

Aural Perception Diagnostics

The Buffalo State Music Department Aural Perceptions (AP) sequence is divided into four semesters. The course is designed to strengthen your aural musicianship. You can expect the diagnostic exam to include a variety of activities including sight-singing, dictation, and Roman numeral analysis,

The diagnostic exam is designed to give us a sense your strengths and weaknesses so that we place you in the appropriate AP class. Those students who lack the aural fundamentals to succeed in AP 1 will be required to meet with a tutor throughout their first semester to assist them in catching up in the sequence. In addition, please see the end of this document for advice and resources that can help you strengthen your aural perception skills prior to the diagnostic exam.

AP Level 1:

Sing on sight, identify, and take as dictation:

- Major and minor melodies (treble and bass clef) beginning on tonic root, third, or fifth, including leaps in the tonic, subdominant and dominant 7 chords (using moveable do solmization with do- and la-based minor)
- Simple and compound meters
- Basic intervals - Major, minor, and perfect within an octave
- Basic chords and inversions - Major, minor, and V7

AP Level 2:

Musical material will include:

- Melodies in treble, bass, and alto, and tenor clefs to be sung using moveable-do solfege
- Skips of diatonic intervals up to an octave
- Rhythms including pickup beats, syncopations, slurs
- Chromatic neighbor and passing tones
- Neapolitan and augmented sixth chords
- Modal melodies
- 2-voice dictation
- Harmonic progressions (dictate outer voices and supply Roman numeral analysis)

AP Level 3:

Musical material will include:

- Skips larger than an octave (focus on increasing confidence with skips larger than fifth)
- More advanced meters including 5 / 8 and 5 / 4
- Increased use of modulation, secondary dominance, borrowed chords, and chromatic alterations
- Increased rhythmic complexity
- Harmonic dictation of chorale-texture examples

AP Level 4:

Musical material will include:

- Melodies include more challenging intonation, rhythm and phrase structure
- Modulation to more remote keys
- More frequent use of chromaticism, syncopation, augmented and diminished intervals, modal
- Basic understanding of fixed-do, la-based minor, and do-based minor solmization systems, and their applications in various musical and educational settings
- Harmonic dictation of chorale-texture examples which will contain diatonic and chromatic harmony
- Basic ability to apply fixed-do solfege to atonal melodies

Advice and Resources for the Diagnostic Exam:

Check out our textbook

- Buffalo State currently uses *A New Approach to Sight Singing*, Sixth Edition, by Berkowitz-Goldstein-Kraft - Fontrier-Smaldone (ISBN-13: 978-0393284911, ISBN-10: 0393284913).
- The best way to gauge your current AP abilities and study for the diagnostic would be to try some of these melodies as sight-singing or dictation. The Fifth Edition will also work for study purposes, but won't be used in class. The Melodies are divided into five sections - the first four sections roughly correspond to the four semesters of AP. The fifth section, atonal melodies, will be addressed briefly at the conclusion of AP 4.

Get comfortable with your voice

- Whether that means working on matching pitch, refining your solfege identification and speed, or warming up your voice in different registers. Learn where your vocal register lies on the piano keyboard. Sing in front of other people - AP proficiency will require a comfort level with using your voice in front of your professors and peers.

Use the keyboard

- Take piano lessons over the summer. Knowledge of the keyboard and the ability to play scales, intervals, and triads will be a significant help. Practice playing one voice of a piece while singing another voice in solfege.

Conduct and Sing

Speak solfege in rhythm to practice fluency

Try online resources for additional practice:

- Online exercises and tutorials: www.musictheory.net
- Online sight-singing materials: www.lightandmatter.com/sight/sight.html