

Chorus Questionnaire

You director and Music Staff are looking for ways to assist you in achieving your musical goals. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions.

1. What are your top 2 goals to grow toward this year?
2. What kind of assistance would be most helpful to you in meeting those goals?
3. What kind of assistance would be most helpful in learning new music?
4. Would you be willing to attend additional section rehearsals?
What day/time?
5. Would you attend small group sessions to solidify you skills when singing with other voice parts?
6. Would you like to have additional PVI's? If so, how often?

7. Would you attend craft classes on any of the following subjects?

- Understanding the Judging Categories
- How to Give a PVI
- Quartet Workshop for Current or Potential Quartets
- Learning to Read Music
- How to Sing Your Part Smart

8. What other ideas/suggestions do YOU have on how we can assist you in achieving your musical and other chorus goals?

Conducting Section Rehearsals

General Guidelines in Working with Sections

- Be prepared
- Be positive
- Stress proper posture
- Teach and reinforce the proper characteristics of each voice part (depending on what section with which you're working)
- Correct wrong notes as you go
- Work on unity of sound – sing in a circle or facing each other. Remind them that no one is to out-sing anyone else. There can be no “saviors” in a unit sound

Section Rehearsal Goals

- Learn Notes
- Check Notes
- Blend Section & Build Unit Sound
 1. Check Breathing techniques
 2. Reinforce vocalises that activate the breathing mechanism.
 3. Reinforce vocalises that open up/expand the sound and develop resonance
- Accuracy and Coning
 1. Mark music to indicate which notes need special attention for tuning, coning or accuracy.
 2. Teach coning appropriate to each voice part and how to accomplish it.

PVI Programs: A Benefit to Everyone

Your whole chorus will grow from implementing and using a PVI program:

- Chorus members will gain education and develop skills
- Musical Leaders are given opportunities to gain experience and develop their skills
- Relationships of trust and confidence are developed
- Directors will see and hear the improvement in the quality of singing and confidence of chorus members
- The chorus will experience and appreciate the increased confidence of both singers and musical leaders.

Basics of Giving a PVI:

- Help her feel relaxed and comfortable as possible
- Ask what she likes about her voice and what she wants to improve about her voice. Does she have a specific question?
- Ask her to sing a few phrases of a chorus contest song. Make sure you have a pitch pipe or keyboard.
- Things to listen and look for:
 - Breath – is she breathing correctly? Fix this first if not.
 - Breath Management – maximizing breath for phrase length and vocal energy
 - Tone Production – is it freely produced and resonated? Any tension? Watch for tongue or jaw tension or over-involvement.
 - Head/chest mix – is she trying to sing too high in her chest voice or too low in only her head voice? Is she negotiating her break smoothly?

- Interval accuracy (tuning) – make sure her face is always lifted. Make sure the sound is dropping too far back into her throat.
- Completing phrase ending with energy and lift
- Choose only one or two things to work on and give her specific homework to work on in chorus
- Summarize the session and thank her for trusting you!

Reminders and Checklist For Posture and Breathing

1. Posture checklist from toes to head: Feet slightly apart, one foot slightly ahead of the other, keeping weight on one foot plus the ball of the other foot, leaving that foot/heel free to move. Knees slightly flexed and flexible to release tension in the body, particularly in the lower back, preventing swayback. Keep abdomen relaxed for breath intake, lift rib cage high and wide, relax shoulders, stretch tall (lengthening the spine), remember the inside smile and keep a twinkle in the eyes.
2. Watch for shoulder and/or neck tension when working with breathing or while doing choreography.
3. Some singers will revert to reverse breathing when working the abdominal muscle exercises. Watch for this and take time to get them back on the right track.
4. Some singers carry very tense abdominal muscles (even when not singing) and who have difficulty relaxing these muscles in order to achieve maximum air. This is often caused by muscle memory after years of “holding in their stomachs” so the muscles tense and it becomes difficult to get them relaxed and keep them relaxed when inhaling. Reminders and relaxation exercises will help reverse this muscle memory. Work with a chair where gravity can help release those muscles is helpful.
5. Encourage singer to expend through the back region as well as the rib expansion in front of the body. Again, leaning forward on the back of a chair while inhaling will help her feel the expansion across the back.
6. Remind the singer to “restate” her posture with every breath. Pick up a foot, shift weight, re-open the rib/chest area to restate. Gravity does begin to take its’ toll on singers unless we resist it by restating our posture.
7. Be certain that the singer is inhaling through an open, relaxed throat.