

The Care & Feeding of New Members

Educating and caring for our newest members is one of the most important aspects of Sweet Adeline leadership. New members bring energy, excitement and renewed joy into our choruses; however, many times they become confused, frustrated, or lonely when so many of their questions remain unanswered and they don't know where to turn. Helping them feel comfortable and prepared will help ensure that each member continues in the friendship and harmony of Sweet Adelines. Besides – it's fun!

I. Who?

A. Who is a "new member"?

B. Who will lead this class? Who are the support staff?

C. Who are "Big Sisters"?

II. When?

A. Prior to Contest

B. Repeating biannual class

III. What?

A. Introductions

- to each other
- to chorus leaders
- to the contest experience

- to chorus life

B. Interacting

- working together
- laughing together
- learning together

IV. How? The 6 to 8 week classes

A. Week 1 – Introductions and class outlines

- Atmosphere
- Eating Together
- Introductions
- What they can expect from each class

B. Week 2 – Singing Together

- Eat
- Introductions of Director/s, Section Leaders and/or Tape Listeners
- Discuss How to Learn Music and Taping Procedures/Expectations

C. Week 3 – Living & Working Together

- Eat
- Introduction of Management Team

- Finance Coordinator presentation

D. Week 4 – A Brave New World

- Eat
- Sweet Adelines as a Foreign Language
- Questions

E. Week 5 – Let's Play Dress Up!

- Eat
- Introduction of Costume Coordinator/s and Make-Up Chairperson
- Discussion and/or presentation of costume and make-up

F. Week 6 – The Contest Experience

- Eat
- Step-by-Step Contest Experience Description
- Questions & Answers

V. Graduation

- A. Timing
- B. Diploma & Ceremony

C. Evaluation Sheet or Follow Up Plan

VI. Additional Options

A. Themes

B. Big Sister/Mentor Program

C. Taping Graduation

D. Monthly or Quarterly Follow Up and Bonding

Sweet Adeline Terminology – A Foreign Language?

Afterglow – cast party after a show or competition

All-in-One – undergarment worn under costumes

Chorus Position – downstage foot slightly in front of the other foot, facing the director

Coning – the art of adjusting to maintain the proper balance of a barbershop chorus

Coronet Club – association of members of all past International Quartet Champions (Queens of Harmony)

Diphthong – two vowel sounds sung on one note

DT (Down Tiles) – facing directly out to the audience from the risers

Dynamic Contrast – planned volume changes to enhance the musical and lyrical message of the song

Fanny Rails – rails attached to top row of risers

Hang Ten – standing forward to front edge of the riser step

Inside Smile – lifting of the soft palate

Off Paper – being able to sing your part without referring to the music

Overtone – unsung tone heard above the highest tone of a properly balanced and matched chord

Pickups – beginnings of phrases sung by only one voice part

Physical Warm-ups – physically moving to warm the body to prepare the singing mechanism to operate at optimum

PVI – Personal Vocal Instruction

PSI – Personal Showmanship Instruction

Quartet Etiquette – displaying courtesy by not singing along with a foursome that is singing unless you are invited

Ringin' Chord – Overtones are produced resulting in an exciting “ringin'” sound

Ripple – choreographed move that starts at one place in the chorus and travels across the chorus

Tag – Section at the end of the song added by the arranger to give a sense of completion

Traffic Pattern – designated and carefully timed path followed by choruses and quartets on competition day

Tuning – ability to sing both “in key” and “on pitch”

Vocal Warm-ups – getting the voice prepared to sing effectively

Windows – riser placement where each person can see and be seen through the opening between the two people in front of them

Woodshedding – the art of singing barbershop by “ear”, without a written musical score

New Member Weekly Visual Performance E-Mails

These e-mails cover the visual performance issues, which sometime causes confusion or stress for our new members. If you can do them in different colors or with funny pictures, so much the better! The Welcome Letter goes out as soon as notification comes from the Membership Chairperson with their information. If you are in the middle of the set with other new members, you can start the newest person there after the welcome letter, continuing until she has received them all (that way you don't have to keep up with who gets which week's e-mail). After contest or a major performance, make sure to take them off the mailing list (or after they've received them all).

