
The golden rules

A sight-reading checklist

Before you begin to play a piece at sight, always consider the following:

- 1 Look at the piece for about half a minute and try to feel that you are *understanding* what you see (just like reading these words).
- 2 Look at the time signature and decide how you will count the piece.
- 3 Look at the key signature and think about how to finger the notes.
- 4 Notice patterns – especially those that repeat, or are based on scales and arpeggios.
- 5 Notice any markings that will help you convey the character.
- 6 Don't begin until you think you are going to play the piece accurately.
- 7 Count at least one bar in.

When performing a sight-reading piece

- 1 Keep feeling the pulse.
- 2 Keep going at a steady tempo.
- 3 Remember the finger pattern of the key you are in.
- 4 Ignore mistakes.
- 5 Look ahead – at least to the next note.
- 6 Play musically, always trying to convey the character of the music.

With many thanks to Gillian Secret for her invaluable help.

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This edition first published in 2011 by Faber Music Ltd.
Bloomsbury House 74–77 Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DA
Music processed by Donald Thomson
Cover and page design by Susan Clarke
Cover illustration by Drew Hillier
Printed in England by Caligraving Ltd
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ISBN10: 0-571-53621-2
EAN13: 978-0-571-53621-4

US editions:
ISBN10: 0-571-53661-1
EAN13: 978-0-571-53661-0

Prepared pieces

- 1 What is the key? Play the scale elegantly.
- 2 Tap the rhythm of the piece then hear the rhythm in your head.
- 3 Do any bars have the same rhythm?
- 4 Play an A (the first note) then hear the piece in your head.
- 5 How will you put character into your performance?

Elegantly

1



- 1 How will you finger the first note?
- 2 How are the first five bars similar?
- 3 What else do the first three bars have in common?
- 4 Tap the rhythm of the piece. Now hear the rhythm in your head.
- 5 How will you put some character into your performance?

Jokingly

2



Improvising

1

Make up your own piece (it can be as long or as short as you like), beginning with this pattern. Keep the pulse steady.



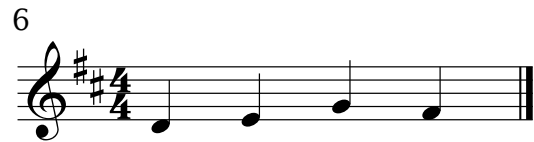
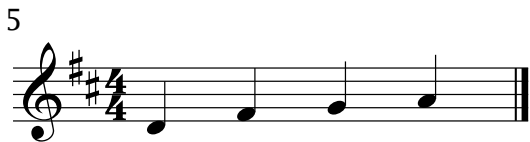
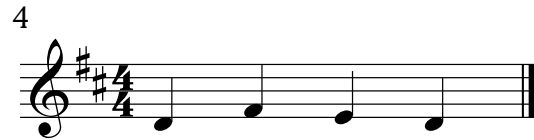
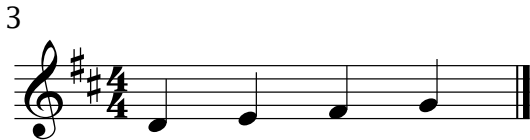
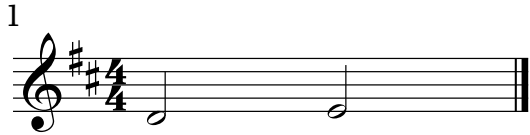
2

Now make up your own piece in A major – using any notes of the scale you like.

Stage 5

Reading
at a glance

Here are some patterns you have already met in this book, beginning on open D. Have your violin and fingers ready, and look at each exercise for a couple of seconds. Then shut your eyes and play it. Check to see if you were right. If you were, you are already successfully reading patterns *at a glance*.



In the next exercises try to take in each 3-beat group at a glance and, as you are playing, look ahead to the next group.

