

SINGING LEAD

All four parts singing in the barbershop style are required to master a number of skills in common. Among those skills are:

- Notes and words accuracy and vowel interpretation
- synchronization...which would include
 - well-defined rhythms
 - complete understanding of the phrasing and its internal rhythms
 - rhythmic breathing
- balance and coning
- the ability to create and maintain overtone quality (ring) in the sound
- resonance appropriate to the ensemble sound, including
 - the ability to manage a register break without disturbing the horizontal flow of the vocal line
 - the ability to smoothly execute the vocal color plan (textures)
 - well-formed and matched word sounds

LEAD'S ROLE

There's no better way to describe the lead's job than to quote Joe Connelly:

“The lead voice generally carries the melody, so she must sing with **musical authority**. The *ideal* lead voice has **clarity, brilliance, depth, maturity** and a **sense of style** that sets her voice apart from the other three. She sings with a sufficient amount of **color** to add interest to the tone but never so much as to distort the locked chord characteristic of the barbershop style...While much of her vocal authority comes from utilizing the lower chest register, she must be able to execute a **smooth transition between the lower and the upper registers** so that quality remains consistent between the extremes of her range. The lead voice should also be capable of a **wide range of expressive dynamics.**”

The skillful lead must remember that:

- she is predominant in the sound of the ensemble because of her voice quality, not because of the volume she uses
- consistency is necessary for all singers, but crucial for the lead singer for everything from ensemble synchronization to tuning to breath timing
- she is just as responsible for tuning as the harmony parts...however, the leads concern is primarily the maintenance of the tonal center
- she actively participates in singing in balance and coning
- she does not “actively” blend with others, but rather, produces a sound with which the harmony parts can blend
- while she doesn’t have to match the vowels of the other singers, she **MUST** produce a vowel sound that is true to the word being sung; this vowel, then, must be fully resonated
- she must be just as skillful in the art of harmony singing since she doesn’t always have the melody, even in a contest song

NOTES:

A E I O and YOU

Guidelines for Matching and Ringing Vowels

Mouth Posture

- Show a bit of the top teeth on all vowel sounds.
- Keep the lips soft. Over-production causes tension.
- Sing within your "goal posts."

Relaxed Jaw

- Be sure to have space between the upper and lower molars.
- Move the corners of the mouth forward, do not jut the jaw forward.
- Relax the jaw. Don't drop the jaw excessively.

Tongue

- It should lie flat on the floor of the mouth.
- The tip should return to "home base," touching the lower gum line.

How We Sang Today

<i>Oohd</i> To	<i>odd</i> mor	<i>ohd</i> row's	<i>ugh</i> an	<i>ugh</i> oth	<i>urge</i> er	<i>ed</i> day			
<i>Odd</i> I	<i>ohd</i> hope	<i>ad</i> and	<i>ed</i> pray	<i>eed</i> we'll	<i>eed</i> be	<i>oohd</i> to	<i>ed</i> geth	<i>urge</i> er	
<i>oohd</i> To	<i>odd</i> mo	<i>ohd</i> row	<i>id</i> this	<i>oohd</i> to	<i>ed</i> day				
<i>id</i> will	<i>eed</i> be	<i>ugh</i> a	<i>ed</i> yes	<i>urge</i> ter	<i>ed</i> day				
<i>ad</i> that's	<i>odd</i> gone	<i>ohd</i> for	<i>ed</i> ev	<i>urge</i> er					

So take my hand my friend I want to say

I'm glad we laughed and loved and sang to geth er to day

So take my hand my friend I want to say

I'm glad we laughed I'm glad we loved I'm glad we sang

Oh how we sang to day how we sang to day

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TARGET VOWEL REPLACEMENTS

AH = odd **AW = awed** **a = ad** **EH=ed** **er=urge** **uh=ugh**

EE= eed **IH = id** **OH=ohd** **OOH=oohd** **ood (as in should, good)**

1. Slowly, chord by chord, target vowels only
2. Target vowels only, with phrase flow.
3. Slowly with some initial consonants added.
4. Sing regular words while concentrating on the replacement vowels.
5. Sing regular words with phrase flow, concentrating on replacement vowels.