

DESCRIPTION OF A SECTION LEADER

A section leader should be a responsible member. She should set a good example, be dependable, prompt, flexible, enthusiastic, friendly, patient and tactful while supporting the director.

She must be a leader, able to take charge and manage the section with a pleasant, constructive attitude. While she need not possess the most outstanding voice in the section, she must be accurate; a consistent singer who is willing to spend the time necessary to prepare herself so that she can sing her part with confidence, authority, and finesse.

She should keep track of the progress of the members of her section, to know when one of her section is having a problem. She should take it upon herself to call extra section rehearsals whenever necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SECTION LEADER

- Be sure the members in her section know **all** the correct words and **all** the correct notes.
- Teach interval accuracy and proper pitch.
- Know the proper interpretation, and expression to ensure you understand and are following THE PLAN.
- Build confidence in the individual section members.
- Help members understand and implement the coning process.
- Convey section difficulties or problems to the Director.
- Keep your own music file up-to-date with corrections, breath marks, etc. on the music so that all members have a ready reference at all times.
- Have knowledge of individual members' voices and their capabilities.
- Assist in the audition of prospective members.
- Assist prospective members by offering to work with them individually to help them prepare for a successful audition.
- Build camaraderie within the section.
- Review qualifying tapes to ensure that all members' qualifying tapes are passed up to the standards established for the chorus.
- Know proper vocal production and insist upon it. Never give up.
- Suggestions for continued growth.
 - Sing in a quartet if possible.
 - Attend Regional and International classes.
 - Listen to tapes and recordings of choruses and quartets.
 - Attend Chapter shows. Visit other chapters whenever possible.
 - Attend other section rehearsals within the chorus.

SECTION REHEARSAL

Tips on the care and teaching of a Section.

1. **Be prepared** – Know what your responsibilities are each week. If you don't know, ask.
2. **Be positive** – You are working as part of a team. If you have problems with interpretation or timing, check with the Director **before** the section rehearsal. Support the director.
3. Stress proper posture when standing or sitting, set a good example.
4. Encourage members to use their recorders, not only to record a new song, but record themselves.
5. Stress discipline, keep in control of the section rehearsal. Use different methods of teaching. Break up into smaller groups and sing to each other. Have one group listen and make suggestions on what needs to be worked on. Develop good listening habits.
6. Teach the characteristics of your voice part in relation to the melody. If you are a lead section leader, stress the important positive aspects of the lead voice.
7. Correct wrong notes as you go. What is **learned wrong**, is harder to relearn. They will thank you later.
8. Tape your section rehearsals then listen to yourself, improve on your teaching methods.
9. If you have an assistant or another section leader, take turns listening. **Don't sing with your section, they will lean on you.**
10. Watch for consistent trouble spots. Sometimes use a recorder to point these out to the section.
11. Work on unit sound, sing in a circle, sing facing each other. Remind them no one is to out sing the other.
12. Make your section rehearsals productive, positive, and fun! Let the members know this is their time to learn and promote team spirit.

Sing Your Part Smart

Tenors:

I. Vocal skills

- Develop good free, upper range to high C.
- Need ability to keep soft palate lifted on all vowels and voiced consonants.
- Freedom from tension in throat, jaw, tongue area.
- Good tonicity of abdominal 'lifting muscles'.
- Good use of 'inside smile'.
- Good breathing skills/breath management.

II. Singing techniques

- Listen to the leads and 'tune' to her notes.
- Tune up any octaves sung with another part.
- Let vowels naturally migrate toward a more neutral sound as tones go high (vowel modification).
- Allow more 'chest tone' into tone between middle C and octave C when lead is above the tenor.
- Feel strength in bridge of nose and use plenty of air. "Spend the air, don't 'save it'".
- Match vowels with lead and sing exactly with her. Minimize consonants and sing a smooth, uninterrupted tone flow.
- Tune up any notes that need to be adjusted sharp or flat.
- Give more width on very high tones. Don't 'pinch' or 'squeeze' high notes. Use the upper rib cage for support of high tones.

Leads:

I. Vocal skills

- Develop a good mix of head and chest tone in octave above middle C.
- Maintain plenty of 'back space' (open throat) and 'arch' in the roof of the mouth (lifted soft palate). Use an 'inside smile'. Shore upper lips helps with that.
- Find the correct balance between pharyngeal and upper resonance.
- Maintain freedom of jaw, throat, tongue area.
- Maintain high, wide chest and use abdominal lift.
- Develop bigger capacity for air as you inhale and better breath manage skills. Try to expand the ribs as you sing.

II. Singing techniques

- Utilize plenty of air, 'spend', don't 'conserve'.
- Sing with energy, vitality, and authority.
- While maintaining a smooth vocal line, sing deliberately. Don't 'throw away' words or syllables. Help three harmony parts to stay with you.
- Maintain open, full resonators, 'inside smile', and plenty of support.
- Keep tone on hard palate as you sing higher. Utilize as much resonance as possible. Keep soft palate lifted. As tone reaches B-flat above middle C, think of strong hum and strength in bridge of the nose.
- Sing vowel-to-vowel and use pure vowels with clear, but not overdone, diphthongs and consonants.

Baritones:

I. Vocal skills

- Keep resonators open, work to mix chest and head tone in middle octave.
- Develop a strong 'hum spot' and maintain that feeling as you sing.
- Use the 'inside smile' (short upper lip).
- Maintain plenty of 'back space' and keep tongue wide and soft against the lower front teeth.
- Use constant abdominal lift.
- Use plenty of air in the tone, 'spend' don't 'conserve'.
- Develop bigger capacity for air – manage exhalation with expanded ribs.

II. Singing techniques

- Sing vowel-to-vowel exactly with the lead. Match vowels, minimize consonants.
- Sing with pharyngeal resonance, but focus below the lead and more head resonance above the lead.
- Tune up octaves sung with other parts.
- Tune up notes that need to be adjusted sharp or flat for total accuracy.
- Maintain your place in the cone on every chord. Need constant adjustment of quality and intensity. When you are below the lead you need to 'fill' and have more of a bass quality, versus when you are above the lead you need more of a light tenor quality.

Bass:

I. Vocal skills

- Vocalize as high as possible as well as low.
- Keep soft palate open for singing high notes and for extra resonance on low notes.
- Keep larynx low/relaxed. It should drop as you inhale.
- Keep chin level with the floor. Don't reach down or up for the breath or the note.
- Keep throat, jaw, tongue, relaxed and maintain the feeling of a large throat.
- Keep 'inside smile' (short upper lip) to aid in accuracy.
- Develop a range at least to C below middle C and the ability to vocalize at least an octave above.
- Develop good breath management skills, while utilizing a high, wide ribcage.

II. Singing techniques

- Match vowels with the lead, sing at the same time.
- Minimize consonants, sing smooth vocal line.
- To help technique, above, sing whole phrase as if all the notes were just one tone. Lift the soft palate more for high tones.
- Keep the feeling of 'humming' as you sing.
- Sing with plenty of air, energy, vitality, focus. Try to expand the ribs as you sing.
- As the bass goes up the scale they need to soften their sound, versus as they descend, they should expand in volume and width.
- Bases are in charge of maintaining tempo. They need to be 'pushing' the beat to keep the songs going.