

1. Sight reading is a skill that has to be practiced separately from playing repertoire and it has to be practiced REGULARLY or you will not improve.

2. To improve your sight reading skills set aside at least 20 minutes each day to practice sight reading music you have not seen before.

3. Find sight reading materials. This may prove to be challenging, but here are some suggestions:

- Ask your piano teacher for materials.

- Hymnals are good resources. Ask your music church director, pastor, or priest if you can borrow a hymnal. Otherwise you can purchase hymnals on amazon.com

4. Start by sight reading EASY music. For example, beginning level piano method and repertoire books.

5. Often the problem with sight reading is really a problem with reading RHYTHMS. You should practice clapping rhythms separately from playing pieces on the keyboard.

6. It is advisable that you have a metronome and that you practice clapping rhythms along with the metronome. Free metronomes are readily available for tablets and smart phones. We recommend: Pro Metronome, available for free download for your Ipad® or Iphone® on Apple's App Store.

7. Establish your SIGHT READING TEMPO. There is a tempo that you can sight read any music, no matter how difficult. This may be an extremely slow tempo at first — but nevertheless, discover what it is and generally practice sight reading at a slow tempo until you gain confidence.

8. Begin by sight reading music in keys with few accidentals such as C major, A minor, F major, D minor, etc. As you progress through a book or a collection, choose only the selections in the same key. For example, you could focus on sight reading only pieces in the same key on a specific day of practice. The following day, choose a different key.

9. Before you begin sight reading the selection:

- Look through the selection to discover any unusual aspects such as accidentals, challenging rhythms, etc.

- Choose a conservative tempo

10. As you are sight reading the selection:

– Keep your eyes on the music and try not to look at your hands.

– Keep your eyes ACTIVE — make them move up and down within the measure on the current beat. Don't let your eyes be static by just looking at one place — make them move.

– Make your eyes move ahead of your hands by one or two notes, maybe a whole beat if you can. An accomplished sight reader can look ahead several beats, even whole measures.

11. When sight reading it is more important to keep the tempo steady than to play correct notes. If you have to, let one hand drop out or only play a few notes so you can keep the tempo steady. Imagine that you are playing with a group of musicians and if you stop playing everyone else will keep going, so you have to "keep up." This is why it is important to begin with a CONSERVATIVE TEMPO and with SIMPLE MUSIC.

12. Your knowledge of key signatures, scales and arpeggios (fingerings), and chords is definitely an influence on your ability to sight read keyboard music. So you should:

– Practice the scale and the arpeggio in the key of the piece you are going to sight read. Two octaves up and down would be sufficient. Although, advanced pianists practice scales and arpeggios four octaves. In this regard, it is not so important to practice the scale and arpeggio fast — just practice it to review the notes and the fingerings.

– Practice the CADENCE in the key of the piece you are going to sight read. If you have not practiced cadences before, you can find those resources [HERE](#).

13. Gaining skill at sight reading keyboard music requires you to improve your VISUAL MEMORY and your ability to visually recognize basic musical forms such as skips and steps, intervals, triads, seventh chords, and scales. See the Fundamentals Review to learn more about this.