Welcome E-Mail

Hi

I just wanted to touch base with you briefly – I'm your Rookie Coordinator (or Rookies Visual Coordinator) with "chorus name". You're now officially Rookies! You'll be considered Rookies until you compete with us (or perform at a major show).

There is so much information to absorb when you're new! If you prefer your information in small, bite-size pieces, I'll begin sending you a series of what we call "Rookie Challenges". These are weekly (more or less!) tips that are

taken from the information in our visual handbook. We suggest that you work on one aspect at each rehearsal.

If you have any questions, confusions or concerns, please feel free to call me (303-791-9345) or e-mail me (padbmt@juno.com). It's exciting to have you as part of our chorus and a privilege to work with you as you begin this wonderful journey we call Sweet Adelines!

On with the Show!

Week #1

Normal Chorus Position

Normal chorus posture is to face our director, standing on the curve of the riser, with your feet toward the front of the riser and your body turned slightly to face her rather than the audience. Your outside foot should be a little further forward. Your weight should be mostly on the balls of your feet – with a little more weight on your outside foot. Your knees should be flexible and have some give in them. Your shoulders will be comfortably back and relaxed with the chest lifted high – singer's posture! Your head and neck are relaxed and somewhat "loose" – flexible. In fact, everything about you should be comfortable and relaxed. However, you'll not be "floppy" – there is strength and command in this posture instead of bounce and "flopping" all over your riser space!

You will find yourself standing up straight. A visual image we sometimes use is the idea of having a string that runs through your head, neck and down your spine (like a puppet). You can “rise up” on that string to elongate and align (not stretch) your body into a singer’s posture. If you feel any tension in your body, there will be tension and stridency in your vocal production. We are alert and responsive, but not tense. This takes practice! It’s a good thing to check yourself every once in a while during rehearsals and performances to see if you’re tense and inflexible. If you have questions, feel free to talk to one of your directors or section leaders or set up a PVI (personal vocal instruction). We’re all here to help you be great!

That’s your first challenge. Take a minute and practice what it feels like to stand in this way. Then “check in” as often as possible at rehearsal to see how you’re doing!

Week #2

Re-State

You hear this word a lot at rehearsal. This means to (all in one brief second!) rethink what you’re doing and express it again – maybe tilt your head a fraction, increase your expression, change your expression, increase your energy level, check your posture, put a sparkle in your eyes!

Re-Stating means to remember what the song is all about and to come alive again with the meaning of the lyrics and music. Sometimes we let our posture “settle back or down” and we’ll want to re-state our good singing posture. Sometimes we get so involved in the techniques that we forget the words we’re singing about and we’ll want to refocus ourselves on reaching the audience.

We often say to “restate with every phrase” – that’s a great habit to be in. It’s what separates the really exciting, interesting choruses from the “okay” ones. Move a bit, pick up a foot and replace it, change your expression – in short, re-state on each breath.

There will also be specific times in the songs that the director or choreographer will ask us to always remember to restate. We all just need to memorize those times. But if you’re in the habit of doing it at each breath, you won’t have to worry about that!

Take a look in the mirror and sing a few lines of a song – most likely, you’ll be amazed at how little you move or change expressions. Now practice “re-stating” while you sing those lines. Watch how much more interesting, sincere and exciting you appear! How you express yourself is a treasure – make sure you bring it to chorus!

Week #3

Watch “your director” – All the Time!

We all need to focus our eyes and attention on the director at all times! The only time we should ever have our eyes elsewhere from the time a performance starts (this is true at rehearsal too!) is when we have a planned move during which we’re supposed to look elsewhere. Our choreographer is very specific about these spots. When in doubt, watch Kathy. This also means your head is turned toward Kathy – not just your eyes.

