

# Sight Reading Tips for an Audition

1) Take a deep breath. It's normal to feel a little nervous when faced with music you've never seen before and yet have to play in front of people. But take a minute to remember that this is YOUR audition. Take your time.

2) Take note of the key signature. "Say" the names of the flats or sharps "out loud in your head." Imagine feeling those flats or sharps under your fingers when you think their names. Think of the scale that belongs with that key signature.

3) Check the first measure and feel the beat in the context of the rhythm of the first measure. (The beat is what the metronome does – the steady part that doesn't change as long as the tempo - or overall speed of the piece - doesn't change).

4) Once you're confident in the basic beat, scan the piece for rhythmic variation. Check anything that looks tricky, counting it "out loud in your head" with your (or your teacher's) preferred counting system. Always be mindful of the stable beat continuing underneath. Especially note any sections where the rhythm changes from relatively fast to relatively slow. These sections may look easy, but they're probably the biggest source of errors. Somehow, our brains have a hard time registering, after playing quickly, that a slower section can possibly be that slow. You'll have a definite advantage over perhaps the majority of people auditioning if you take a moment to notice these transitions from relatively faster to relatively slower.

5) Thinking back to the key signature, scan through for any accidentals, imagining their fingering if it's helpful. At the same time, check any other tricky fingering spots.

6) Finally, take note of any expression markings: dynamics, tempo, and style. Enjoy the feeling of what you're about to express.

Practice these 6 steps every day for at least 2 weeks before the audition, or better yet every time you read anything year round! Your duo partner, band or orchestra director, adjudicator, and YOU will notice the value of your efforts!

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