

# **YOU THINK SIGHT-READING – THEY THINK FUN!**

## **Middle School Choir**

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### **DEVELOPING MUSICAL LITERACY**

Teach the basic elements of music and skills for sight-reading. As your singers become more proficient sight-readers, their intellectual grasp of music is strengthened and their enjoyment increases.

#### **Your attitude & actions**

- What you do in the first month is most important.
- Keep them interested.
- Make it like a game.
- Plan, plan, plan!

#### **Sight-reading systems (pitch & rhythm)**

- Pick a system & use it every day – even the day before holiday break and the last day of school!
- Devote 10-15 minutes a day to sight-reading.
- Can use a variety of methods and supplementary systems

#### **Teaching Strategy**

- Assess their level, but you probably will start at square 1. (This is a beat. This is a quarter note.)
- Separate rhythm & pitch (The heart beat → preferred rhythm syllables)
- Conducting
- Iconic – Curwen hand signs (use to reinforce pitch names, high and low and intervals)
- Follow a standard sequence (rhythm → pitch → chant pitch names in rhythm → review pitches (echo sing) → sing on pitch names)

#### **Sight-reading “real” music**

- Choose pieces or sections of pieces in which the students will be successful.
- Read rhythm → Name pitches (pencil in) → Chant pitch names in rhythm → review pitches (echo, isolate intervals) → Sing on pitch names (solfege) → add accompaniment → sing a cappella with the printed text → add accompaniment

#### **Suggested order of Rhythm concepts (this is over many months and possibly as much as 2-3 years)**

- Quarter, half, whole notes/rests
- 4/4, 3/4, 2/4 meters
- Eighth notes/rests
- Sixteenth notes/rests
- Eighth/sixteenth note combinations
- Tied notes
- Dotted notes
- Dotted note combinations
- Simple meter & compound meter (6/8)
- Triplets

- Syncopated patterns
- Swing rhythm

**Suggested order of Melodic concepts (over many months and possibly as much as 2-3 years)**

- Staff, clefs, scale, key
- Major & relative minor
- Stepwise diatonic
- Intervals in the tonic chord
- Intervals in the dominant chord
- Intervals in the subdominant chord
- Isolated intervals
- Altered pitches
- Modes

**Develop independence and “practice” sight-reading**

- “Combinable” lines (build confidence in sight-reading)
- Look for musicality and variety in “practicing sight-reading”
- Use a variety of methods/techniques to keep it interesting and singers engaged.
- Assess whether to move ahead with new concepts or continue practicing current concepts.
- Apply sight-reading methods to performance music.