

MSVMA Choral Festival Sight Reading Information and Procedures

Choral festival sight reading has been designed to assess our students' sight reading ability. To be successful, preparation prior to festival is required/necessary. Sight reading should be a regular part of daily class/ensemble rehearsals. Students and directors should select and adhere to a sight reading method with which they are comfortable and can have success. Whether a group is singing for a final determination or comments only, the choir is required to sight read. (Choirs singing for comments only may request a sight reading clinic.) This applies to both high school and junior high/middle school choirs.

Levels and Voicing

- Policy change for 2023-2024 School Year - All choral festival entries must sight read in their school category, i.e. HS must read HS and JHMS must read JHMS. The director must choose the voicing of festival sight reading to match the voicing of one of the two performance pieces. The director may choose any level.

General Information

- The MSVMA Sight Reading Rubric defines the criteria for adjudication.
- Sight reading exercises will be printed in the appropriate clef for each voice. In the case of unison exercises involving male voices the exercise will be printed in both clefs.
- Each exercise will be eight measures in length.
- Directors should choose a tempo at which the group can succeed.

General Rules and Procedures

- When the choir enters the room, the singers will organize themselves into the

arrangement of their choice. The sight reading books will remain closed.

- The adjudicator will confirm with the director the level and voicing to be read.
- The singers will open the sight reading books when instructed to do so.
- The director and singers may discuss all of the exercises at the beginning of the session, or may address each exercise separately.
- The director and singers may discuss any of the musical elements of the exercises, but during the performance the director may not sing the exercise, clap the exercise, or in any way perform the exercise with/for the students.
- If the director chooses to conduct the exercises, he/she may only conduct the basic meter of the exercise.
- The director may use conducting and/or unvoiced assistance in maintaining a steady tempo (ie. clapping, snapping, tapping).
- The director is discouraged from giving verbal assists during the performance of each individual exercise. Oral assistance from the director while the students are performing will be evaluated in light of the overall performance.
- Rhythmic exercises must be sung using an effective reading system. Singers may not clap any of the rhythmic exercises.
- The director may transpose the key to best support the vocal abilities of the choir. The director should inform the adjudicator of the key change.
- Beginning pitches may be given vocally, by piano, or by pitch pipe.

Preparation

- The Warm-up – The key may be established by having the students sing a few scales or chord patterns. Students may sing random intervals or patterns such as 1-3-5-3-1, 1-4-6-4-1, etc. in preparation.
- Directors may only sing with the choir during the warm-up to establish keyality. Directors may not illustrate by singing AT ANY TIME intervals directly referenced from the exercise.
- When discussing the exercise, the director may point out potentially problematic

intervals contained therein. However, he/she may not immediately rehearse them with the choir.

- All singers are permitted to discuss and sing with their neighbors during the prep time, as long as the director is not assisting by illustrating intervals or rhythms. This practice of “neighboring” is limited to 2 or 3 students.
- The “neighboring” groups may not join together and prepare as one section.

Performance Instructions for Junior High/Middle (all levels) and High School (Primary and Intermediate)

- The performance should be sung using an effective reading system.
- Exercise #1 - The rhythm will be sung.
- Exercise #2 - The rhythm and pitches will be sung.
- Exercise #3 - The rhythm will be sung.
- Exercise #4 - The rhythm and pitches will be sung.
- Exercise #5 - The rhythm and pitches will be sung.

Performance Instructions for High School (Advanced)

- The performance should be sung using an effective reading system.
- The exercise will be sung once for adjudication.

Advanced Sight Reading rule change

The practice of "neighboring" is limited to 2 or 3 students of the same part, or a group of one student per part such as SATB quartet, SSAA quarter, TTBB quartet, etc.