It is especially good practice to NOT look at any other member or guest who comes in late or is doing something different from the chorus. It’s extremely distracting for whoever is “up front” and you’ll miss something!

This seems like an easy one, but does require your concentration at times. Remember to “check in” as often as possible to see how you’re doing. And feel free to call, e-mail or catch me at rehearsal if I can be of any help.

Week #4

Open Mouth on Pitch

This is something that makes such a big difference in our sound! This means that when you hear the pitch blow, you

should open your mouth to the shape of the first vowel sound that will come out of it when you begin singing. While the pitch is being blown and you're waiting for that signal to begin, you're breathing through your mouth and preparing to make that first sound. You may notice that sometimes _____ holds up beginning the song in rehearsal while she scans the chorus to make sure everyone has their mouth open. We're trying to create that habit in every member – and you'll be ahead of the game (sometimes changing old habits is tough!). Rookies are usually among the best in doing this – so keep up the good work!

Week #5

Down the Tiles, or “DT”

This means to turn your body and face directly out to the audience (not in the curve of the risers), straight out to the audience from your place on the risers. This means you don't put your body on the curve of the risers, but rather turn so you're parallel to the edge of the stage. This term is sometimes used by choruses to tell members to line up with the tiles in their rehearsal floors. You'll do this only when the choreographer tells you to – the normal chorus position is in the curve of the risers, turned toward the director. You will also do this during a “snap turn” – when we've finished a song and turn out to the audience. “DT” is your time to soak up that applause – enjoy!

Week #6

Don't Watch the Front Row!

The Front Row often has different choreography moves or different timing than the rest of the chorus. They're supposed to look out into the audience much more often than riser members. If you fall into the habit of watching the front row to cue you in on your choreography, you may find yourself moving when your other riser buds are not! You'll find yourself becoming much more comfortable with the choreography if you'll practice just a little at home. That assurance will give you the confidence to perform with freedom and ease – able to focus on vocal production and delivering the message of the song. Now THAT'S a beautiful thing!

Week #7

It's Never Too Late!

It's never too late to do anything! If you ever realize that you're tense or your face isn't "on" or you're not singing with energy or dynamics or anything else – you can correct it then and there! It won't look funny – the more you catch yourself and correct something, the easier it is to make it a habit.

There is ONE exception – but you’ll have to wait until next week for that one!

Week #8

Missed Choreography Moves

Remember last time when we said “it’s never too late to do anything”? Well, there is one tiny exception – if you miss a choreography move, just miss it! Don’t begin it late and DON’T let that little slip up show on your face or in any subsequent move. Everyone messes up! Let it go and move on to the next move. If you’re face remains “in the game”, probably no one will ever know.

From the Judging Category Description Book, “One of the major concerns of the average chorus member is forgetting planned movements. Those fears are usually groundless because the showmanship judge (and the audience) cannot possibly watch each individual during all motions just in case one member misses. On the other hand, early or late movements do attract the attention because they create a flaw in the unit presentation.”

Relax and enjoy the presentation – it may not be flawless, but it will be engaging and enjoyable. Have fun!

Week #9

Sneak Breathing

Although this topic will be covered in your Rookie classes for vocal reasons, it has some visual aspects as well. If you have to sneak a breath during a performance (and all of us do), make it flawless! Not only does that mean that it will need to be noiseless when you breathe, but your mouth will still need to be forming the words as though you were still singing. Your facial expression will need to remain involved as well. No one will ever be able to tell by looking at you that you've just taken a breath. Whew!

Week #10

Hang 10

This means to be sure you're standing at the very front of your riser. It serves two purposes: 1) it keeps us from crowding the people behind us, and 2) it helps to keep our energy level up throughout our performance rather than "settling back" which immediately pulls down the energy level.

