

Thinking Out Loud

SONG TITLE: THINKING OUT LOUD
ALBUM: X
LABEL: ASYLUM / ATLANTIC
GENRE: BLUE EYED SOUL / POP

WRITTEN BY: ED SHEERAN, AMY WADGE
AND JULIAN WILLIAMS

PRODUCED BY: JAKE GOSLING

UK CHART PEAK: 1

♩ = 79 Pop

A

D D/F#

mp

‘Thinking Out Loud’ was released as a single in September 2014 and reached the no.2 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 subsequently spending a year in the Top Forty. It reached no.1 in many countries across the world and by 2015 it had reached half a billion streams on Spotify and over 2 billion views on YouTube. The song won two Grammy Awards, for Best Pop Solo Performance and Song Of The Year respectively.

‘Thinking Out Loud’ was written in partnership with long-time collaborator Amy Wadge, who Sheeran has worked with since 2007. They also collaborated on the 2017 single ‘Shape Of You’, a massive worldwide success. ‘Thinking Out Loud’ is a romantic ballad and its lyrics reflect the feeling of getting older and how love and fidelity are impacted by it. Sheeran has defined the song as a ‘walking down the aisle song’. The song’s similarities with Marvin Gaye’s ‘Let’s Get It On’ brought claims of plagiarism that were later withdrawn. ‘Thinking Out Loud’ has sold in excess of 10 million copies worldwide.

Ed Sheeran’s meteoric rise to fame has been the result of a highly productive work ethic. He performs relentlessly to this day, as a solo acoustic artist, to thousands of fans worldwide.

His 2017 album ‘÷’ had, at one time, a record 10 singles in the UK Singles Chart

Sheeran was born in West Yorkshire in 1991 and raised in Suffolk. He dropped out of school aged 16 to pursue a career in music and moved to London. His independent releases caught the attention of Elton John and Jamie Foxx, and he signed to Asylum records in 2011. He is one of today’s most popular and commercially successful artists.

Sheeran is an outspoken artist, not afraid of making his political and social views known, and he remains an accessible and down to earth character. He is an actor, and had cameos in *Game of Thrones*, *Home and Away* and *The Simpsons*.

With only three albums to his name to date, Ed Sheeran has already had an immensely successful career.

Thinking Out Loud

Ed Sheeran

A ♩ = 79 *Pop*

The piano score for 'Thinking Out Loud' is written in D major and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system is marked with a box 'A' and a tempo of 79. The music is in a pop style, with a moderate tempo. The chords are D, D/F#, G, and A7. The piano accompaniment is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score includes measure numbers [3], [6], [9], [12], and [15] at the beginning of their respective systems. The bass line is primarily composed of chords and simple rhythmic patterns, while the treble line features more melodic movement.

Technical Exercises

In this section you will be required to play a selection of exercises drawn from each of the groups below. The examiner will be looking for the speed of your response and will also give credit for the level of your musicality. Please see the syllabus guide for details on the marking criteria.

Major scales, minor scales and arpeggios need to be played hands together, in straight feel, ascending and descending, in the keys, octaves and tempos shown. Candidates can choose to play *either* natural minor *or* harmonic minor scales in the exam. Pentatonic scales are right hand only, and the C blues scale needs to be performed hands separately. You may use your book for Group A and Group B. Group C exercises must be played from memory.

Note that Groups A, B and C need to be played to a click and any fingerings shown are suggestions only.

Group A: Scales

The tempo for this group is ♩ = 66 bpm.

1. B^b major scale

Musical notation for the B^b major scale exercise. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two flats (B^b major). The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The right hand starts on G4 and the left hand starts on G3. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

2. D major scale

Musical notation for the D major scale exercise. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The right hand starts on D4 and the left hand starts on D3. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

3. G natural minor scale

Musical notation for the G natural minor scale exercise. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two flats (G natural minor). The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The right hand starts on G4 and the left hand starts on G3. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

4. B natural minor scale

Musical notation for the B natural minor scale exercise. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two sharps (B natural minor). The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The right hand starts on B4 and the left hand starts on B3. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Sight Reading

In the exam, you have a choice between either a Sight Reading test or an Improvisation & Interpretation test. The examiner will ask you which one you wish to choose before commencing. Once you have decided you cannot change your mind.

In the sight reading test, the examiner will give you a 4–6 bar melody in the key of either D major or B \flat major. You will first be given 90 seconds to practise, after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is for you to practise and the second time is for you to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. The tempo is $\text{♩} = 60\text{--}95$.

During the practice time, you will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in of the second playing will start immediately.

Sight Reading | Example 1

Musical notation for Sight Reading Example 1, a 4-bar piece in B \flat major, 4/4 time. The notation is written on a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats (B \flat major). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: B \flat 4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B \flat 3. The bass line consists of half notes: B \flat 3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B \flat 2.

Please note: The test shown is an example. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.

Sight Reading | Example 2

Musical notation for Sight Reading Example 2, a 4-bar piece in D major, 4/4 time. The notation is written on a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two sharps (D major). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, D5. The bass line consists of half notes: D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C#4, D4.

Please note: The test shown is an example. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.