

The logo features the letters 'KSO' in a stylized white font inside a red square, followed by the word 'YOUTH' in a large, black, serif font. Below this, the words 'WIND ENSEMBLE' are written in a smaller, black, serif font, separated from the word above by a thin horizontal line.

# KSO YOUTH WIND ENSEMBLE

## Preparing for Your Audition

### 1. Work with a Teacher or Director

- **Seek guidance and regular lessons from a private teacher or band director** over the summer. They can help you interpret challenging passages, refine your technique, and guide your overall preparation. Don't attempt to prepare alone—mentorship is essential at this level.

### 2. Be Fundamentally Sound

- **Scales:** Prepare all major scales and a full-range chromatic scale. Scales should be fluid, accurate, and confident.
- **Sightreading:** Practice reading new music regularly. Focus on rhythm accuracy, keeping time, and shaping phrases—even under pressure. Use [www.sightreadingfactory.com](http://www.sightreadingfactory.com) to help practice sight-reading. You can practice 20 exercises for free before needing a paid subscription. This is a GREAT resource for those needing to improve sight-reading!

### 3. Practice with Purpose

- **Use a metronome:** Begin well below performance tempo. Isolate difficult measures and gradually increase speed.
- **Record yourself:** This can help you identify issues in rhythm, tone, pitch, and articulation that may not be obvious during practice.
- **Use a tuner or drone:** Particularly for wind and brass players—intonation must be precise and consistent. Use a drone (many are free on YouTube) in the key of the exercise or scale you are playing.

### 4. Master the Musical Details

- Be precise with dynamics, articulations, note lengths, tempo changes, and any written instructions. These are often what separate good auditions from great ones.
  - Once your technique is secure, focus on **musicality**. Shape phrases, breathe appropriately, and express character—even if no interpretive markings are provided
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### **Brass-Specific Tips**

- **Buzz on the mouthpiece** to build pitch accuracy and air efficiency.
  - **Use drones and tuners** daily. Listen carefully and adjust pitch using embouchure and airflow before using slide or valve corrections.
  - Develop **endurance and flexibility** by practicing in shorter, focused blocks with rest in between.
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### **Woodwind-Specific Tips**

- Combine **airflow with finger fluency**—both must be balanced for clear, consistent sound.
  - Learn and practice **alternate fingerings** for pitch accuracy and smoother transitions.
  - Rotate several high-quality reeds. Have **audition-ready reeds** that are well broken-in and responsive.
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### **Percussion-Specific Tips**

- Prepare for **all areas**: snare, mallets, and timpani. Be ready to demonstrate versatility and maturity on each.
  - Carefully **mark your music** with sticking, dynamics, and cues. Mental organization translates into performance confidence.
  - Focus on **sound production**. Choose sticks and mallets that highlight tone.
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### **Final Preparation Tips**

- **Run mock auditions** at least one week before the real one. Simulate audition conditions: uninterrupted, timed, and with all components.
- The day before the audition, avoid over-practicing. Do a light review and spend time visualizing success.
- Arrive prepared with all needed equipment (extra reeds, sticks, valve oil, etc.), and plan ahead for logistics like travel and warm-up time.