As you face the director, your outside foot should be so close to the front edge of the risers that the toes are actually hanging over the edge. Your inside foot should be nearly as close, but not actually hanging over, for stability. (Okay,

so that's actually hanging 5, but who's counting!) You'll find you have a little more "bounce" in your attitude and energy by standing this way.

Now you may notice as you begin to practice hanging 10, that some of the more "experienced" members in front of you may not be doing the same thing! This will make you feel crowded and your tendency will be to step back. Stand firm, my friend!! Eventually they'll catch on when they themselves feel crowded. We all know better, but sometimes just forget. So lead forward in this – others will follow!

Week #11

Energy

You will hear this term applied to nearly everything we do! This excerpt from the Judging Category Description Book aptly explains why: "Energy is the force that propels all aspects of musical performance. It adds a special shine to the visual performance, taking it beyond routine into magic. Energy is the life force of the showmanship category. Adding energy for a performance well-grounded in basic musical techniques will be recognized and rewarded by the showmanship judge (and the audience)."

One comment we often hear at our performances is that "you all look like you're having so much fun up there!".

That's energy! We don't just sing – we perform and entertain! We express the joy of singing and music in our faces, bodies and attitudes. Energy is what gives our music life and joy!

Are you showing your energy? Your love for this wonderful music? How are you showing it? If you have any questions about this or wonder if you're showing energy, just ask one of us or the choreography team. We'd be glad to offer tips and watch you shine!

Week #12

Facial Expression

Sometimes we struggle with what our faces should look like as we sing. Sweet Adelines are known for giving visual expression as part of our performances because we always look like we're enjoying ourselves...even on a serious song. First and most important is your eyes. You'll want to let them sparkle and shine with the joy and intensity you feel, always looking interested and involved. One trick to get this effect is to think of having a really good secret that you're trying to keep inside. Try it for a minute and see how you feel. Now go look in the mirror to see what that looks like. You'll probably see that your eyes sparkle and your cheeks are lifted. Your mouth isn't necessarily open in a big smile...after all, it's a secret! That's exactly the effect you want! Remember how it feels

and begin practicing it at every opportunity while you sing. Another technique to try is talking like you're singing to a five year old – it's amazing how animated we get when talking to children! It takes that much energy and facial involvement to reach into the audience.

The expression comes entirely from the eyes...and you may be surprised how happy you look without a huge smile! A big smile is beautiful (please use it between songs!) but if it is too extreme, it will cause vocal tension and may not always appear sincere. Smiles aren't always necessary to convey emotion – the eyes are the windows of the soul!

Even when we're singing a sad song, we never want to look totally sad. That automatically drags down our facial muscles, taking our vocal production down the tubes as well! We may look pensive or thoughtful, but always we want to convey energy and involvement in the message. It takes practice to perform ballads and sad songs effectively, but be assured that energy and expression in the eyes are always preferred to sadness!

From the Judging Category Description Book, "Facial expression is the best tool available to the performer in visual communication with the audience. The stage performer realizes that more intensity and animation are required in a stage performance than in a face-to-face interaction, because of the distance that must be spanned.

The performer’s job is to communicate with the last row of the audience, not just the judging panel.”

So that’s your challenge for this week! Take a minute and practice what it feels like to sing this way in front of a mirror. As always, if you have questions, please let me know!

Week #13

“Outside” and “Inside”

You’ll hear these terms applied to all kinds of things at chorus. Basically, when you’re standing on the risers facing the director, your outside hand is the one closest to the audience. For instance, if you are on the right side of the chorus, your “outside” hand is your right hand (or foot, shoulder, etc.) or the one closest to the edge of your side. Your “inside” is the left hand – the one closest to the center of the risers. If you are on the left hand side of the chorus facing the director, your left is the “outside”, your right is the “inside”.

Nothing too challenging about this one – just a definition to become familiar with so that when they tell you to use your inside hand you’ll know where that is!

