

Strategies for Choir Sight Reading

Before adjudication

1. **Sight Read weekly - If you can do this daily, awesome. I try to get it done weekly.**
2. **Have a common language with your students.**

This is super important. I use solfege but you could also use the number system. Either of these systems will help to orient the students on where the intervals will fall in their voices. It is also important for when you are coaching them before their exercises

3. **Explain why this is important, and make it FUN!**

I know I am “preaching to the choir” (or band) on this one, but it is really important. We should have a better reason for putting in this time than “MHSA makes us get judged on it”. Some of the things I do to change it up are; put solfege on the board and skip different intervals, have songs in solfege for them to figure out and sing together (star wars theme, Soft Kitty Warm Kitty, Old Town Road).

Adjudication time - How to tackle this beast? This is how I do it!

_____ **During your 2 minute time, what to look for?**

1. **Look at the beginning syllables.**
2. **Look for unison singing sections, where can they come together....hopefully on Do!**
3. **Look for patterns in each part so that you can point them out to individual sections.**
4. **Find the A and B sections so you can point them out.**
5. **What do they do from the bottom of one page to the top of the next, also check out the page turns.**

How to best use your 6 minutes with your kids

1. **Point out the key and make sure that everyone knows their beginning notes. They should be working independently while you are discussing each section’s part. Students can talk and discuss during this time. They can’t sing, but they can work together.**
2. **Spend time with each section, quickly and efficiently. I usually start with the Basses as they are our foundation. Point out anything you found above. Always, where they can find a Do with everyone else. Then I move to the Tenors and Altos. Tenors typically have a lot of stepwise motion and the Altos sing a lot of La Do skips with stepwise**

motion. I move to the Sopranos last. I find their part is the hardest, with some awkward intervals and a melody that they aren't familiar with. Always point out Do!!! This is their home base.

- 3. If you have time left, you can lead the students in chanting through the piece. This is legal, as long as there is no pitch. They can chant the syllables or numbers.**

You are ready to start!!! Remind them that they can do this!!!!

You can run them through the scale and some arpeggios. Make these a part of your warm ups so the kids are used to them and comfortable.

During your second run, just point out the places where they can do better. It is just a second chance.

A few last tricks that you might not know are legal.

- 1. You can count rhythm with the students.**
- 2. You can talk to them while they are singing. I do this a lot with my kids. I point out what is coming up "get ready for Do" or "measure 12 now". I have seen lots of conductors be silent while the kids could use this kind of help.**
- 3. You can change the key for them to be more comfortable.**
- 4. You can choose the voicing that will work best for the group. If you have 1 person on a part, they don't have to hold the part alone, you can choose 2 Pt and have them sing with someone else.**