

STEPS

Strategies &
Tools
Encouraging
Proficient
Sightsinging

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CARL FISCHER®

A GUIDE FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THIS BOOK

The value of a teaching resource is directly related to whether or not it is used as the authors intended. This book is no different. If maximum benefit is to be gained, it is essential to proceed with a clear understanding of how it was designed and to be meticulous about following the authors' suggestions.

Sight singing materials are not "disposable"; i.e., once sung, never to be used again. With creative repetition and a multi-sensory approach to teaching sight singing, there is always more to a teaching resource than meets the eye (see *InSIGHT Singing* Sight Singing book by Eaton, Juneau & Schott, CMF6). Teachers who use a creative approach in making materials "work" to enhance the skill level of particular ensembles will be rewarded with the greatest amount of growth and development.

Strong singer musicians adopt a systematic approach to sight singing and follow it until accuracy with good tone is achieved. Physical involvement (pulsing the beat and/or using hand signs) is highly encouraged.

1. It is essential that singers read from the clef in which they will be singing.
 - basses should always read from the bass clef.
 - tenors must determine which clef to use as it may vary from song to song.
2. Sing the major scale as written (each scale reflects the range of the melodies or fundamental drill for the given key).
3. Sing the scale slowly enough so that:
 - the best vowels can be produced with the best tone.
 - tuning is accurate.
4. When singing the chord built on DO, whole notes are pitch markers allowing the teacher to determine how many beats each note will receive as well as the rate of speed. Maintain a slow tempo in order to establish good tone and form tall, unified vowels.
5. Sing the intervals from *do*, *mi* and *sol* using excellent vowels and well supported tone.
6. If students are not ready to successfully negotiate pitch and rhythm simultaneously, first sing from syllable to syllable with excellent vowels and tone, *using no rhythm*.
7. When pitch reading is accurate and in tune, chant the solfege syllables in rhythm until accuracy is achieved.
8. Then sing the melody at a moderate tempo ($\text{♩} = 60$) on solfege in rhythm with good vowels and tone. Repeat until excellence is achieved.
9. Repeat the melodies until they can be sung with ease. Remember, your goal is mastery of each melody (or duet).

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES, CHALLENGES AND ASSESSMENT

1. Observe all diacritical markings. If students are not ready to incorporate successfully, do so when they are ready. Appendix B contains all musical symbols and definitions of diacritical markings. These can also be used to teach and assess.
2. Incorporate **STEP FURTHER FLASHCARDS** (CMF9) for more creative repetition of interval drill practice from the notes in the tonic triad (*DO*, *MI* and *SOL*) and as a fun activity, game, or assessment.
3. Combine melodies to create harmony. When the first two melodies (in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter) on each page are successfully performed, they can be combined.
4. Strive to combine musical accuracy with expressive phrasing while incorporating rhythmic stress. Ex: In $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, only stress beat one.
5. Use the keyboard at the back of the book to teach students to identify names of notes and to understand whole and half step relationships, scale and chord structure.
6. Create singing assessments utilizing scale, tonic triad, fundamental drill or melodies in a given key.

Keep STEPPING in order to become a proficient sight singer!!

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STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL USE OF THIS BOOK

STEPS, Strategies & Tools Encouraging Proficient Sight Singing is organized by key so that students are immersed in a key, enabling them to identify the steps of the scales at sight as well as the intervals from the tonic triad, or the chord based on *DO*. Presentation of material should be paced to allow sufficient time for students to master the fundamental drills before moving on to the sight singing melodies.

STEPS emphasizes the intervals of seconds and thirds and expands upon intervals found within the tonic, sub-dominant and dominant triads, to include fourths, fifths and limited octaves. The first volume of the **STEPS** book series provides melodies and visual fundamentals to sight sing in five keys. Each key section begins with the scale and outline of the tonic chord followed by ascending and descending intervals from the tonic chord: *DO*, *MI* and *SOL*. For each key, there are twelve sight-reading melodies: eight melodies in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter and four melodies in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

The first two melodies on each page are in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter and are combinable, enabling the teacher to introduce harmony when the students are ready. One of the two combinable melodies is more rhythmically active, which adds variety to combining the unison melodies for two-part singing.