Week #14

Consider Every Rehearsal a Performance

It's so easy to get flustered on stage and forget things. The only way around this is to act like each rehearsal is a performance! Put your face and energy into every song we do...that's the only way things will become a habit. Then on stage we can concentrate on our finest singing because everything else will be natural to us. You won't look silly to anyone....really! We love that stuff! Seriously, the director really appreciates looking at faces that are reflecting back joy and energy to her – it gives her energy to pass along to us.

Make each performance and contest appearance a fun and enjoyable experience – be completely prepared by performing at every rehearsal!

Week #15

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Taking a few minutes at home every week to practice in the mirror will be SO valuable to you! Whether you're practicing your choreography or your facial expression or even just seeing what you look like doing choreography, it will give you a chance to experiment without feeling silly and will give you so much more confidence and security.

Most importantly, it will give you a chance to see what other people see...and if you don't like it, you can change it!

It's also very important to practice your choreography both at home and by attending extra help choreography sessions. This allows you to concentrate on the vocal portion of rehearsal and get the most out of them instead of worrying about your moves. Practice makes Permanent!

New Member Weekly Vocal Production E-Mails

These e-mails cover the vocal production terms that may cause confusion or stress for our new members. A Welcome Letter precedes the e-mails after you've received notification that a visitor has completed their paperwork and become a member. Then the E-Mails come to them weekly for 6 to 8 weeks. They can come from the Rookie Chairmen, asst. director, section leader or the Director! After that, please remember to take them off the e-mail list!

Welcome E-Mail

Welcome to our Chorus!

We're so excited to have you joining us as a member of this dynamic and exciting chorus! Part of the mission statement for Sweet Adelines International and our chorus is to educate our members in the musical art of barbershop and the fine vocal skills needed to perform it. With that in mind, you'll receive eight short weekly e-mails to explain some of the vocal production terms and how to produce your finest sound. There can be so MANY things to think about as you begin this wonderful journey. This will give you smaller, bite-size pieces that hopefully will be easier to absorb.

If you have questions or confusion, please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail. We can talk by phone, computer or in person – we'll make sure you're confidently on your way to becoming an independent and successful singer on our risers! It's so much fun to work with you and share this wonderful hobby together!

Happy Singing!

Week #1

PVI's & PSI's

The first thing you may want to know about with vocal production is our PVI program. PVI stands for Personal Vocal Instruction, which is made available to you through our chorus. Basically it's like a mini-voice lesson –

helping you work through any areas of vocal production that are new or confusing to you. It only last 20-30 minutes and is free to you just for the asking!

All Rookies will be scheduled to receive a PVI soon after you've joined. That will help get you off on the right foot with vocal production, breathing, body alignment and other singing areas we work on. Periodically, our chorus will schedule a "Voice Lesson Weekend" with a local voice teacher as well. During those times, you sign up for a 30-minute lesson (you can share a lesson with another member if desired – but really it's not too scary!). For new members, the first lesson is free!!

During the year, the chorus will also schedule PVI/PSI nights to allow the whole chorus to receive more specific instruction concerning their own particular vocal production development. Plus, you can ask for a PVI at any time – just check with any director or assistant director to schedule one.

We're thrilled that you've joined us in this exciting journey to better singing and friendship!

**PSI's are Personal Showmanship Instruction. They can be scheduled through our choreographer.

Week #2

Body Alignment (formerly known as posture)

Body alignment means understanding and correcting our own physical alignment so that our body can find its balanced and efficient "place" for singing. We all know how important breath/air is to singing. Well, it begins with our body! The "container" for that breath must be prepared effectively each rehearsal in order to produce the breath and tone that we work toward.

When we sing well, we sing with our whole bodies, which are supported centrally by our spines. Begin by "lengthening" your spine – feel it elongate and stretch toward the ceiling, which will result in feeling taller. Then check your head – it should be resting comfortably on the top of the spine – not

jutting out front or stretching to the sides or back. Feet are about shoulder width apart to give stability to your body and your sound. Knees are flexible and movable allowing the hips to be in a somewhat “tucked” position.

