

SIGHTREADING TIPS

This brief chapter will focus on several tips, methods, and approaches to use when sightreading standard notation. The term sightreading simply means to “read as you go” without ever having seen the material before, very similar to how you would read a book. You don’t memorize an entire book word-for-word and then go back and read through it, but instead, you read and interpret each word as it goes by without ever having read it before. This concept is fully analogical to sightreading, as you are reading what is on the page right as you see it for the first time without any use of memorization or prior knowledge. It is very common for many musical ensembles to play entire performances this way, where the first time the musicians see the music is when they are performing it for an audience. Other types of gigs may provide you with music and only schedule a few rehearsals before the final performances. Even though a few rehearsals will allow you to have a general idea of what to expect in the music, it will not be enough time to actually memorize fine details or specific parts. As a result, you will still be sightreading the music to a degree during the final performances. The mental process required to look at a piece of music, identify the note while simultaneously looking ahead at the next few notes, associating this note with a fret on your instrument and then playing this note in time with a metronome or live band is quite an immense one, and takes some time to perfect. However, once you begin to get the hang of