

## CHORAL ACTIVITIES THAT INFUSE READING AND WRITING SKILLS

### Southwood Middle School Choir

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1. Students learn to track and decode music notation, two skills fundamental to reading. Singing by ear is minimized and students are introduced to processing musical notes in two thought processes, letter names and more importantly solfeggio. Solfeggio is a notation system that was invented in 1029, but still used today.
2. Students use a variety of learning styles for the “whole” child: aural, visual, and kinesthetic. Singers utilize the Curwen hand signs combined with the Kodaly curriculum of learning music. This is a visual presentation of the do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do scale that incorporates body motions and gives teachers an instant assessment of student musical comprehension. All students, but particularly SPED students, benefit from this activity as it activates a different form of brain function.
3. Compare and contrast two choral pieces with the same text by different composers. Draw a Venn Diagram on board and have class fill in the details after listening to a recording. If they can see the scores, that’s even better. Discuss meter, tonalities, word painting, compositional style, motifs, melodic contour, rhythms, etc. Example: I Dream a World (Thomas/Dilworth), I Am Not Yours (Childs/Stroope), Ubi Caritas (Durufle/Halley)
4. Students complete teacher-made CRISS style graphic organizers for choral repertoire. These are complete templates requiring students to list items as: tempo, dynamics, expression marks, analysis of choral text, harmonic analysis, phrase and form structure, etc. Graphic organizers are available online or make your own.
5. (Pre-FSA) Students use the Language Arts Benchmarks FCAT Task Cards to create FCAT style questions for their peers. One article was from an NPR All Things Considered article on Phillip Glass’ opera “Einstein on the Beach” for which two groups of students created a bank of test questions ten each. The class listened to the pod cast, then took turns to read the article, collaborating to find the answer with a page, paragraph, and line location. Ask the 8<sup>th</sup> graders to make the question bank for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade quiz!
6. Students use the Kennedy Arts Edge and TED Talks as a starting point for creating detailed journal entries. These pod casts also provide a narrative script so that students can follow along at their own respective reading pace. Students love to watch and write about the Eric Whitacre Virtual Choir videos.
7. Students use foreign language choral repertoire to reinforce root words. Words in foreign languages that correspond to English words are highlighted. For example, in Festival Jubilate the word “verum”, truth in Latin is used, so the connection to words in English is presented, verify, verity, verification, etc.
8. Students create class vocabulary lists, words that begin with do, re mi, etc. This is a great activity for the weeks following choral MPA before spring break. Make silly fill in the blank sentences to increase memory power! Example: domicile, domestic, dowager, recession, relentless, miscellaneous, misogynist, migration, fascist, famished, factotum, solstice, solitude, solemnize, laceration, lactose, tintinnabulation, tillage
9. Students use multi-color sticky notes to create a solfeggio word wall. Each color represents the number of solfeggio syllables found in that word (spelling, not pronunciation). Example: 2/blue – miso, sofa, latte; 3/red – relegate, represent; 4/green – facsimile, disseminate, obliteration
10. Have the class do a journal entry "free-write" describing an engaging musical video. Here are some suggestions: Giant Xylophone in Forest, The USAF Band Holiday Flash Mob, All Girl Marimba Band. Share with the class.

**GOOD SKILL IN ALL YOU DO!**