Basically – ears should be over the shoulders, which should be over the hips and feet! Simple? Yes!!! If you’re confused, just ask any of our musical leaders for clarification. We’re excited to help you!

Week #3

Breathing

We talk so much about breathing – haven’t we been doing it every day since we were born?!?! There’s a yes and a no to that question – yes, we’ve been breathing; however, we don’t always breath effectively with full, deep breaths. A singer’s breathing may be new to you, but soon you’ll find that you feel better, have more air and are producing beautiful sounds floating on air!

1. With lifted body alignment, keep the chest lifted high and wide.
2. Blow, pant, or puff to find and use abdominal muscles.
3. Expand the rib cage area with air and resist collapse as long as possible while you sing
4. Inhale through vowel shapes – ah or oh are good for establishing space
5. To better feel the air moving, stand up and bend over leaning on a chair back. Inhale and feel the back and side expansion. Feel ribs moving out as the lungs fill with air. Exhale and feel pulling up and in of abdominal muscles. Continue exercise while gradually standing up remaining conscious of rib and back expansion.

Air is your best friend! Enjoy!

Week #4

What Does a Healthy Voice Feel Like?

1. Tones feel easy, open and free.
2. Vibrations are felt in the mask, nose, pharynx, etc.
3. Lower tones vibrate in the chest area.
4. Body feels buoyant and lifted.
5. Limbs feel energized and moveable.
6. Head floats directly above the spine.
7. Inhalations (breathing) feel natural and not manufactured.
8. Exhalations feel steady and resistant.
9. Face feels movable and elastic.
10. Practice recreating the feeling as often as possible.
11. A beautiful voice feels full and free.

This can be you!!

Week #5

Resonation

In order to create our most beautiful, resonant singing voice, several things must be in place:

1. Released and relaxed jaw
2. Relaxed lips
3. Tongue resting on the lower gum ridge of your mouth (except for some consonants)
4. Breathing through the open vowel space
5. Lift your countenance (eyes) to help lift soft palate
6. Correct body alignment
7. Effective breathing techniques

Choose one thing every week to work on! You'll be amazed at how quickly things start to coordinate together!

Week #6

Ten Steps Toward Vocal Health

1. Drink lots of water.
2. Get plenty of sleep.
3. Quit smoking.
4. Nutrition – eat healthily
5. Exercise – walk or do some physical exercise 3-4 times a week
6. Laugh – enjoy life.
7. Take care of illnesses.
8. Work through emotional conflicts.
9. Use supported speaking voice.
10. Balance voice use with voice recovery time.

Here's to happy, healthy singing!

Week #7

Recognizing Vocal Strain

Physical Signs Neck tension, jaw sticking out, shoulder tension
 Improper breathing and body alignment
 Facial tension
 Physical tension

Audible signs: Throat clearing, coughing, huskiness, hoarseness
 Loss of range, fewer high notes
 Missing notes in mid-range
 Forced sound, need excessive effort to sustain sound
 Whimpering high is impossible
 Glottal attacks

If you're experiencing any vocal strain, tension or losing your voice after rehearsals, please see one of the directing staff for a PVI. Singing is one of our most freeing experiences – relax and enjoy!

Week #8

Emotion and the Vocal Performer

Vocalists have an advantage over all other musical forms when it comes to projecting mood and emotion because we use the human voice and have lyrics to help the performer portray the feeling of the song. “The ideal Sweet Adeline International performance is one that can create an illusion so real, so alive, that both performer and audience are caught up in its spell and all else is forgotten in the magic of the song.” SAI Judging Category Description Book

How do we display emotion, character and mood while maintaining proper vocal production?

