

**London College of Music Examinations**

# Piano Sight Reading Tests

Grades 1 to 8

**Valid from:**

2026 until further notice

updated 13.05.2026

**Piano Sight Reading Tests**

This booklet brings together example exercises to practise the Sight Reading component of LCME's Piano exams. It provides structured practice material that reflects the expectations of the examination and supports the development of solid technical fluency. Candidates should always refer to the 2026 *Piano Syllabus* for full and up-to-date requirements.

**Syllabus validity**

This handbook is valid for examinations from 2026 until further notice.

**Exam format**

Examinations in Piano are available in two formats: graded examinations and recital grades, offered both in-person and digitally.

**Entering for an exam**

Exam entries can be made online at [lcme.uwl.ac.uk](http://lcme.uwl.ac.uk)

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## Component 4: 10 marks

# Grade 1 Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### In the exam

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### Parameters

The following parameters offer guidance as to what may be tested in the exam.

- keys of C, G and F major
- $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$  time signatures
- range of notes within a fifth in fixed hand position
- single part texture with hands separately
- movement mainly by step — any leaps limited to maximum of a fifth within each hand
- crotchet, minim, dotted minim and semibreve note values
- whole bar and minim rests
- simple tempo indications in English with metronome markings
- *p*, *mp*, *mf* and *f* dynamic markings
- maximum of 8 bars in length

### Sample tests

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

### Example 1

At a moderate speed ♩ = 80

The musical notation for Example 1 is as follows:

Right Hand (Treble Clef):

- Bar 1: *mp* quarter notes G4, A4, B4
- Bar 2: quarter notes C5, B4, A4
- Bar 3: quarter notes G4, F4, E4
- Bar 4: quarter notes D4, C4, B3
- Bar 5: *f* quarter notes A3, G3, F3
- Bar 6: quarter notes E3, D3, C3
- Bar 7: quarter notes B2, A2, G2
- Bar 8: quarter notes F2, E2, D2

Left Hand (Bass Clef):

- Bar 1: whole bar rest
- Bar 2: whole bar rest
- Bar 3: whole bar rest
- Bar 4: whole bar rest
- Bar 5: quarter note G2, quarter note F2
- Bar 6: quarter note E2, quarter note D2
- Bar 7: quarter note C2, quarter note B1
- Bar 8: quarter note A1, quarter note G1

**Example 2**

With movement ♩ = 88

Musical score for Example 2, 2/4 time signature. The piece is in B-flat major. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and contains a sequence of quarter notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The second staff (bass clef) is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final two measures: a whole note B-flat in the third measure, and quarter notes A, G, F, E in the fourth measure. The dynamic changes to piano (*p*) in the third measure.

**Example 3**

Slowly and evenly ♩ = 72

Musical score for Example 3, 4/4 time signature. The piece is in B-flat major. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and contains a sequence of quarter notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The second staff (bass clef) is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final two measures: a whole note B-flat in the third measure, and quarter notes A, G, F, E in the fourth measure. The dynamic changes to piano (*p*) in the third measure.

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Musical score for Example 3 continuation, 4/4 time signature. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and contains a sequence of quarter notes: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The second staff (bass clef) is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final two measures: a whole note B-flat in the third measure, and quarter notes A, G, F, E in the fourth measure. The dynamic changes to forte (*f*) in the third measure.

**Example 4**

At an even steady speed ♩ = 80

Musical score for Example 4, 4/4 time signature. The piece is in D major. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and contains a sequence of quarter notes: D, E, F#, G, A, B, C, D. The second staff (bass clef) is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final two measures: a whole note D in the third measure, and quarter notes C, B, A, G in the fourth measure.

5

Musical score for Example 4 continuation, 4/4 time signature. The first staff (treble clef) is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final two measures: a whole note D in the third measure, and quarter notes C, B, A, G in the fourth measure. The second staff (bass clef) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and contains a sequence of quarter notes: D, E, F#, G, A, B, C, D.