- Sight singing melodies are written in treble and bass clef in unison octaves making **STEPS** functional and practical for any ensemble, mixed, treble or tenor-bass.
- The initial focus is always to find *DO*, *MI* and *SOL* (tonic triad) in the scale, then to visualize whether *DO*, *MI* and *SOL* are located on lines or spaces when singing the tonic triad.
- The focus of the fundamental exercise is three-fold:
 - a. Solidify where *DO*, *MI* and *SOL* (tonic triad) are located – lines or spaces.
 - b. Sing intervals from each note of the tonic triad.
 - c. Introduce intervallic distance and quality (**STEP FURTHER** flashcards reinforce this skill).
- Note values included are whole, half, quarter, eighth, dotted half and dotted quarter and quarter rests.

With a well-thought out, systematic approach to teaching the materials in this book, students will gain tools certain to improve their sight singing skills. The presentation of material should be paced to allow sufficient time for students to master the fundamental drills before moving on to the sight singing melodies. The authors recommend moveable DO as the pitch reading system.

STEPS can be used:

- As a daily fundamental skill development activity using the order presented in the book. Depending on the capabilities of the ensemble, the number of days to complete each key unit will vary.
- As advanced preparation prior to rehearsing a song. Select the melodies in the key and meter found in the song prior to introducing and rehearsing it.
- As a singing assessment over any or all of the singing materials: scale, tonic triad, fundamental drills and melodies.
- As games, using the *Read Ahead Fun* & *Read Ahead Fun Challenge* exercises to challenge while having fun learning.
- As a tool for students less proficient in music reading. These students can use the scales as a guide to label *sol-fa* in their music.
- For individual practice and improvement.
- As a piano keyboard unit. Use the keyboard at the back of the book to teach the pitches on the keyboard, whole and half step relationships, and chromatic pitches.
- As a means of understanding whole and half step relationships in the major scale. Introduce the formula for building a major scale. Then play and sing as students locate the pitches on the keyboard.

USING THE READ AHEAD FUN EXERCISES

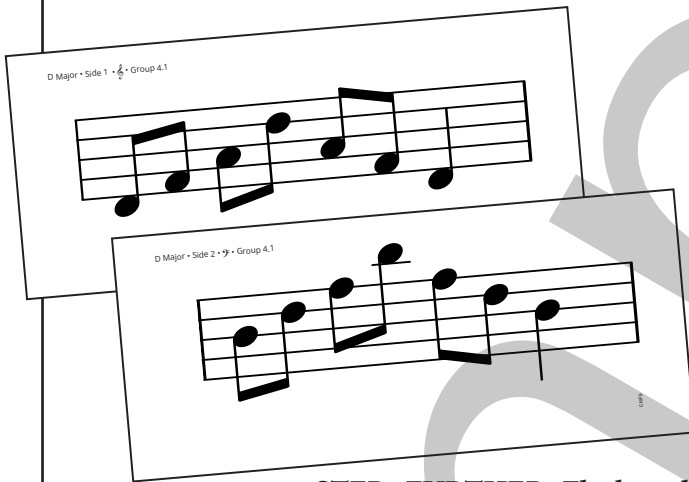
Training the Eye and Ear While Building Skills and.....Having Fun!

Read Ahead Fun and *Read Ahead Fun Challenge* exercises provide limitless opportunities to develop both visual and aural interval identification while assisting students in training their eyes and ears to read, think and hear ahead.

1. *Read Ahead Fun* exercises are two measures in length. They are designed to further immerse the singer in the key center while training them to both look and “hear” ahead. The goal is to successfully learn to “track” with the eyes.
2. As with reading the scale, tonic triad, interval drills and melodies, singers should read from the appropriate clef. The exercises consist of one page each: *Read Ahead Fun Treble Clef*, *Read Ahead Fun Bass Clef*, *Read Ahead Fun Challenge Treble Clef* (key of D and B \flat), and *Read Ahead Fun Challenge Bass Clef* (key of D and B \flat).

