

ABRSM Marking Criteria - downloaded from [www.abrsm.org/exams](http://www.abrsm.org/exams)

Remember that **keeping going** is the key to a Pass; aim to keep a basic pulse, despite slips on the way, rather than stopping to correct them. Do feel free to try out any part of the test piece in the half-minute allowed before the actual test begins.

The examiner will suggest that the candidate may try out any part or parts of the test for half a minute before going on with the full attempt. It is suggested that candidates first try the opening bars and the end, followed by any passages containing accidentals and such things as awkward changes of position.

'I can't do this', candidates sometimes sigh when the examiner puts the test on the music stand. It is often the fear of the unknown, plus lack of practice and guidance, which add to the confusion. Sight-reading ability is an invaluable asset, making music so much more accessible and helping the learning process to be much faster.

Candidates are always given 30 seconds' preparation time to look through and try out the test. This is sufficient to check the time signature, the key signature, to set up a regular basic pulse, to play or sing the opening and the final bar and to check any awkward-looking corners on the way. Not all candidates appear to be aware of this, but we do actively encourage them to play/sing parts of the test, which helps them to use the 30 seconds in a productive and confidence-building way.

When working towards this test, candidates should be encouraged to look slightly ahead, keep going at a manageable speed, ignore any slips and keep their nerve. It may be helpful to know that examiners rarely hear perfect attempts at these tests but will always appreciate evidence of the right approach, plus an awareness of key and time values which gradually increases with the grades.

**All grades marking assessment**

**19-21** Attention to expressive details

Musically aware

Fluent

**17-18** Usually steady pulse

Mostly accurate

Appropriate tempo

**14-16** Momentum generally maintained

Some awareness of key and time signatures

**11-13 Below Pass standard**

Poor recognition of time and notes

Lack of continuity

Inconsistent awareness of key

Outline in place, despite errors

**7-10** No continuity or incomplete attempt

Complete disregard for key

Very poor recognition of time and notes

**0**

No work offered

*You can get seven points just by attempting the sight reading test in your exam.*