



Murray State Music Theory Diagnostic

All incoming music majors (except for music business majors) and music minors must register for Developmental Music Theory (MUS 097) along with Theory I and Functional Keyboard I. MUS 097 is a five-week, pass-fail course that meets on MWF at 8:30am. On the first day of that class (Wednesday, 8/15), a diagnostic exam will be given. Those that pass the exam automatically receive a passing grade for MUS 097, or they are allowed to drop the course.

Since Summer 2017, we have been providing an alternative way to pass out of MUS 097 that can be done online anytime before the semester begins. This allows some students to drop the course during the summer and possibly register for another course at that 8:30 MWF time.

[To receive the rest of this information over email, send a blank email to mikedambrosio@gmail.com with the subject line "Theory Diagnostic"]

To pass out of MUS 097, the student needs to complete the following four exercises on www.musictheory.net and meet the specific requirements for each:

Note Identification

www.musictheory.net/exercises/note/drwrwryrynyygb

Requires 50 correct in 6 minutes, 80% accuracy

Note Construction

www.musictheory.net/exercises/note-construction/drwrwryryyybynggb

Ignore the natural sign—choose only flat, sharp, or "none"

Requires 30 correct in 6 minutes, 80% accuracy

Keyboard Note Identification

www.musictheory.net/exercises/keyboard/999dyynbrkb

Requires 50 correct in 4 minutes, 80% accuracy

Keyboard Reverse Identification

www.musictheory.net/exercises/keyboard-reverse/drwrwryrybngkbyyy

Requires 50 correct in 6 minutes, 80% accuracy

I would recommend practicing each one of these before actually testing yourself. It is important to learn about the layout and mechanics of each exercise, as well as practicing the skills themselves in advance. **You can do these exercises as many times as you want to!** If you would like to learn/review this information, go to www.musictheory.net and select "Lessons." All six categories within the top section present useful information for the incoming music student, but the ones most pertinent to the test are "The Staff, Clefs, and Ledger Lines" and "Steps and Accidentals." Within those lessons, clicking on each line will bring up helpful graphics. Lastly, questions on the exercises do not go away if you get them wrong; try again. Each wrong answer is counted, so click carefully.

Once you have succeeded in achieving the requirements for each exercise, you can count that turn as part of your diagnostic test by doing the following:

- If the exercise requires 50 correct, make sure your first number is at least 50 (for example: 50/53 or 60/75) and that your percentage correct is at least 80%.
- At the end, click on "View Report."
- Put your name in, then click "Sign Report."
- Copy the verification code and paste it into an email to mdambrosio@murraystate.edu.

To get credit for MUS 097, the email you send should contain all four verification codes. I will reply to you via email once I have verified your scores. At that point you will be permitted to drop the course on MyGate if you choose. (You can also keep the one credit course on your schedule if you choose; you will not be expected to attend class.)

OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS:

Can I test out of my theory courses?

For those of you taking the AP Music Theory Exam, scoring a 5 gives you credit for both Theory I and Theory II (MUS 170 and 173), giving you the option of taking Theory III as a freshman. Scoring a 3 or 4 gives you credit for Theory I only. In addition, the department offers "challenge exams" for Theory I and II at the very beginning of the fall semester. There will be a sign-up sheet posted on Dr. D'Ambrosio's office door (FA 544) at that time. Sitting for the exam(s) costs \$75 per course.

What can I do to prepare for Functional Keyboard classes?

Since the first few weeks of Functional Keyboard I move at a brisk pace, *it is very important for incoming freshmen to become fluent in basic note and rhythm reading as soon as possible*. Students with access to a piano or a keyboard are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the layout of the piano keyboard at the same time that they are mastering their note-reading skills. Be sure to practice with both treble and bass clef. The easiest way master note-reading is to practice with music flash cards. (You can find them online to print, or make your own using 3x5 cards.) Twenty minutes of flash card practice per day will have students reading better in about two weeks.

Below are a few books and online resources to practice your piano reading skills:

- <http://www.musictheory.net/exercises/keyboard-reverse>
- <http://www.soundswell.co.uk/pages/swsightr.htm> (The exercises in the "First Steps" section will work.)
- <https://www.sightreadingfactory.com> (Try the Demo for free; great resource for all musicians!)
- Bastien, James. *Sight Reading, Level 1* (Kjos Music Company)
- Johnson, T.A. and Caroline Evans. *Right@Sight, Grade 1* (Edition Peters)
- Kember, John. *Piano Sight Reading, Volume 1* (Schott)
- Marlais, Helen and Kevin Olson. *Sight Reading & Rhythm Every Day, Book 1A* (FJH Music Company)

Can I test out of Functional Keyboard courses?

Students who have prior experience in piano may elect to test out of one or more semesters of Functional Keyboard classes. Contact Dr. Matthew Gianforte (mgianforte@murraystate.edu) for details.