Component 4: 10 marks

# Grade 2

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### In the exam

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### Parameters

In addition to the parameters listed at grade 1, you may be tested on the following:

- a range of notes up to an octave
- some hand position changes
- two-part texture with hands together
- crotchet rests
- tempo indications in Italian or English with metronome markings
- crescendo and diminuendo hairpin marks
- phrasing and staccato markings

### Sample tests

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

### Example 1

Andante ♩ = 76

The musical score for Example 1 is written in 4/4 time. It begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The melody in the right hand starts with a quarter rest, followed by a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The bass line starts with a quarter note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. A crescendo hairpin mark spans the first four measures. In the fifth measure, the dynamic changes to forte (*f*). The piece ends with a fermata over the final note G5 in the right hand and G2 in the left hand.

Example 2

Allegretto ♩ = 88

Musical score for Example 2, Allegretto, ♩ = 88. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass line consists of half notes Bb3 and C4. Dynamics include a crescendo to *f* and a decrescendo to *p*.

Example 3

Moderato ♩ = 72

Musical score for Example 3, Moderato, ♩ = 72. The piece is in 2/4 time and D major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F#4, and G4. The bass line consists of half notes D3 and E3. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mf*.

Example 4

Andante ♩ = 76

Musical score for Example 4, Andante, ♩ = 76. The piece is in 4/4 time and D major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F#4, and G4. The bass line consists of half notes D3 and E3. Dynamics include *mf*.

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Musical score for Example 4 (continued), starting at measure 5. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F#4, and G4. The bass line consists of half notes D3 and E3. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *p*.

Component 4: 10 marks

# Grade 3

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### In the exam

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### Parameters

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

- key of A minor
- a range of notes up to an twelfth
- accidentals
- greater independence of hands, including left hand melody
- *pp* dynamic

### Sample tests

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

### Example 1

With movement ♩ = 80

Example 2

Andante ♩ = 80

Musical score for Example 2, measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is Andante with a quarter note equal to 80 beats per minute. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. The bass line consists of half notes: F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. A slur covers the entire piece.

Musical score for Example 2, measures 5-8. The piece continues in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp. The tempo is Andante. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. The bass line consists of half notes: F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. Dynamics are indicated: *f* (forte) at the start, *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 6, and *p* (piano) in measure 8. Slurs are present over the melody and bass line.

Example 3

Brightly ♩ = 88

Musical score for Example 3, measures 1-8. The piece is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is Brightly with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, Bb3. The bass line consists of quarter notes: Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, Bb2. Dynamics are indicated: *f* (forte) at the start, *p* (piano) in measure 5, and *f* (forte) in measure 8. Slurs are present over the melody and bass line.

Example 4

Moderato ♩ = 72

Musical score for Example 4, measures 1-8. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is Moderato with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, Bb3. The bass line consists of quarter notes: Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, Bb2. Dynamics are indicated: *mp* (mezzo-piano) at the start and *pp* (pianissimo) in measure 8. Slurs are present over the melody and bass line.

**Component 4: 10 marks**

# Grade 4

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### **In the exam**

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### **Parameters**

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

- the keys of E minor and D minor
- quavers and quaver rests
- three part, occasionally four part texture
- all tempo indications in Italian

### **Sample tests**

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

Example 1

Allegretto ♩ = 88

Musical score for Example 1, Allegretto, ♩ = 88. The piece is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5, then a half note D5. The bass line consists of quarter notes G2, F2, E2, and D2. Dynamics include mp, f, and p. A slur covers the first four measures of the melody.

Example 2

Lento ♩ = 60

Musical score for Example 2, Lento, ♩ = 60. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5, then a half note D5. The bass line consists of quarter notes G2, F2, E2, and D2. Dynamics include mf. A slur covers the first four measures of the melody.

Example 3

Moderato ♩ = 76

Musical score for Example 3, Moderato, ♩ = 76. The piece is in 4/4 time and D major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F#4, and G4, then a half note A4. The bass line consists of quarter notes D2, E2, F#2, and G2. Dynamics include f, mp, mf, and p. Slurs are present over the first four measures of the melody and the last two measures.

Example 4

Moderato ♩ = 76

Musical score for Example 4, Moderato, ♩ = 76. The piece is in 4/4 time and D major. The melody in the treble clef starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F#4, and G4, then a half note A4. The bass line consists of quarter notes D2, E2, F#2, and G2. Dynamics include f, mp, and p. Slurs are present over the first four measures of the melody and the last two measures.