1. Visualize the scene or story set out by the chorus
2. Find a personal relationship to the emotion to be conveyed
3. Keep the head relaxed and natural.
4. Your eyes tell the story – they should be moveable and expressive
5. Keep chin level, jaw and tongue tension free for best singing; smile on breaths. Allow your expressions to change with the lyrics.
6. Good body alignment that is flexible tells a strong story.
7. MOVE! Flexibility in your body will aid flexibility in your voice.

Enjoy the music! Enjoy the message of each song! Enjoy singing – it will show! Enjoy every moment of your Sweet Adeline chorus experience! We love sharing it with you!

Three Habits of Highly Effective Sweet Adelines

1. Learn Your Music

- Be accurate, dependable and accountable
- Be the first one to qualify on your music – let your singing be critiqued – don't wait until the last minute.
- Be disciplined – work on music 10 minutes a day – remembering what we did in chorus. Resist talking on the risers
- Be personally responsible for your vocal development
- Match vowels and turn diphthongs appropriately
- Champions are made every day – not just on rehearsal nights.
- Invest in the plan
- Be AWARE of and responsive to director's conducting techniques
- LISTEN – record yourself and listen; analyze your own work – find a couple of things you can fix and tape again next week. Then listen to some really awesome barbershop!

2. Pay Your Dues

- Pay financially on time
- Be involved. Mentor new members – find a replacement for any position your hold
- Express your creativity
- Show Commitment – give your 100% on this day
- Attend rehearsal regularly and let the right person know if you must be absent
- Volunteer to help occasionally.

3. Be Nice to Each Other

- Don't take yourself so seriously.
- Be less quick to criticize other members and the director.
- Seek the company of positive people.
- See the good in every situation.
- MIRROR TECHNIQUE
 - Things that bug us about others usually are what is in us.
 - Listen to how you speak about other people and see if there's a part of you reflected in it too.
 - Listen to things that you value and appreciate in others and embrace those things – you are in **THOSE** things too!

12-Step Program to Learn Music with Learning CD's

This is a 12-Step program to assist you in learning your music more successfully. It is only one system – over time, you may develop your own system that works best for you.

The success of this program is contingent upon the effective LISTENING SKILLS of the learner much more than upon the musical background or ability to read music. Give it time! With each song, the process will become quicker.

Any of the 12 Steps may be repeated before continuing on to the next step. But remember...EACH step is important to the overall successful results of learning ALL the right notes, words and timing of the new song.

DO NOT eliminate any of the steps even though they may appear to be insignificant to you. When you have passed your first song successfully, you'll be glad!

Step #1 LISTEN to the music while you close your eyes. (This will familiarize you with the general feel and flavor of the song.)

Step #2 WATCH the NOTES on your music while you listen. Don't sing yet!!

Step #3 Again, Watch the Notes while you listen. Don't sing yet!

Step #4 Watch the words on your music while you listen. Please – no singing yet!

Step #5 On a separate piece of paper, WRITE down all the lyrics (you can refer to the music if needed). Now, watch your paper to check all you've written while you LISTEN once again. Nope – no singing yet!

Step #6 WATCH the NOTES again while you LISTEN

Step #7 WATCH the WORDS again while you LISTEN

Step #8 Try to write the words down again on another piece of paper without looking at the music. If you have trouble, listen to the tape again while you watch the words. Then return to writing it again without looking.

Step #9 HURRAY! Finally, you can add your voice! Now watch the notes on your music while you HUM along. Hum – singing is next!

Step #10 WATCH the words on your music while you sing along. Can you believe it – you're singing! However, if you have any difficulty, CIRCLE the spot on your music as you go through. Then go back and LISTEN to those parts again.

Step #11 Record yourself singing your part all the way through WITHOUT looking at your music.

Step #12 WATCH your music and LISTEN to your own recording to see if you are correct. You'll probably be outstanding!! But if you have any doubt, go back and check your part again on the master recording. Concentrate on listening to the parts you circled earlier to be sure you have made the corrections.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

With a little bit of luck plus all your great work, YOU are now the proud singer ready to qualify!!