

Day Nine: Key Signatures

Tip for Today:

When sight reading, the key signature should be the colour of the piece. Don't just plan to add a black note when you see an F; instead, learn to enjoy the sound of different keys, and make a point of thinking about the key of the piece before you start. In the Sight Reading Secrets books, you can have lots of practice in each key required for your AMEB exam.

Preparation:



What key is this piece in? The key signature has one sharp. When there is only one sharp, it is always an F sharp. The last note is a G, so I would assume the piece is in G major.

Can you imagine the sound of any of your pieces in G major? See if you can “hear” the sound of that piece in your head. Can you “pitch” a G? That means, can you imagine the sound of a G by itself?

This piece will only need a sharp on the seventh note of the key, on the F. Look through the example above and work out which notes will be F sharps. Now prepare your hands, just in your mind, as you think about which position they will be in. Imagine having your hands touching the keys. In your left hand, you might have your thumb on G, so your second finger will be on F sharp. In your right hand, you might have your fifth finger on G, so your fourth finger will be on F sharp.

(Disagree with me about which fingers you will use? That's fine! This example could have several fingerings. The important thing is to think about the highest and lowest notes for each hand, and choose a finger position that allows for that. Then make sure that the F sharps are part of your fingering preparation, because at Grade One AMEB level you will not need to move your hand position. Sight Reading Secrets Grade Two has examples of stretching hand positions and moving to new places during a piece, which is appropriate to Grade Two AMEB standard.)

Let's Try

Okay, enough words, see how you go! Did it sound like G major?
If it sounded odd, you may have omitted an F sharp!

