

Judging Tips & Sightreading Deductions

PURPOSE OF TMEA THE SIGHTREADING AUDITION

To create and ensure the students in region and All-State choirs are literate and prepared to read and master new/added repertoire on site, ensuring the best quality performance at the end of the audition process.

The sightreading portion of the TMEA "Path to All-State" audition process was added in 1977.

DEDUCTIONS IN THE SIGHTREADING AUDITION

The role of a great judge should be to award as many points possible for an audition, not just deduct. The following deductions are assigned to give a student the maximum points possible for their sightreading.

Pitches and Rhythm:

1. 1 point reduction for inaccurate pitch
2. 1 point reduction for inaccurate rhythm

Modulation of key center:

1. 5 points off at each noticeable key change
2. Continue to judge pitches and rhythm accordingly in the new key
3. While students should not be penalized for singing the entire exercise in a different key than what was set by the tonic triad played by the audition track [see Common Sightreading Audition Questions below], there is a 5 point deduction if the exercise is not performed in the same octave as the auditioned literature voice part. [eg. treble voices must sing in the tenor octave if they are entered as a tenor voice part]

An obvious attempt by a student to avoid singing the melodic line by chanting the rhythm will result in a score of 1 point.

The student should begin performing the sightreading exercise within 10 seconds of the second tonic triad being played on the recording. 5 points will be deducted if the student does not begin performing the sightreading exercise in this time. If a student does not begin performing the sightreading exercise within 30 seconds, the lead judge will say "thank you" as a direction for the student to exit the room.

It is appropriate to deduct 1 point each time the student pauses in the performance of the sightreading exercise. This includes stopping and starting over.

COMMON SIGHTREADING AUDITION QUESTIONS

1. May a student tap during their performance of the sightreading exercise? **YES**
2. Is a student allowed to switch from performance using solfege to a neutral syllable? **YES**
3. Should a student receive credit for saying the wrong solfege syllable but singing the correct pitch using the correct rhythm? **YES**
4. Are students expected to sing musical phrases in their performance of the sightreading exercise? **NO**
5. If the student begins singing in a different key than is pitched in the tonic triad, and proceeds to perform the entire exercise in that key, should any points be deducted? **NO**
6. Is a student allowed to sing the tonic triad on their own after the triad was played following the 30 second practice period? **NO** [per the instructions, "You will begin immediately to sing the exercise ..."]

JUDGING EXPECTATIONS FOR LITERATURE AND SIGHTREADING ROUNDS

1. A Judge's Raw Score Assignment Form is provided at all rounds of auditions. All judges are expected to utilize this form even as the audition software bars you from submitting repeated entries of a total literature round score. Once you have entered the student's score, record the singer's audition number beside that score on the Judge's Raw Score Assignment Form. Judges will not be able to use that score again.
2. Be consistent with yourself as you judge literature.
3. Remember the first literature audition you hear and the score. Compare every audition to the first student you heard to award the fairest number of points.
4. Judges never converse with other judges during either round of auditions.
5. All judges are expected to write comments, regardless of the round of auditions.
6. Judge each audition equally, whether the student was the first to sing or the last.

UPDATED WRITTEN SIGHTREADING INSTRUCTIONS TO BE PROVIDED TO EACH STUDENT AT REGISTRATION FOR ALL AUDITION ROUNDS

“You will be instructed by the audition recording to look at the sightreading exercise. The recording will play the tonic triad in broken fashion (do-mi-sol-mi-do-sol-do), followed by the starting pitch. A 30-second study period shall follow. You will be allowed to tap, chant, or sing during this study period. You will not be allowed to use any tuning device or any additional materials as aid during the study period or in singing the exercise. You may not write on the exercise for any reason.

At the end of the 30-second study period, the audition recording will instruct you to stop, then play the tonic triad again in broken fashion (do-mi- sol-mi-do-sol-do), followed by the starting pitch located within the tonic triad. You will begin immediately to sing the exercise using your preferred method of sightreading (syllables, numbers, neutral syllables, or any combination). No additional study time is allowed.

You will have only one chance to sing the exercise unless there is mechanical failure with the playback sound system.”

Contest Chairs may not deviate from the above procedure at any level.