

# Full-Grade Level Choral Music Grades 4-5

## *Standards and Objectives*

1. **Music Literacy** (CA standards in Artistic Perception)
  1. Read rhythmic notation for whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in simple meter (4/4, 3/4, 2/4).
  2. Differentiate between simple (e.g. 4/4) and compound (e.g. 6/8) meters.
  3. Sight-read simple melodies on the treble clef using solfege (2-4 measures, stepwise and small interval motion, within one octave, primarily using the pentatonic scale).
  4. Aurally identify the difference between major and minor.
    1. Sing a major scale.
    2. Sing repertoire in both major and minor keys.
  5. Identify and define standard notation symbols for pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, articulation, and expression.
  6. Follow their own part in a choral octavo.
  7. Identify and describe basic music forms and their parts (e.g. round, verse/chorus, etc.)
  8. Compose and improvise basic rhythmic and melodic patterns.
2. **Singing** (CA standards in Creative Expression and Historical and Cultural Context)
  1. Sing unison and 2-part vocal repertoire with expression and technical accuracy.
    1. Display full, relaxed breathing and aligned posture.
    2. Demonstrate ability to match pitch and blend with others.
    3. Sing in chest and head voice without strain.
    4. Demonstrate basic knowledge of phrasing, dynamics, and musicianship, including facial expression.
    5. Utilize correct enunciation skills (clear consonants, open vowels).
  2. Sing music representing diverse genres and cultures with appropriate expression.
    1. Sing songs in foreign languages, and use correct diction for each language.
    2. Sing songs from memory and/or using movement, where appropriate.
    3. Describe characteristics of music from a variety of cultures, time periods, genres, and styles.
  3. Demonstrate appropriate rehearsal and performance etiquette, including audience behavior (where applicable).
    1. Follow and respond to the conductor's gestures.
    2. Contribute positively to music making.
    3. Present oneself confidently with good citizenship in a unified performance.
3. **Analyzing and Evaluating Music** (CA standards in Aesthetic Valuing and Connections, Relationships, Applications)
  1. Identify differences in tempo and dynamics in contrasting music selections.
  2. Develop criteria for evaluating music performances based on the style of the music.
  3. Use musical vocabulary to evaluate performances and offer constructive suggestions for improvement.
  4. Make connections between music and other subject areas, e.g. history, math, art, etc.

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## ***Recommended Progression of Study***

### **Unit 1: 4 Weeks**

#### **Introduction to singing**

1. Posture
2. Breathing
3. Vocal health
4. Types of voices
  1. Speaking, singing, shouting, whispering
  2. Chest voice and head voice

#### **Warm-ups (get them making sound)**

1. Sighs, sirens
2. 5-note patterns
3. Use warm-ups that utilize a mix of vowels, numbers, and words
4. Introduce solfege words as part of warm-ups (e.g. do, re, mi)
5. Incorporate chants/raps so students can demonstrate steady beat (clap, snap, stomp, etc.)

#### **Repertoire**

1. Begin with simple, short, accessible unison songs that you can teach by rote/echo
  1. Start with call and response first
  2. English or foreign language are OK
  3. Stay away from complex songs they already know, e.g. Disney
  4. Sing (model) without the piano
  5. Add steady beat and/or body percussion ostinati whenever possible
2. In week 3-4, hand out lead sheets (NEVER lyrics only) to previous or new songs and explain how to follow.
  1. Left to right, top to bottom, etc.
  2. When the notes go up, your voice goes up, etc.
  3. Start at words, phrases, or boxed letters (not measures yet)
3. If/when using accompaniment (piano, guitar, tracks, etc.), explain the difference between accompanied and a cappella singing.

#### **Other Tips**

This unit should be fun, engaging, and fast-paced — get them involved in making sound and hooked on wanting to sing well! Concentrate on technique and rehearsal etiquette (the “how”), and don’t worry about introducing notation or musical concepts (the “what” and “why”) until the second month.

You WILL have “inconsistent” singers. Place them next to stronger or more confident singers, preferably in the middle of ensemble (not the back or front rows). Encourage them, but avoid singling them out. They are likely not tone deaf (which is a physical malfunction of the ear), but do not have the control or technical ability to match pitch... yet! This is a skill they can develop!

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## ***Recommended Progression of Study***

**Unit 2: approximately 10 Weeks  
(until approximately winter break)**

### **Continue to build singing technique**

1. Daily warm-ups
2. Matching, blend, balance
3. Flexibility of the voice and range expansion
4. Major scale on solfege with hand signs
5. Singing healthily at various dynamics

### **Sight-reading and notation**

1. Steady beat
2. 4/4 meter
3. Notes: quarter, half, whole, two eighths
  1. Kodaly system (ta, ti-ti) or numbers (one-and, two-and)
  2. Compare to fractions in math
4. Rests: quarter, half, whole
  1. Vocalized with 'shh'
5. Practice through echo-clapping, improvising, and games (like identifying whether the teacher has clapped the right pattern or not)
6. Introduce the patterns and then reinforce them using repertoire

### **Music terms and symbols as applicable using current repertoire**

1. Staff
2. Time signature (definition in general)
3. Measures, measure numbers, bar line
4. Double bar line
5. Dynamics (as encountered)
  1. forte, mezzo-forte, mezzo-piano, piano
  2. crescendo, decrescendo
6. As encountered in current repertoire, e.g. repeat sign, breath mark, fermata, form

### **Repertoire**

1. Unison songs (including foreign language), songs with ostinati, partner songs
  1. Choose diverse repertoire (tempo, dynamics, at least one song in a minor key, etc.). Compare and contrast differences in those songs.
  2. Provide historical or cultural context to songs as appropriate. Connect to prior learning in history, geography, etc.
  3. Work on correct and unified pronunciation of words (especially vowels)
  4. Work on appropriate facial expression. Add body movement if appropriate for the style and/or culture of the work.

