

- Vary how much information you give - more at the beginning and less as they advance
- Bring attention to the basics of the piece
  - Key signature, time signature, tempo, style
  - Who has melody/accompaniment
  - Any challenging rhythms
  - Repeats, endings, DS, DC, Coda, etc.
- Go Slow!
- Frequent regroupings are ok
- Establish the idea that you have to keep going
  - Each individual is responsible for their own part
  - No matter what don't stop
  - Try to provide enough framework that most students can find their way

## Timeline for the year

- Beginning of the year - October
  - Rhythms and counting 2-4 times per week
  - Unison Lines 1-2 times per week
  - Rhythm exercises – count, clap,
  - Note Identification drills/exercises
  - Say the names of notes in any method book line
  - Play Method book lines
    - Go back and play lines you have skipped
    - Go back and play lines that
    - Use other method books
    - Whole notes, changing notes, note/rest patterns
  - Read during Marching Season! – Not much reading during a season of rehearsing an 8 minute show. Once music is memorized the process becomes aural only and not visual. You will have to budget time for this.

*The end of the school year is a great time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Your students will be at their best. Read and enjoy the ride.*

### Timeline for the year (continued)

- November – December
  - Read small sections of the winter concert music
  - Read holiday tunes, lines in the book
  - More advanced rhythm lines
  - More advanced lines in the method book
- January – February
  - Continue to advance what you are doing earlier in the year
  - Read easier solos
  - Read longer lines in the method books
- February – April
  - Introduce the process for the UIL Sight-Reading Assessment - 2-3 months before contest
  - Go over the rules and procedures
  - Read a very easy piece of music the first time
    - Students need to focus on learning the process not struggling with the notes/rhythms
    - Focus is on the process and gaining confidence
  - Teach and narrate through the process
    - Start a timer, begin teaching the piece within the general explanation guidelines
    - Stop the time – tell the students what you are doing and why so they will know what to expect
- After UIL – End of Year
  - Have Fun! – Contest are finished
  - Read tunes for your spring concert
  - Read a tune that you would like to do for UIL in the future
  - Read the tunes that you are too afraid to play for judges
  - Read pop tunes
  - Read pep tunes for next fall

### UIL Sight Reading Contest

- Know the rules and format
  - General/Summary explanation times
  - What you can or can't say
  - What you can and can't do
- You can find information about Sight-Reading on the [UIL Music Concert and Sight-Reading Website](#)
  - [Band Sight-Reading Instrumentation 2017](#)

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*Do your homework and remember... you are not judged on how many students wear white socks with their black pants.*

### **UIL Sight Reading Contest (continued)**

- [Band Sight-Reading Rubric](#)
- [Band Sight-Reading Percussion Instrumentation](#)
- [Sight-Reading Band Instrument Ranges](#)
- [Band Sight-Reading Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [TMAA Sight-Reading Procedure for Band](#)
- [Band Sight-Reading Criteria](#)
- [Constitution and Contest Rules \(C&CR\)](#)
- Tips to prepare
  - Do your homework – start now, learn the rules, practice often
  - Prepare your students for the process
  - Practice the process – both for your benefit as well as the students'
  - Video your band sight-reading – include the director explanation
  - Plan ahead for your warm-up
  - Assign percussion parts and split parts (trumpet 1/2) beforehand
- Tips for day of
  - Take a bottle of water
  - Enter the room before students
  - Start your 3 minutes of score study while students are setting up and judge introduction
  - Have an assistant director take your band into the room
  - Do your best to portray confidence to your students
  - Ask for the short version of the rules – you have the option for the long version. Instruct your students ahead of time. Short version saves time. Students tend to zone out.
- Judges look for...
  - Refer to the rubric – Tone, Technique, Musicianship
  - Tone quality of the band and general intonation
  - Basic music elements
    - Correct notes and rhythms
    - Accurate tempos, dynamics, and expressions
    - Musical phrasing
    - Style
- You are not judged on...
  - How organized and professionally you enter the room
  - How quiet you are during explanation
  - Director information given during the explanation
  - What type of uniforms you are wearing
  - How many kids are wearing white socks with black pants

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*Read anything  
and everything.*

### Resources

- Any Method Book – Book 1, Book 2, Book 3, technique book
- Past UIL Sight-Reading tunes – RBC lists every tune for every level from 1998-2016
- Your music library
- Any rhythm sheet
  - Rhythm Rockers – Music Mastery for Band – [musicmastery.org](http://musicmastery.org)
  - Your current method book
  - Google “band rhythm sheet”
- 40 Days of Sight-Reading For Full Band – Marty Nelson – [mrnsmusic.com](http://mrnsmusic.com)
- SmartMusic
  - Sight-reading exercises that can be assigned
  - Any method book line assigned to be sight read – view, read once, submit
  - Use any tune in the library – music on screen, mp3 band accompaniment, adjust tempo
  - Wide variety of year-round exercises, tunes, lines, etc. that can be assigned as often as you want.
  - Cursor and metronome clicks are available
- Sight-Reading Factory
- 101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns



*Hopefully, this won't be the piece you have to sight-read next year...*

Love theme from

# PRELUDE AND THE LAST HOPE IN C AND C# MINOR

TRADITIONAL  
Arranged by  
**JOHN STUMP**  
Op. 40, No. 2

from the Opera Marche de L'oise (*March of the Ducks*)

The musical score is written for multiple instruments and voices. It includes parts for Quasi Cadenza Slower, Resonator (Orchestral) Bells, Flute Solo, Un Poco Allegro, REFRAIN, THEME, Spoken, Finale, Act. I In 4, Moderately Quick, caritabile, Sopranos only, Free Chant, Rhythmic trotting tempo, Slowly-Ad Lib., Like A March, and Guitar Solo. The score features various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (e.g., fff, ff, mf, p), articulation marks (accents, slurs), and performance instructions like 'left hand softly' and 'add Altos (or Organ)'. The key signature changes between C minor and C# minor.

\*If necessary, stagger breathing so as to sustain organ point here.

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