

Introduction

Everything in the arts begins with a dream. Then through expertise, hard work and a strong desire we, the artists, turn that dream into a reality.

Nancy Telfer
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For Whom is Book 2 of Successful Sight-Singing Designed?

Students and adults with unchanged, changing or changed voices who have completed Book 1:

- 1) Singers in **middle school, high school, university, community or church choirs;**
- 2) **Instrumental and choral music students at the university level** studying musicianship, ear-training, theory or sight-singing;
- 3) **Private instrumental, vocal or piano students** who wish to review skills learned in Book 1 and continue ear-training at a more advanced level.

Gifted students in accelerated programs may be able to use Book 2 without preliminary work in Book 1.

At the **university** level, all first year music students can be tested with some of the final exercises from the last milestones of Books 1 and 2. Then divide the students into three groups:

- 1) **No sight-singing skills** - Start at the beginning of Book 1; complete Books 1 and 2
- 2) **Some sight-singing skills** - Start at the beginning of Book 2; complete Book 2
- 3) **Excellent sight-singing skills** - Exemption from sight-singing classes

All university music students should reach the competency level of Milestone 8 before they graduate.

Exercises in three parts may be sung:

- 1) Each part separately;
- 2) Parts 1 and 2 alone;
- 3) Parts 1 and 3 alone;
- 4) All three parts together.

Which Features are Continued From Book 1?

- ♦ lyrics and dynamics;
- ♦ contemporary musical elements;
- ♦ unaccompanied exercises;
- ♦ well-crafted, original music;
- ♦ limited ranges whenever possible;
- ♦ variety of styles of music;
- ♦ technical pitfalls;
- ♦ color-coded information;
- ♦ choral publishing format;
- ♦ 5-10 minute sessions at least once a week;
- ♦ exercises that are fun to sing.

What New Features are Included in Book 2?

- ♦ a quick review of all elements presented in Book 1;
- ♦ old skills continued on to more advanced levels;
- ♦ new sight-singing tips;
- ♦ exercises with three independent parts;
- ♦ more practice with bass clef;
- ♦ extensive use of modulations, advanced interval training and atonal music;
- ♦ new activities for problem areas;
- ♦ problem-solving chart for singers;
- ♦ quick diagnostic chart for teachers;
- ♦ "In Rehearsal" suggestions for reinforcement and transferral to concert repertoire.

Teaching Sight-Singing

Should All Singers Learn to Sight-Sing in Both Treble and Bass Clefs?

Yes, but they should spend most of their time using the clef suitable for their own voices. The important sight-singing skills are the same whether you are reading in treble or bass clef; these skills transfer fairly easily between the two clefs.

All singers need to learn to sing from both treble and bass clefs to be able to read their cues from other vocal parts or the piano accompaniment. Basses need treble clef skills to read unison sections. Tenor parts may be in treble clef or in bass clef (i.e. when they are on the same staff as the bass part).

Is it Important to Use the Lessons in Order?

The singers should have a strong sense of the rhythm framework and the pitch framework before continuing on to more difficult exercises. Then it is possible to skip ahead to a later lesson to teach a rhythm, pitch or concept which is used frequently in the singers' current

Sight-Singing Lessons

◆ ◆ SKILLS REVIEW ◆ ◆

1

d s 

INTRODUCE

tonic (home)
dominant (far away from home)
do, so

◆ SKILLS REVIEW ◆

1


1

tonic	home
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1

dominant	far away from home
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tonic dominant



do so

(on a space) (2 spaces above)

tonic dominant



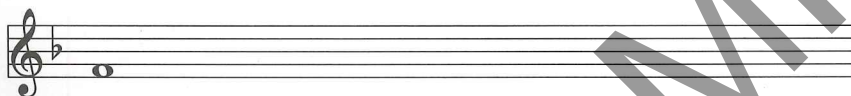
do so

(on a line) (2 lines above)

Teachers who use numbers instead of sol-fah syllables may wish to continue using numbers.

EXPLAIN: The higher the note is on the staff, the higher in pitch it will sound. Let the notes show your voice whether to go higher or lower in pitch.

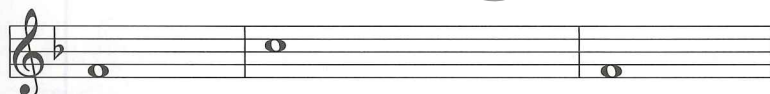
Sing as a chant:



“Do” is the tonic; it sounds like home.



“So” is the dominant; it sounds far away from home.



Home, far away from home, home.

NOTE: Whenever the “home” tone is sung, it should sound solid and strong. “Far away from home” should sound less settled. The tonic and dominant are used more often than any other pitches in concert repertoire. The singers should memorize:

- i) The sound of the pitches “do so do”;
- ii) The feeling of the “home” tone.

