

**Grade 1 Violin**

# Improve your sight-reading!

**Paul Harris**

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**Extra Stage: Revision** available to download from  
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# Introduction

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Being a good sight-reader is so important and it's not difficult at all!  
If you work through this book carefully – always making sure that you really understand each exercise before you play it – you'll never have problems learning new pieces or doing well at sight-reading in exams!

## Using the workbook

### 1 Rhythmic exercises

Make sure you have grasped these fully before you go on to the melodic exercises: it is vital that you really know how the rhythms work. There are a number of ways to do the exercises, several of which are outlined in Stage 1. Try them all out. Can you think of more ways to do them?

### 2 Melodic exercises

These exercises use just the notes (and rhythms) for the Stage, and are organised into Sets which progress gradually. If you want to sight-read fluently and accurately, get into the simple habit of working through each exercise in the following ways before you begin to play it:

- Make sure you understand the rhythm and counting. Clap the exercise through.
- Know what notes you are going to play and the fingering you are going to use.
- Try to hear the piece through in your head. Always play the first note to help.

### 3 Prepared pieces

Work your way through the questions first, as these will help you to think about or 'prepare' the piece. Don't begin playing until you are pretty sure you know exactly how the piece goes.

### 4 Going solo!

It is now up to you to discover the clues in this series of practice pieces. Give yourself about a minute and do your best to understand the piece before you play. Check the rhythms and fingering, and try to hear the piece in your head.

Always remember to feel the pulse and to keep going steadily once you've begun. Good luck and happy sight-reading!



# The golden rules

## A sight-reading checklist

Before you begin to play a piece at sight, always consider the following:

- 1 Look at the piece for about half a minute and try to feel that you are *understanding* what you see (just like reading these words).
- 2 Look at the time signature and decide how you will count the piece.
- 3 Look at the key signature and think about how to finger the notes.
- 4 Notice patterns – especially those that repeat, or are based on scales and arpeggios.
- 5 Notice any markings that will help you convey the character.
- 6 Don't begin until you think you are going to play the piece accurately.
- 7 Count at least one bar in.

## When performing a sight-reading piece

- 1 Keep feeling the pulse.
- 2 Keep going at a steady tempo.
- 3 Remember the finger pattern of the key you are in.
- 4 Ignore mistakes.
- 5 Look ahead – at least to the next note.
- 6 Play musically, always trying to convey the character of the music.

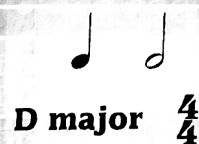
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# Stage 1



## Rhythmic exercises

The rhythmic exercises are really important. Always practise them carefully before going on. There are different ways of doing these exercises:

- Your teacher (or a metronome) taps the lower line while you clap or tap the upper line.
- You tap the lower line with your foot and clap or tap the upper line with your hands.
- You tap one line with one hand and the other line with the other hand on a table top.
- You tap the lower line and sing the upper line.

Before you begin each exercise count two bars in – one out loud and one silently.

1

2

3

## Melodic exercises

Set 1: Exploring the open D string

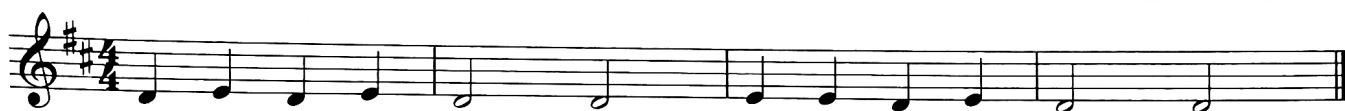
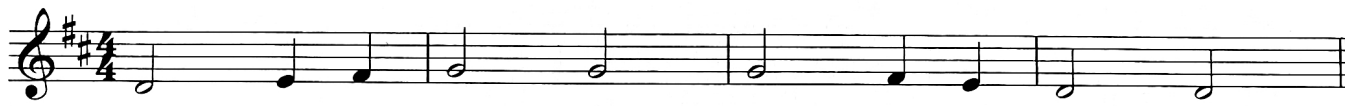
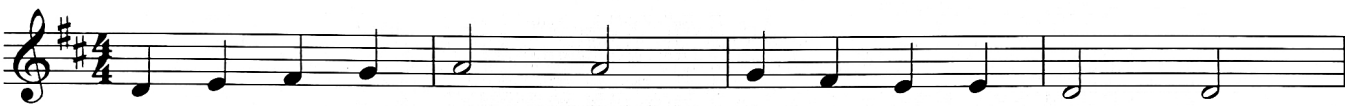
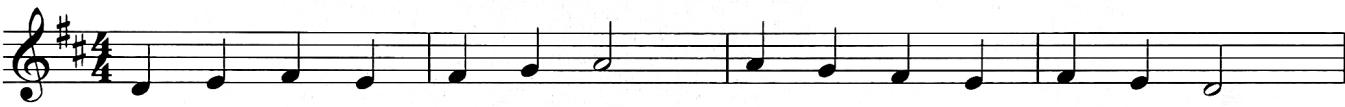
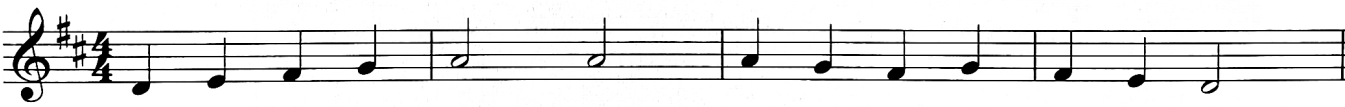
Hear each exercise in your head before you play it.

