

Using SmartMusic and Finale Teaching Sight Reading: School Performing Ensembles, General Music, and Soloists



National Standards for Music Education

- 5. Reading and notating music.
- 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
- 7. Evaluating music and music performances.

DESE-Missouri Knowledge Standards

Goal 1

DESE-Missouri Performance Standards

1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 2.5 3.1 3.2, 4.4

Subject Area: Choral, vocal, theory, or general music classes

Grade Range: Any

Teaching sight reading is necessary in any well rounded music program. Instructors often find it difficult to continue to find new materials to bring to their classrooms to hold student interest. Finale and SmartMusic can generate unlimited amounts of material that can be used to augment the sight reading curriculum in any music setting.

Materials Needed: SmartMusic, Finale 2003 or later, and PA system (Optional: method of projection in classroom)

Time Allowance: Multi-Day

Objective: Students will sight read every day and will demonstrate the ability to read new music at sight with a higher percentage of correct pitches and rhythms.

Students will:

Demonstrate higher degree of mastery in sight reading music by actively engaging in consistent daily exercises.

Lesson

- **Step 1: Create simple, intermediate, and/or advanced sight reading materials for your class to read by using Finale. Choose the target area of desired fundamentals to be mastered. Open Finale's Launch Window to create your sight reading exercise. Choose from finale's Set up Wizard, Templates, or the Exercise Wizard to get started creating your materials. (Tip: Watch Finale's Quick Start Videos on "Getting Started", "Note Entry", and/or "How To" for novice Finale users or for a refresher course.**
- **Step 2: After creating the document to fit your class or ensemble, enter the notation desired. (Tip: Enter notes on one staff and copy to others, or use the Exercise Wizard's preset patterns and edit to fit the class.)**
- **Step 3: Print your document and reproduce to read in class. (Or "Save Special" in Finale to and create a SmartMusic Ensemble if desired. Many can be created with "On Screen" music for your class to sight read, eliminating the paper used to print it.)**

Using SmartMusic and Finale for Sight Reading Teacher Instructions

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Assignment Suggestions

1. Develop “target areas” from the scope and sequence of the curriculum that students need to master at their level in sight reading. Assign students to find rhythms, intervals, and specific passages in music they are learning that may present a challenge to them. From the student’s analysis; the instructor may determine additional areas to cover.

Indicators of Success

Students will be able to:

1. demonstrate in his/her sight reading a higher percentage of accuracy in an ensemble or as an individual
2. analyze new music finding rhythms, intervals, and patterns that have been drilled through frequent sight reading or “target areas”

Assessment

- Students may be assessed as a class, as a section, or as an individual.
- Use SmartMusic to record the ensemble and assess them on a predetermined set of criteria/scoring guide. (% of correct measures, etc.)
- Assign all students to sight read individually and SAVE the recording of their sight reading using SmartMusic.
- Ensembles at the high school level sight read for a rating at music contest.
- Students sight read individually for auditions of many types: District and All State Ensembles, honor groups, placement in school groups, and scholarships.

Lesson Extensions

1. Assign students to creating a sight reading exercise for your class or ensemble. Cooperative Learning groups can discuss the merits of the exercises created. The instructor will reap the benefits of many new sight reading exercises for their class.
2. Study literature that your class or ensemble will begins and create sight reading examples using the more difficult phrases, rhythms, and melodies.
3. For high school ensembles, make use of the state high school activity association’s guidelines for elements to be included in large ensemble sight reading. Include those in several Finale generated sight reading selections that the instructor creates. Use Finale to easily create additional selections with the “same” elements. “Copy” the instructor created piece into a new document. Change the key signature, melodies, rhythms, time signature, articulations, or any other elements to create an entirely “new” selection for your ensemble to sight read.
4. Use the Sight Reading Assessment form included with this lesson.

Sight Reading Assessment



Name _____ Class _____ Hour _____
Date _____

Sight Reading: _____

Accuracy: _____

Rhythms: _____

Pitches: _____

Articulations: _____

Dynamics: _____

Intonation: _____

-----Score _____

(If applicable)

Tone quality: _____

Breath support: _____

Posture: _____

Technique: _____

Embouchure: _____

Fingerings: _____

Other: _____

Instructor comments:

Improvement since last sight reading assessment:
_____ much improved _____ improving _____ improvement needed

Score: _____