Component 4: 10 marks

# Grade 5

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### In the exam

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### Parameters

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

- keys up to two sharps and two flats
- $\frac{6}{8}$ ,  $\frac{2}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{2}$ , common and cut common time signatures
- dotted quaver/semiquaver rhythms
- common Italian terms (e.g. *cantabile*, *subito*, *rit.*) and pause (*fermata*)
- up to 10 bars in length

### Sample tests

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

Example 1

Andante ♩ = 72

Musical notation for Example 1, measures 1-3. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is Andante with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The first two measures are marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The third measure is marked *p* (piano). The melody in the right hand features a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Musical notation for Example 1, measures 4-6. Measure 4 is marked *mf*. Measure 5 contains a fermata over the first half. Measure 6 is marked *f* (forte). The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 2

Poco lento ♩ = 56

Musical notation for Example 2, measures 1-5. The piece is in 6/8 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The tempo is Poco lento with a quarter note equal to 56 beats per minute. The first measure is marked *p* (piano). The second measure is marked *sim.* (simile). The right hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the left hand features a melodic line with a long slur. The word *cantabile* is written below the left hand. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Musical notation for Example 2, measures 6-8. Measure 6 is marked *f* (forte). The right hand has a melodic line with a slur, and the left hand continues with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 3

Grazioso ♩ = 80

Musical score for Example 3, measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time and marked *Grazioso* with a tempo of ♩ = 80. The dynamic is *mf*. The melody in the right hand features eighth-note patterns and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Musical score for Example 3, measures 5-8. The piece continues with dynamics of *f*, *p*, and *f*. The melody in the right hand includes a long slur across measures 5 and 6, and a crescendo leading to a *f* dynamic in measure 8. The left hand continues with quarter-note accompaniment.

Example 4

Poco lento ♩ = 60

Musical score for Example 4, measures 1-3. The piece is in 3/2 time and marked *Poco lento* with a tempo of ♩ = 60. The dynamic is *pp*. The melody in the right hand consists of half notes and quarter notes, while the left hand plays a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Musical score for Example 4, measures 4-5. The piece concludes with a final melodic phrase in the right hand and a sustained bass note in the left hand.



Component 4: 10 marks

# Grade 6

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### **In the exam**

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### **Parameters**

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

- keys up to three sharps and three flats
- a wider variety of Italian tempo and expression markings (e.g. *poco più mosso*, *scherzando* etc.)
- predominant use of four part texture, with occasional layered textures when using pedal
- greater use of semiquaver rhythms
- occasional use of pedal

### **Sample tests**

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

Example 1

Andante tranquillo ♩ = 78

Musical score for Example 1, Andante tranquillo, 3/4 time, piano. The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an *espress.* marking. The second system begins at measure 5 and includes dynamics of *mf* and *p sub.* The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 2

Allegretto ♩ = 78

Musical score for Example 2, Allegretto, 2/4 time, piano. The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second system includes dynamics of *p* and *pp*. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 3

Ritmico ♩ = 92

Musical score for Example 3, Ritmico, 4/4 time, key of D major. The score consists of two systems. The first system has three measures with dynamics *f*, *ff*, and *mf*. The second system starts at measure 5 and has three measures with dynamics *f* and *mp*.

Example 4

Poco lento ♩ = 52

Musical score for Example 4, Poco lento, 6/8 time, key of D major. The score consists of two systems. The first system has five measures with dynamics *mf* and *rit.*. The second system has one measure with dynamics *rit.*



**Component 4: 10 marks**

# Grade 7

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### **In the exam**

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### **Parameters**

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

-  time signature
- more continuous semiquaver movement
- simple ornamentation (eg. trills, arpeggiated chords)
- triplets and duplets
- caesuras at barlines

### **Sample tests**

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

Example 1

Allegro ♩ = 88

Musical score for Example 1, measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is Allegro with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. The score is written for piano in treble and bass clefs. Measure 1 starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 4 begins with a trill (*tr*) in the right hand. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 2

Lento e espress ♩ = 40

Musical score for Example 2, measures 1-6. The piece is in 6/8 time with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). The tempo is Lento e espress with a quarter note equal to 40 beats per minute. The score is written for piano in treble and bass clefs. Measure 1 includes the instruction *con Ped.* and a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 3 features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 4 starts with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. Measure 6 begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ends with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 3

Moderato ♩ = 72

Musical notation for Example 3, measures 1-2. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is Moderato with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The first measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. A slur connects the two measures.