1

2

3



**Set 2: Exploring the notes on the D string**4  
☐5  
☐6  
☐**Set 3: Exploring the D string notes plus open A string**7  
☐8  
☐9  
☐**Set 4: Exploring the D major scale**10  
☐11  
☐12  
☐13  
☐

## Prepared pieces

- 1 How many beats are there in each bar? What will you count?
- 2 What is the key? Play the scale.
- 3 What do bars 1 and 4, and bars 2 and 6 have in common?
- 4 Play a D (the first note), then hear the piece in your head.
- 5 How will you put some character into your performance?

### Marching



- 1 How will you count this piece?
- 2 Tap the rhythm then, clapping the pulse, hear the rhythm silently in your head.
- 3 Are there any repeated rhythmic patterns?
- 4 Compare bar 1 with bar 4.
- 5 How will you put some character into your performance?

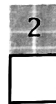
### Sleepily



## Improvising



Make up your own piece (it can be as long or as short as you like), beginning with this pattern. Keep the pulse steady.

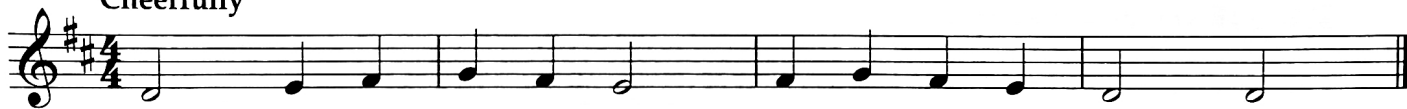


Now make up your own piece in D major – using any notes of the scale you like.

## Going solo!

Don't forget to prepare each piece carefully before you play it.

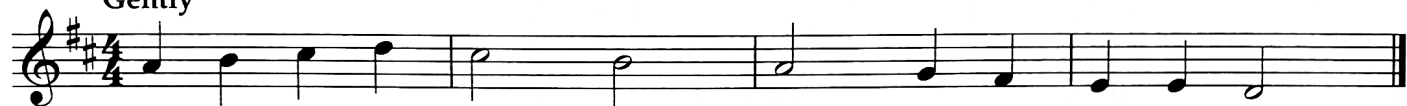
Cheerfully



Marching



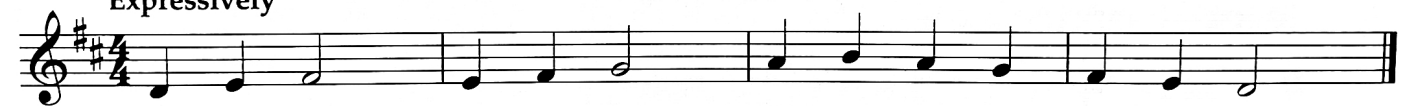
Gently



Strongly



Expressively



Heavily



Lightly



Dancing



Dreamily



# Stage 2

A major



## Rhythmic exercises

Always remember to count two bars in.

