

# Learning A New Piece Of Music

## 1. What Is The Piece?

Is it meant to be happy? Sad? Who wrote it? Does the piece have a specific meaning? Don't get bogged down in the notes yet; it's all about the music!

## 2. Tempo and Meter

How fast or slow is the piece? What's the time signature? Does it change?

## 3. Key Signatures and Accidentals

Is the piece in a specific key? What sharps or flats are always applied? Which ones show up throughout the piece, but are written in? Which ones are you worried about missing?

## 4. Patterns

Does the piece use the same music multiple times? Are there any sections that are similar or identical to other sections?

## 5. Rhythm

Now let's start looking at the music. Are there any weird rhythms? Think through the music without involving notes; just think about the timing.

## 6. Notes and Audiation

Audiation: Imagining the sounds and pitches within your head without actually creating any sounds.

Now that we are aware of rhythm, key signatures, tempo, etc., we can start thinking about the notes. Think through the piece, finger along, and – most importantly – audiate! Think about what the piece is going to sound like. If you can imagine it, you can do it!

## 7. Try It!

If you get stuck, take a deep breath and keep going. That's what sight-reading is all about – making it to the finish line!

## 8. Advanced: Articulation, Dynamics, And Shaping

Once you're comfortable getting through steps 1 – 7, try looking deeper. Look at the dynamics; do they change frequently? Look at the slurs and articulation; think about what should be crisp and what should be beautiful. Then look for crescendos and diminuendos, and any other guidance of what to do with each phrase. Music isn't just notes!

## 9. Remember, it's all about creating *music!*