

Sight-Reading STARS!

Discipline

Music

Grade and/or Course Level(s)

Middle School Instrumental Music; All Levels

High School Instrumental Music; All Levels

Overview

This plan will introduce the foundational skills and methods to develop successful sight-reading through guided practice. These methods provide students with the awareness and confidence to become capable and independent at the sight-reading process.

Objectives

- Students will read new music and identify musical symbols and terminology.
- Students will apply musical concepts during sight-reading.
- Students will apply and demonstrate a consistent method for sight-reading.
- Students will reflect on their success and areas of growth throughout the sight-reading process.

Standards of Learning (SOL)

Middle School Instrumental Music

MIB.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- f) Define and apply music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- h) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

MII.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- g) Define and apply music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- h) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

MIAD.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- g) Define and consistently apply music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- i) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

High School Instrumental Music

HIB.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- g) Define and identify music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- i) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

HII.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- g) Define and apply music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- i) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

HIAD.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- f) Apply and differentiate music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- g) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

HIAR.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- e) Identify, explain, and apply music terminology found in the music literature being studied.
- h) Sight-read music of varying styles and levels of difficulty.

Materials

- Student instrument
- Sight-reading examples: level appropriate music literature, method book, exercises, etudes, etc.
- **Build Your Own Sight-Reading Method** (attached)
- **STARS Scavenger Hunt Worksheet** (attached)
- **Sight-Reading Reflection** (attached)
- Timer (optional)
- Sight-reading online program (optional)
- Computer/projector (optional)

Student/Teacher Actions

Preparation

1. Prior to class, prepare the sight-reading material:
 - Folders for students
 - Method book exercises
 - Online sight-reading platforms
2. Warm up the ensemble using scales, arpeggios, finger patterns, etc. that will be used in the sight-reading material.

Introduce the Process

3. Hand out the **STARS Scavenger Hunt Worksheet** (attached) and review the different components of music that should be identified before starting the sight-reading process. Students should think of this as a scavenger hunt, looking for all the information that will help them eventually perform the sight-reading material. This worksheet can be completed in instrument sections, done individually, or discussed as a class. Eventually, as students become more familiar with this process, this will be a quick, independent process.
 - S- signatures (key & time)
 - T- tempo
 - A- accidentals
 - R- rhythms
 - S- signs (dynamics, articulation, repeats, endings)
4. See the provided teacher resource **Build Your Own Sight-Reading Method** (attached). Introduce the students to the sight-reading methods you have selected and explain the process you will use. Here are a few sample methods:
 - Clap and count
 - Clap and sing
 - Say note names/finger numbers
 - Air bow/shadow bow
 - Air bow- mimicking the bow strokes while hovering the bow over the string
 - Shadow bow- violins and violas place the bow in the crook of their elbow (bow hair UP!) while basses and cellos lay the bow across their lap, behind their instrument
 - Shadow finger/Air drum
 - Tizzling: Make a “tss” sound with your mouth to create rhythms, articulations, and dynamics.
 - Sing on a syllable such as “da”
 - Practice rhythms and dynamics through spoken/sung exercises or body percussion

Note: These methods can be used in different combinations. Example: Air play while singing and shadow fingering.

5. Give yourself time limits for each aspect of the sight-reading process. Here is an example timeline (times can be altered to fit ensemble needs):
 - Access music and look at it on your own: 1 minute
 - The teacher should also look through the sight-reading material.
 - Ask the students if they have any questions or do not understand something.
 - **STARS Scavenger Hunt Worksheet:** 3 minutes (talk, write, discuss)
 - Work through sight-reading method together (clap, count, tizzle, etc.): 3 minutes
 - **TOTAL:** 7 minutes

Sight Reading and Review

6. Once students have been through the preparation method, students will sight-read the music. Explain that in sight-reading, it is important to continue playing regardless if mistakes are made. The teacher may talk through the sight-reading to assist the ensemble, providing rehearsal numbers as needed.
7. After performing the sight-reading material, facilitate a discussion to reflect on the performance.
 - What were your individual areas of strength and growth?
 - As an ensemble, what do you think are our areas of strength and growth?
8. Students may also use the **Sight-Reading Reflection** (attached) before, after, or in addition to a classroom discussion.
9. Optional: Record the sight-reading process and performance and reflect on the playback.
10. Consistently practice sight-reading with your ensemble. Incorporate this practice into your rehearsals/classes throughout the school year.