1 2

3 4

5 6 Write your own rhythmic exercise, then clap it:

## Melodic exercises

Set 1: Exploring the first five notes of A major

1

2

3

4

**Set 2: Exploring the A major scale**

5



6



7



8



9

**Set 3: Longer examples**

10



11

**Set 4: More crotchet rests**

12



13



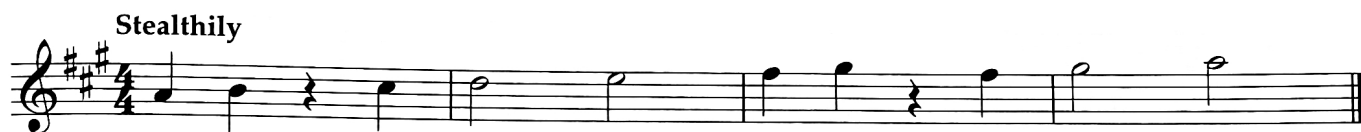
14





## Going solo!

Don't forget to prepare each piece carefully before you play it.

1  
☐2  
☐3  
☐4  
☐5  
☐6  
☐7  
☐8  
☐9  
☐

# Stage 3

Small leaps

 $\frac{3}{4}$ 

## Rhythmic exercises

Always remember to count two bars in.

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  2  $\frac{3}{4}$  3  $\frac{3}{4}$  4  $\frac{3}{4}$  5  $\frac{3}{4}$  6 Write your own rhythmic exercise, then clap it:  $\frac{3}{4}$

## Melodic exercises

Set 1: Exploring  $\frac{3}{4}$

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  2  $\frac{3}{4}$  3  $\frac{3}{4}$  4  $\frac{3}{4}$



**Set 2: More leaps in D major**5  
☐6  
☐7  
☐**Set 3: More leaps in A major**8  
☐9  
☐10  
☐**Set 4: Both keys**11  
☐12  
☐13  
☐

## Prepared pieces

- 1 What is the key? Play the scale and name all the notes.
- 2 What will you count? Tap the rhythm of the piece.
- 3 Find the two leaps. What do they have in common?
- 4 Think about how you will finger the piece.
- 5 How will you put some character into your performance?

### Flowing

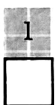


- 1 How will you count this piece?
- 2 Do any bars contain the same rhythmic patterns?
- 3 Tap the rhythm then, tapping the pulse, hear the rhythm in your head.
- 4 How many leaps can you find? How will you finger them?
- 5 How will you put some character into your performance?

### Waltz-time



## Improvising



Make up your own piece (it can be as long or as short as you like), beginning with this pattern. Keep the pulse steady.



Now make up your own piece in  $\frac{3}{4}$ , in D or A major.

## Going solo!

Don't forget to prepare each piece carefully before you play it.

Gently



Boldly



Delicately



Firmly



Sleepily



Playfully



Confidently



Cheerfully



Bouncingly



# Stage 4

**Dynamic markings**



## Rhythmic exercises

Always remember to count two bars in.

1 2 3 4 5 6 Write your own rhythmic exercise, then clap it:

## Melodic exercises

Set 1: Exploring quavers 1

1 2 3 4

## Set 2: Exploring quavers 2

5  
☐6  
☐7  
☐

## Set 3: Exploring dynamics 1

8  
☐9  
☐10  
☐

## Set 4: Exploring dynamics 2

11  
☐12  
☐13  
☐

## Prepared pieces

- 1 Explain the time signature of this piece.
- 2 Do any bars contain the same rhythmic patterns?
- 3 Clap the rhythm then, tapping the pulse, hear the rhythm in your head.
- 4 How will you put some character into your performance?
- 5 Play an A (the first note) then, tapping the pulse, hear the piece in your head.

1  
□



- 1 What is the key? Play the scale with a dancing character.
- 2 Say the names of all the notes.
- 3 What will you count? Tap the rhythm of the piece.
- 4 What do the two dynamic markings tell you?
- 5 Play a D then hear the piece in your head, with the dynamics.

2  
□



## Improvising

1  
□

Make up your own piece (it can be as long or as short as you like), beginning with this pattern.  
Keep the pulse steady.



2  
□

Now make up your own piece which includes some dynamics.

## Going solo!

Don't forget to prepare each piece carefully before you play it.

