

# Unit 02: Reading and Interpreting Music for Rhythm and Pitch

Content Area: **Music**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **ongoing**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

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A continued growth in the ability to read notation of rhythm and pitch, as well as the relationship they have, is key to musical success. Students will work to develop sight-reading abilities and aural skills and understand how to read and interpret the markings on the musical score.

## Transfer

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## Essential Questions

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- • How do composers represent sound traveling through time (rhythm)?
- • How do composers represent the frequency of sound (pitch)?

## Essential Understandings

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- • a conductor's gesture aims to maintain the rhythmic pulse of a piece of music.
- • each member of the choir has a responsibility for the pulse, rhythmic integrity, and intonation of a piece being performed by being aware and fully engaged in multiple ways (kinesthetic, auditory, visual, etc.).
- • learning the musical part of the other vocal sections and understanding its relationship to the other parts creates a better, more informed and thoughtful performance.
- • performers should follow a composer or arranger's notation and markings, but the performers and conductor have the freedom to be flexible with tempo and duration of pitch for interpretational purposes.
- • rhythmic accuracy is the most important component in creating a uniform sound in a choral ensemble.

## Students Will Know

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- • how to identify and correct poor intonation, both in melodic and harmonic situations.
- • how to interpret and perform written rhythms and rests in relationship to any given meter.
- • how to mark and read a variety of choral/vocal scores.

- • how to perform a major scale, the three minor scales, and any modes or accidentals needed for the repertoire being studied.
- • how to take four-measure melodic dictation, with accurate rhythm and pitch (including dotted-rhythms).
- • how to use diatonic and chromatic solfege to aid in pitch accuracy, both in sight-singing and in the choral repertoire.
- • how to work together in maintaining a steady pulse when necessary, and engaging in expressive rubato by responding to the gestures of a conductor.
- • several counting systems as tools for interpreting rhythm within a meter, including count-singing.
- • the difference between rhythm and tempo/pulse.
- • the major key signatures and scales.
- • the note names of the treble and bass clef, including enharmonics.

## **Students Will Be Skilled At**

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## **Evidence/Performance Tasks**

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- • debate, experiment with, and determine the appropriateness of using rubato in the repertoire and changing or being flexible with the tempo or pulse for interpretational purposes.
- • evaluate the accuracy of their own and others' performances of pitches and rhythms.
- • explore and reflect on the essential questions through discussions and journaling.
- • identify and accurately perform appropriate solfege syllables to corresponding pitches within sight-singing examples and choral repertoire.
- • identify and remedy intonation and rhythmic problems in the preparation and performance of choral repertoire.
- • identify the tonic of a piece of music, by looking at the key signature and by aural recognition.
- • perform a basic conjunct, diatonic melody at-sight accurately and in tune.
- • perform major, minor, and chromatic scales as a class and individually.
- • perform pitches and rhythms as a class and individually, at-sight and rehearsed, with accuracy.
- • perform pitches, rhythms and harmonies accurately within a quartet or octet.
- • write accurate pitches and rhythms derived from aural dictation.

## **Learning Plan**

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- • Encourage student use of counting for learning rhythms in repertoire. Write in counting when necessary. Teacher isolates especially complex rhythms for practice and discussion.
- • Encourage student use of solfege and learn pitches in repertoire utilizing the appropriate syllables.
- • Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the course
- • Students and teacher engage in kinesthetic and eurhythmic activities during vocal warm-ups and

within the preparation of repertoire, which relate to specific meters, rhythms, or rhythmic issues.

- • Students daily perform rhythm and pitch in sight-singing exercises from the Jensen Sight-Singing Series or other resource.
- • Students experience a variety of meters, rhythms, keys, and tonalities within the choral repertoire selected each year. Each piece has its own unique musical characteristics and challenges for students and teacher to explore.
- • Students perform repertoire accurately for school and community concerts and events.
- • Teacher asks students to isolate pitch (by singing without rhythm) or rhythm (by chanting or clapping without pitch) to draw attention to difficult passages or remedy inaccuracies. Teacher also isolates specific vocal sections.
- • The teacher records various rehearsals and concert performances. The class listens, critiques, and assesses the accuracy of rhythm and pitch in the performances.
- • Through careful listening, awareness and discussion, teacher and students will identify, remedy intonation issues within the choral repertoire. By holding specific chords, students listen for and discuss intonation issues present in the harmony.
- • Using solfege charts, hand signs, and regular practice during vocal warm-ups, students become proficient in singing major, minor, and chromatic scales. Together the teacher and students evaluate the performance and identify and remedy intonation difficulties.

## **Materials**

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## **Suggested Strategies for Modifications**

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- • Allow students to write in solfege when necessary.
- • For students who have difficulty reading or following the written score, we can increase the size of the music and/or highlight students' individual parts.
- • Seat stronger students next to students who might need assistance in following their part or hearing their pitches.