Musical notation for Example 3, measures 3-4. Measure 3 begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns, and the left hand plays a steady bass line. Measure 4 features a crescendo leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

Example 4

Liricamente ♩ = 52

Musical notation for Example 4, measures 1-2. The piece is in 9/8 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is Liricamente with a quarter note equal to 52 beats per minute. The first measure starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata, while the left hand plays a bass line. A slur connects the two measures.

Musical notation for Example 4, measures 3-5. Measure 3 begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand plays a bass line. Measure 4 features a decrescendo leading to a *dim.* dynamic. Measure 5 features a further decrescendo leading to a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.



Component 4: 10 marks

# Grade 8

# Sight Reading

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## Requirements

Performance of a short, previously unseen piece of music.

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## Information

### In the exam

One minute of preparation time will be given, during which you may study and try out parts of the test before performing to the examiner.

### Parameters

In addition to the parameters listed at previous grades, you may be tested on the following:

- keys up to four sharps and flats
- $\frac{12}{8}$ ,  $\frac{4}{2}$  and changes of time signature
- texture still mainly four parts, but occasionally extending to six parts
- greater range of ornamentation
- up to 12 bars in length
- occasional use of demisemiquavers

### Sample tests

The following are examples of the style and standard of the sight reading tests at this grade.

Example 1

Andante pastorale ♩ = 72

Musical notation for measures 1-3. The piece is in 9/8 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is Andante pastorale with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The first system shows measures 1, 2, and 3. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and mezzo-piano (*mp*).

Musical notation for measures 4-5. Measure 4 begins with a dynamic of mezzo-piano (*mp*). The right hand continues the melodic development with slurs and ties. Measure 5 shows a change in the bass line and a dynamic shift to mezzo-piano (*mp*). The system concludes with a double bar line.

Musical notation for measures 6-7. Measure 6 starts with a dynamic of pianissimo (*pp*). The right hand features a wide intervallic chord with a slur. Measure 7 shows a dynamic shift to mezzo-piano (*mp*) and a change in the bass line. The system ends with a double bar line.

Musical notation for measures 8-9. Measure 8 begins with a dynamic of mezzo-forte (*mf*). The right hand has a sustained chord with a slur. Measure 9 shows a dynamic shift to fortissimo (*ff*) and then piano (*p*) at the end of the piece. The system concludes with a double bar line.

Example 2

Sostenuto  $\text{♩} = 60$

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Sostenuto' with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute. The melody in the right hand begins with a half rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, and C3.

Musical notation for measures 5-6. Measure 5 continues the melody with a quarter note C5, a half note D5, and a quarter note E5. Measure 6 features a change in time signature to 4/2. The melody consists of a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The bass line has a half note G2, a half note A2, and a half note B2.

Musical notation for measures 7-9. Measure 7 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'poco marcato' marking. The melody in measure 7 is a half note G4. Measure 8 continues with a half note A4 and a quarter note B4. Measure 9 features a half note C5, a half note D5, and a quarter note E5. The bass line in measure 7 has a half note G2, and in measures 8-9, it has a half note A2 and a quarter note B2.

Musical notation for measures 10-12. Measure 10 continues the melody with a quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. Measure 11 features a half note B5, a half note C6, and a quarter note D6. Measure 12 has a half note E6, a half note F#6, and a quarter note G6. The piece concludes with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The bass line in measure 10 has a half note G2, and in measures 11-12, it has a half note A2 and a quarter note B2.

Example 3

Poco allegretto ♩ = 80

Example 3, measures 1-4. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is Poco allegretto with a quarter note equal to 80 beats per minute. The dynamic is *poco f*. The melody in the right hand features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Example 3, measures 5-8. The music continues in the same key and time signature. The dynamic changes to *p*. The right hand features a melodic line with some chromaticism, including a tritone interval. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 4

Poco marziale ♩ = 72

Example 4, measures 1-4. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). The tempo is Poco marziale with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The dynamic is *f*. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Example 4, measures 5-8. The music continues in the same key and time signature. The dynamic changes to *p* in the first two measures and then returns to *f* in the final two measures. The right hand features a melodic line with some chromaticism, including a tritone interval. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.



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