1 ☐ **Strolling along**

2 ☐ **Bustling along**

3 ☐ **Tripping along**

4 ☐ **Striding along**

5 ☐ **Gliding along**

6 ☐ **Trotting along**

7 ☐ **Floating along**

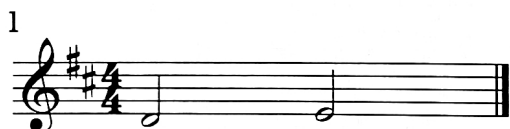
8 ☐ **Bouncing along**

9 ☐ **Marching along**

# Stage 5

Reading  
at a glance

Here are some patterns you have already met in this book, beginning on open D. Have your violin and fingers ready, and look at each exercise for a couple of seconds. Then shut your eyes and play it. Check to see if you were right. If you were, you are already successfully reading patterns *at a glance*.



In the next exercises try to take in each 3-beat group at a glance and, as you are playing, look ahead to the next group.





## Prepared pieces

- 1 Why is it a good idea to read ahead?
- 2 How many different rhythm patterns can you find in each piece?
- 3 Tap the rhythm of each piece then, tapping the pulse, hear the rhythm in your head.
- 4 Try to hear the piece in your head before you play it.
- 5 Think about reading ahead before you begin each piece.

Heavily



Lightly



## Going solo!

Don't forget to prepare each piece carefully before you play it.

Gently



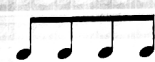
Boisterously



Grumpily

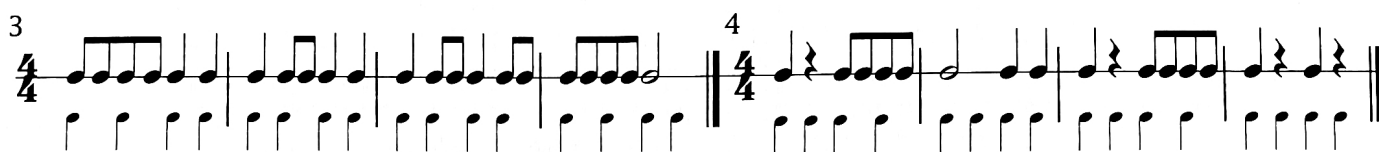
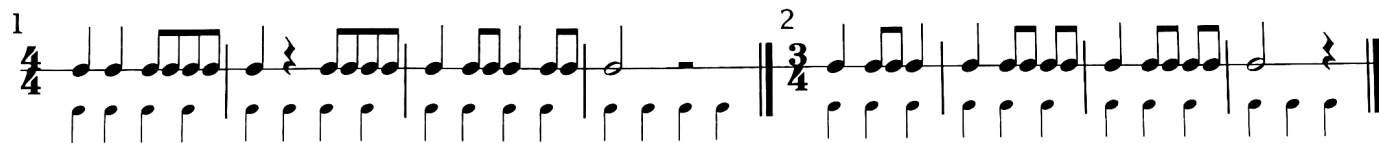


# Stage 6



Revision

## Rhythmic exercises



## Melodic exercises

Marching



Moderato



Cheerfully



Boldly



## Going solo!

Don't forget to prepare each piece carefully before you play it.

### Marching

1 ☐



*mf* *f*

### Jauntily

2 ☐



*mf* *f*

### Gently

3 ☐



*mf*

### Playfully

4 ☐



*f* *mf*

### Swaying

5 ☐



*f* *mf*

### Cheerfully

6 ☐



*f* *p* *mf*

### Crossly

7 ☐



*mf* *f*

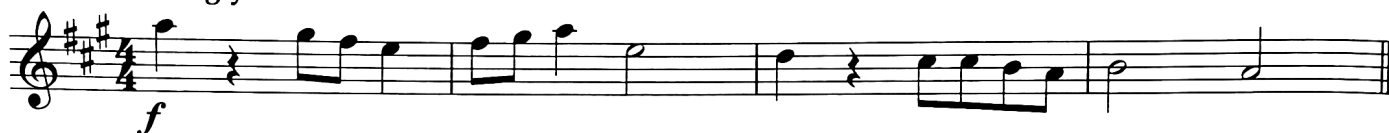
### Getting up early in the morning-ly

8 ☐



*mf*

Smilingly

9  
☐

Playfully

10  
☐

Strutting down a country lane

11  
☐

Saturday afternoon-ly

12  
☐

Sunday afternoon-ly

13  
☐

Snoozingly

14  
☐

Confidently

15  
☐

Happy to do sight-reading in exams-ly

16  
☐

Excellently!

17  
☐