



Men's Choir

Vocal Technique and Tone

Production

May 15, 2020



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Objective/Learning Target:

The student will learn/review information regarding vocal technique and tone production.



Warm Up

First sing your two favorite warm-ups that you miss most from school. Then, on a separate piece of paper, answer the following questions:

1. What do the two warm-ups that you sang help do for your voice?
2. Think about what tone production means to you and define it.



Refresher Course

Vocal technique is essential when making quality sounds. Instrumentalists get to manipulate their instruments with their hands. When it comes to vocal music, our bodies are our instruments. You should consider the following when producing sound: warm-ups, posture, breathing, vowel shapes, resonance, diction.

This lesson will go in-depth with all of these.



Warm-Up

Olympic athletes have to stretch before running. We have to do the same for our voices! You will not sing your best if you don't try to get your body, mind, and voice loosened up and ready to go. Warm ups are more than just going through the motions to wake your voice up. They activate your listening skills. They relax you and focus your mind. They also get you ready for what might be showing up in your music that you are learning/struggling with.



#PostureMakesADifference

Let's go back to band instruments. Any wind instrument is set up in a way that if the air travels through the instrument in the right way, it will make a proper sound. Our bodies are set up the same way. The best sounds from our singing happen when we are positioned to make the best sound. It is more than just standing and singing. It starts in your feet and works all the way up to your head. This is a video that walks you through proper singing posture: <https://youtu.be/epNEiWCpslo>



Remember To Breathe

The airflow you put in is what you are going to get out of your voice. When air is just blown through a trumpet, it has to be the correct amount; too much and you go sharp or to a different partial, too little and the note is flat or in a lower partial. The breaths we take in must be deep and intentional. Short gasps of breath lead us to sound too childish. You must learn to take healthy singing breaths to improve the quality of your sound. Longer phrases require bigger breaths! Let's practice taking a proper breath: <https://youtu.be/CBvtyPlzAPo>



Vowel Shaping

Vowel shapes are the next part of this and they are possibly the hardest thing to master. You could be slightly off and it could cause you to sing flat or sharp. Have you ever heard your director say that you need taller vowels? This is because your vowel shape is not allowing the good breath you took to make the best possible sound. 95% of the time, if something doesn't sound absolutely correct, it is an issue with the vowel. Without a good vowel shape, you are just throwing sound out.



Resonance/Placement of Sound

Resonance is the type of sound that can be heard no matter where you are in the concert hall. It must be supported by breath and fully engaged through your body. Resonance also must be placed in the right part of your voice. If you sing too forward, it comes out as too bright and it will not travel as far. Too far back in your throat leads to not carrying far in the hall either. The most resonant sounds are found in the middle. You must also place your tongue out of the way. Try to experiment. Sing an “ah” vowel and try to find that happy medium. Then, watch this video to see their mastery of placement:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zpFvDGC9qU>



What Are You Saying?

The way we articulate words is just as important as the rest of the process. We are a performance based ensemble and if we perform for our audience and they can't understand the words we are singing, we are doing a disservice to them, the lyricist, and ourselves. If you sing the words lazily, every other part of your singing will fall off. Sing crisp consonants with a lot of energy, and you will keep making fantastic sounds.



Answer the following!

1. What are the elements of vocal technique that we discussed in this lesson?
2. What could you do daily to help yourself get better at these elements?
3. Now that you you have a summer break, how will you get better at these before next school year?