Assessment Strategies

- Formative Assessments:
 - The teacher observes and provides immediate feedback during the sight-reading process.
 - The **STARS Scavenger Hunt Worksheet** can be used as an assessment tool.
 - The teacher will provide feedback and guide reflection after playing the sight-reading material.
 - Students provide feedback and reflection on their performance. **Sight-Reading Reflection** (attached)
- Summative Assessments:
 - Class performance and assessment using a teacher-provided rubric or checklist.
 - Use a clearly defined rubric to assess the students on their sight-reading (See: The Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association [Sight-Reading rubric](#))
 - Student-driven activity: Students complete a rubric or checklist to assess their sight-reading performance.

Differentiation Strategies

- Adjust sight-reading parameters to mirror the needs of the students.
- Isolate specific sections of STARS for specific student needs.
- Start with unison examples. From there, introduce two-part and then ensemble examples.
- Provide music for individual students that accommodates their needs (for example: music may only use half notes or three different pitches).

- Provide the STARS worksheet and the music with color coding (For example: both the S on the worksheet and the time signature on the music are both highlighted in yellow).

Extensions and Connections

- Extensions:
 - The teacher or students can reach out to colleges and universities to obtain sight-reading used for auditions. Advanced students will benefit from practicing college-level sight-reading.
 - Change the parameters of the sight-reading to meet the needs of your students and prepare them for the events in your district - measure count, difficulty, preparation time, range.
 - Have students sight-read an exercise by themselves. This will give you a chance to observe your students and give them an opportunity to demonstrate leadership qualities.
 - Students can use these skills to practice sight-reading on their own.
- Collaboration:
 - Have another teacher/adjudicator assess the class' sight-reading. This can be done in person or with a recording.
 - Have another teacher facilitate the sight-reading process with your ensemble so you can take the opportunity to observe your students.

Remote Learning Strategies

- This lesson can be completed via videoconferencing and through the use of digital folders.
- **STARS Scavenger Hunt Worksheet** (attached) can be completed digitally.
- Students can use video recording platforms to record the sight-reading process and performance. It is important that the practice is also recorded as the process is just as important as the product.

Resources

- [Sight Reading Factory](#): Free trial of 20 sight reading examples of your choice.
- [Noteflight](#): Allows you to compose sight reading examples that are appropriate for your students.
- [Sight-Reading Forms and Rubrics](#): VA Band & Orchestra Directors Association
- [Sight-Reading Level Recommendations \(Strings\)](#): VA Band & Orchestra Directors Association
- [Help Your Students Gain Sight Reading Confidence](#)
- [Prepare for Sight-Reading](#)
- [Sight-Reading STARS](#)
- [MusicTheory.net](#): Access lessons and exercises for key signatures, note reading, rhythms, etc.

Fine Arts Instructional Plan

- [Rhythm Randomizer](#): Online tool to practice counting, clapping, singing different rhythms. New rhythms are auto-generated with the option to adjust parameters.

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Build Your Own Sight-Reading Method

This form is meant to be used as an organization/reflection tool for the teacher.

- ☐ Clap and Count
- ☐ Clap and Sing
- ☐ Say note names/finger numbers
- ☐ Air Bow/Shadow Bow
 - ☐ Air Bow- mimicking the bow strokes while hovering the bow over the string
 - ☐ Shadow Bow- violins and violas place the bow in the crook of their elbow (bow hair UP!) while basses and cellos lay the bow across their lap, behind their instrument.
- ☐ Shadow finger/Air drum
- ☐ Tizzling: Make a “tss” sound with your mouth to create rhythms, articulations, and dynamics.
- ☐ Sing on a syllable such as “da”.
- ☐ Practice rhythms and dynamics through spoken/sung exercises or body percussion.

Place them in the order they will be used:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How did the ensemble respond to each strategy?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STARS Scavenger Hunt Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fill in each box with information from your music.

S	Signatures (Key & Time)	
T	Tempo	
A	Accidentals	
R	Rhythms	
S	Signs (dynamics, articulations, repeats, endings)	

Sight-Reading Reflection

Use musical terms or refer to STARS in each answer.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What went well? What are you proud of?

Circle all that apply: S T A R S

Explain: _____

2. What could be better? What did you find difficult?

Circle all that apply: S T A R S

Explain: _____

3. What would you like to work on? What is your goal moving forward?

Circle all that apply: S T A R S

Explain: _____

4. What strategies will you use to improve?

Explain:_____

5. How can you improve as an ensemble?

Explain:_____