Ask the singers to sing “do so do” in F major, then in G major, then in F major again.

See page 179 in the Teacher’s edition for an activity to memorize the interval of a fifth.

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fifth

SING Exercise 1:

In two parts with the lyrics the first time through.
(Tenors and basses will sound an octave lower than the written music.)

NOTE: Sight-singing is being able to sing a new piece of music accurately with the lyrics the first time through. Singers may have difficulty using the lyrics with the music at first but they quickly improve and the lyrics become a natural part of sight-singing.

If these exercises are sung to a neutral syllable, sol-fah syllables, numbers or time names the first time through, the singers never have an opportunity to practice real sight-singing with these exercises. It is particularly important that the singers practice fitting the words with the music at this very easy level in the first few exercises. This gives them an opportunity to let their eyes develop the skills needed to read words and music at the same time before the exercises become more difficult.

After the singers have sight-sung an exercise, you may wish to go back over the exercise with them to analyze or make corrections using any skills they have with sol-fah syllables, time names or numbers.

REPEAT Exercise 1:

Encouraging the singers to sing:

precisely together and *exactly in tune.*

Commend their courage in attempting the right pitches and rhythms without waiting to hear their neighbors' voices first. Mistakes are permissible.

Each singer should monitor their own progress and take pride in being responsible for their own achievements in sight-singing. If singers start to lag behind on each note, remind them to be brave.

NOTE: Singers who lag slightly behind never have any practice in sight-singing because they always hear the correct pitches and rhythms from the good sight-singers just a fraction of a second before they sing.

Similarly, singers who glide into the correct pitch hear the correct pitch and tuning from the good sight-singers before they reach the center of the pitch themselves. Tell your singers that the only way to learn to sight-sing is to sing with precision in tune.

See page 183 in the Teacher's Edition for activities for precision. See pages 193 and 195 for activities for tuning.

READ the TIP under the music in the Vocal Edition.

NOTE: The success rate for keeping a steady beat and singing accurate rhythms is much higher if the body is evenly balanced. See page 11 in the Teacher's Edition for activities for balanced posture.

REPEAT Exercise 1:

Switch parts. Pay special attention to the tuning on repeated pitches. Be aware of the feeling of "home" every time you sing the tonic.

◆ SKILLS REVIEW ◆

1

1	tonic	home	dominant	far away from home
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tonic	dominant	tonic	dominant
do	so	do	so
(on a space) (2 spaces above)	(on a line) (2 lines above)	(on a space) (2 spaces above)	(on a line) (2 lines above)

fifth	
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Exercise 1

Steadily
mf

Part 1
Hear the fid - dlers tune their fid - dles

Part 2
Hear the fid - dlers tune their fid - dles

clos - er to the right pitch.

clos - er to the right pitch.

TIP Keep your posture balanced.

IN REHEARSAL

do so

New Terms: tonic, dominant, fifth

New Concepts: precision, tuning, balanced posture, follow the direction of the pitches as they move higher and lower, feeling of “home” tone

TIPS:

- i) Sight-sing concert music with the lyrics the first time through.
- ii) Before beginning each piece:

◆ If any singers are unsure how to find the tonic on the staff, at this stage simply tell them:

“The tonic is on the bottom line for sopranos, altos and tenors; the second space from the top for basses.”

(In Lesson 7, key signatures will be reviewed.)

- ◆ Sing “do so do” (minor keys: “tonic dominant tonic”).
- ◆ Check for balanced posture.

2

d	s		
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
quarter note (one beat)
quarter rest (one beat)
marking tonic at the beginning of the music

SING Exercise 2:

Singers on the right: Part 1.
Singers on the left: Part 2.


2

2

quarter note		one beat
quarter rest		one beat

TIP Mark the tonic in pencil at the beginning of the music.

Lightly *P*



Rise up, my

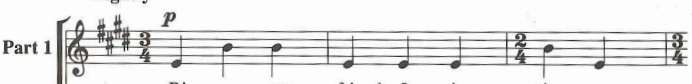
Rise up, my

Always know where the tonic sits on the staff in every piece of music. Each time you see the tonic, sing the same pitch.

Exercise 2

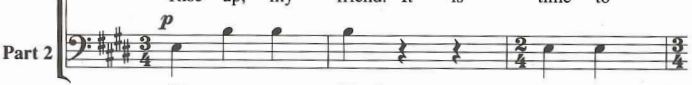
Lightly *P*

Part 1



Rise up, my friend. It is time to

Part 2



Rise up, my friend. Time to



greet the dawn while birds soft-ly sing.

greet the dawn while birds sing.

TIP Watch the conductor for each downbeat to correspond with the first beat of each measure.