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## Unit 2, continued

2. Connect learning where possible
  1. Use musical vocabulary, notation, or symbols
  2. Use measure numbers to identify where to start
  3. Identify musical form where appropriate (e.g. verse/chorus)
  4. Take time to explain lyrics and/or define new words, even in English
  5. Clap rhythms within the song
3. Prepare for performance, if applicable
  1. Introduction to conducting (how to follow a conductor)
  2. Basic performance etiquette
  3. Create criteria for evaluating performances; generate constructive suggestions
4. Vocabulary: accompanied, a cappella, pick-up, diction, ostinato, solo/duet/trio, harmony; music terms, symbols, and notation as listed above

### Other Tips

This unit is where the bulk of the introduction to music notation, signs, and symbols happens. Like instrumental students, choir students need to know these things. However, for choir students, reading musical notation is separated from repertoire (especially at the beginning), and still needs to be made “fun”.

### Recommended one-hour Lesson Plan:

1. Warm-ups, breathing, technique (5-10 minutes)
2. Musicianship / music-reading (5-10 minutes)
3. Repertoire (three or four pieces at 10-12 minutes each)
  1. Review what they know, then teach something new
  2. Use echoing to teach rhythm and pitch patterns
  3. As students develop, sight-sing or clap rhythm patterns from the song
  4. Use audiation (to develop internal hearing)
  5. Make sure students can sing a part by themselves before adding a second part

★ Opportunities for improvisation, composition, performance preparation, etc. should be interspersed throughout in small chunks (not taking up an entire lesson)

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## ***Recommended Progression of Study***

**Unit 3: approximately 12 Weeks  
(from winter break until spring break)**

### **Continue to build singing technique**

1. Major scale on solfege with hand signs should be fully learned
  1. Allow students to lead each other
  2. Allow students to improvise using hand signs
2. Reinforce technique with your warm-ups (**recommended book: “Vocalize!: 45 Accompanied Vocal Warm-Ups That Teach Technique,” by Andy Beck, 2013**)
  1. Posture
  2. Breathing
  3. Range, flexibility (insist upon use of the head voice)
  4. Dynamics
  5. Diction / vowels / consonants
  6. Articulation

### **Sight-reading and notation**

1. Continue rhythm reading in additional meters (2/4, possibly 3/4)
2. Incorporate pitch-reading on the staff using solfege
  1. Clef (general explanation) - use treble clef only
  2. Start with **mi, so, and la** in the key of F (F-C)
  3. Move **mi, so, la** into other keys
  4. Add **re**, then **do** (low and high) when they are ready
3. Give at least one opportunity for basic composition
4. Introduce the patterns and then reinforce them using repertoire

### **Music terms and symbols as applicable using current repertoire**

1. Additional time signatures (e.g. 2/4)
2. Additional dynamics
3. Additional signs and symbols (e.g. D.C. al Fine, 1st/2nd endings, slur, etc.)
4. Point out and explain tempo markings or metronome markings, including ritardando and accelerando

### **Repertoire**

1. Diverse repertoire: unison (including foreign language or folk songs), songs with ostinati, partner songs, songs with descants. If students are very confident, try rounds.
  1. When choosing a song in minor, introduce the term and the aural skill of identifying the difference between major and minor.
  2. If introducing a song in compound meter (e.g. 6/8), explain the rhythmic concept, but don't go into too much detail.
  3. Rhythm-clap or sight-read in solfege small segments of repertoire where possible. Pattern recognition is important (e.g. recognizing mi, so, la patterns)
2. Vocabulary: major, minor; new musical terms, symbols, and notation as above

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## ***Recommended Progression of Study*** **Unit 4: 10 Weeks** **(from spring break until the end of school)**

### **Continue to build singing technique**

1. Do daily warm-ups that reinforce technique
2. Incorporate solfege words and hand signs into warm-ups

### **Sight-singing and notation**

1. Review and expand rhythm reading (simple meter only)
  1. Consider adding dotted half notes, dotted quarter notes, single eighth notes
  2. Consider adding ties
  3. Make it a game wherever possible
2. Review and expand pitch-reading on the staff using solfege
  1. Move pitch-reading of **do, re, mi, so, la, do** (pentatonic scale) into other keys
  2. Expand the range of notes used (ti below do, etc.)
  3. You may need to explain ledger lines

### **Music terms and symbols as applicable using current repertoire**

1. *Will vary, depending on what is encountered*

### **Repertoire**

1. Diverse songs, including rounds.
2. Connect learning where possible.
3. Prepare for performance, if applicable
  1. Reinforce and improve performance etiquette
  2. Teaching students to conduct will make them more responsive
  3. Apply criteria for evaluating performances; generate constructive suggestions
4. Vocabulary: round; music terms, symbols, and notation as described above