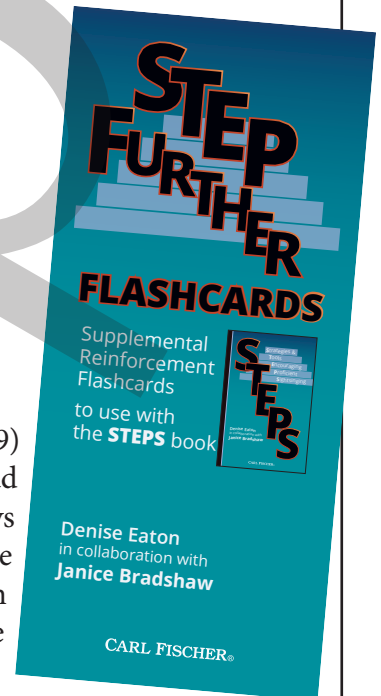
3. Possible activities include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Sing in numerical order
 - b. Sing by column: lowest number to highest number or highest number to lowest number
 - c. Teacher (or student) calls out the number of exercise to be read one measure before singing the exercise
 - d. Sing in a zig-zag manner. Ex: 1,4,5,8,9, etc.
 - e. Sing pitch to pitch, removing all rhythm -- teacher determines the place marker for the note value. i.e., quarter note, half note, etc.

STEP Further Flashcards



STEP FURTHER Flashcards (CMF9)

are designed to visually reinforce the notes of the tonic triad (DO, MI and SOL) in each key. Consisting of the five keys used in the book, there are five groups of ten cards. One side of the card is notated in implied treble clef and the other in implied bass clef, making them functional for mixed, treble or tenor-bass choirs.



Utilizing the flashcards will further immerse the singers in a given key through creative repetition helping them to become comfortable with syllable and interval identification in each key. When incorporating this resource into daily teaching, unlimited opportunities exist for creativity and fun, all while improving skills.

Consider implementing **STEP FURTHER** Flashcards:

- As a visual orientation prior to singing the fundamental interval exercises
- As a reinforcement after singing the fundamental interval exercises
- As a visual reinforcement of the key center prior to singing repertoire
- Through playing “games” for skill development; section vs section, boys vs girls, etc.
- As an assessment

Key of C Major

Scale

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do Re Do Ti La Sol Fa Mi Re Do Ti Do

Outline of Chord Built on Do

C is Do Do Mi Sol Do Sol Mi Do

Intervals from Do

1 M2 2 M3 3 P4 4 P5 5 m2 6 m3 7 P4 8 P5

Do Re Do Do Mi Do Do Fa Do Do Sol Do Do Ti Do Do La Do Do Sol Do Do Fa Do

Intervals from Mi

1 m2 2 m3 3 P4 4 M2 5 M3 6 P4

Mi Fa Mi Mi Sol Mi Mi La Mi Mi Re Mi Mi Do Mi Mi Ti Mi

Intervals from Sol

1 M2 2 M3 3 P4 4 P5 5 M2 6 m3 7 P4 8 P5

Sol La Sol Sol Ti Sol Sol Do Sol Sol Re Sol Sol Fa Sol Sol Mi Sol Sol Re Sol Sol Do Sol

* For further practice without solfege syllables, use STEP FURTHER flashcards CMF9.

C Major Melodies

1

1

5

$\text{♩} = 60$

2

2

5

3

3

5

Melody #1 and 2 are combinable.

4

pp *mf*

5

pp

5

5

Andante

6

mf

5

Melody #4 and 5 are combinable.

7

Largo

8

9

Melody #7 and 8 are combinable.

Allegro

10

1 2 3 4

5

6 7 8

11

1 2 3 4

5

6 7 8

12

1 2 3 4

mf

5

6 7 8

mp

Melody #10 and 11 are combinable.

C Major Treble Read Ahead Fun



1 

2 

3 

4 

5 

6 

7 

8 

9 

10 

11 

12 

13 

14 

15 

16 

To download Read Ahead Fun Challenge Exercises, visit www.carlfischer.com