

Singing

Introducing singing in a pedagogically sound and musically beneficial way can be done in many ways. ALWAYS begin with warm ups.

Warm ups bring the students to attention, work on breath, posture, vowels and diction. Warm ups also aim to activate the body and the mind, not just the voice. Body softness and movement is an essential part of the freedom that comes with good, healthy singing.

Games which incorporate rhythm and melody memorisation and/or creation, are fun ways for students to come to recognise patterns aurally and visually and can introduce elements of a song as you go.

Clapping, singing, sizzling, call and response and body percussion are just some ways in which you can vary your approach to introducing rhythmic or melodic ideas.

Create an environment in which students can construct their own learning. Involve them in the process of teaching and sharing suggestions and/or creative ideas for the class. Invite their suggestions for musical variety at all stages of learning, even warm ups.

Warm ups

1. ATTENTION

Use silence to begin.

- a. Give silent gestures to stand/sit.
- b. Vary the speed.
- c. Use gradual changes of speed too.
- d. Demonstrate good sitting posture for singing (**A**).
- e. Demonstrate good standing posture for singing (**B**).

2. STRETCHES

Give the following directions:

- a. Shake out left arm.
- b. Shake both arms.
- c. STOP shaking your right arm.
- d. Shake the other arm.
- e. Raise both your shaking arms over your head.
- f. Curl over like a puppet, arms still shaking.
- g. Stop shaking and slowly uncurl back up to good standing posture for singing (**B**).

Point to all the corners in the room! Don't forget corners low down as well as high up. Swing from the hips. Remember, free movement encourages free breathing.

3. POSTURE

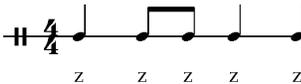
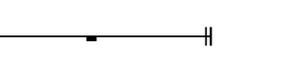
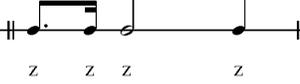
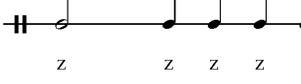
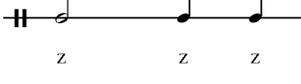
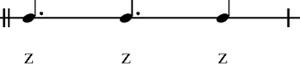
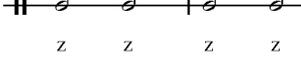
Place imaginary suitcase in each hand and find 'B'. Note: If the shoulders are forwards or backwards too much, you could fall over. Feel the weight balanced and the posture upright.

4. BREATH

Walking breath: Inhale, then exhale to a sizzle (mf) as you walk across/around the room. Repeat and challenge students to walk further in one breath.

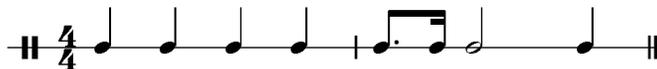
5. SIZZLING ECHOES

Sizzle short patterns consisting of old ideas. Next, introduce new ideas. Ask the students to choose dynamics and articulation. Note: louder and shorter sizzles evoke intense actions from the abdominals.

Teacher Call 1:	Student Response 1:	T.C 2:	S.R 2:
			
3.	4.		
			
5.	6.		
			
7.	8.		
			
9.			
			
10.			
			

6. DISCRIMINATING ECHOES

Sizzle a pattern you want the students to learn. (Suggestion given below.) Ask them to echo ONLY when they hear that pattern. If they hear a different pattern, they respond with a sustained 's' sound for four beats.



A further challenge to students in time would be instead of the sustained 's' sound in response to 'alien' patterns, they could create their own alternative response. They could add body percussion to it if they so wished and could respond to the 'alien' patterns with their own composed rhythm through body percussion.

7. GLISSANDI

1. Sweeping circles on 'woo' Begin and end in around A4 (A above middle C) to encourage use of light/head voice.

2. Toss a frisbee:

a. Glissando upwards and downwards as the frisbee rises and fall. Have students point to follow their own frisbees.

b. This time, having thrown the frisbee, it gets stuck in a tree! Hold the top pitch of the glissando. Then wiggle the jaw to release the frisbee and glissando back down.

8. VOWELS

1. Noah:

Start in F major.

Modulate up in semitones.

Young unchanged voices should be able to sing up to an octave higher than this in warm up exercises.

Some boys may choose an octave lower. This is absolutely fine.

No - - ah, No - - ah, No

No - - ah, No - - ah, No

2. Doo lee doo

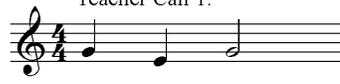
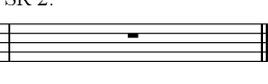
Begin by saying ‘Doo lee doo’ in your head voice. Students repeat in head / light voice. Now extend it – ‘Doo lee doo, doo lee doo, doo lee doo’ using lots of inflection and expression in your voice. When students are familiar with this, ask them to lead the exercise. Extend this by asking them to compose their own texts too.

Start in C major.
 Modulate up in semitones.
 Young, unchanged voices should be able to sing up to an octave higher than this in warm ups.
 Some boys may choose an octave lower. This is absolutely fine.

Next ask students to suggest three names from the group. They should be a 3-syllable name, followed by a 2-syllable name and finally, a 3-syllable name. For example:

Another variation would be to sing in solfa but ensure they are comfortable with singing the pattern as ‘ti’ is new to 1st years. From singing at Primary School, they should be familiar with the pentatonic scale – *d, r, m, s, l, d'*.

9. SOLFA PATTERNS

Teacher Call 1:	Student Response 1:	TC 2:	SR 2:
			
3. 	4. 	5. 	6. 

10. DICTION

Students repeat after the teacher:

a. H H H



b. Hi-sto-ry: Hi - sto - ry

(Note: Strong consonants are deliberately placed against the next syllable (i.e Hi-sto-ry as opposed to His-tor-y) so that the 'i' vowel is sustained, not the 's' and the 'o' vowel and not the 'r'. The same applies in the samples below. Sometimes text-setting is not placed sensitively and you'll need to draw your students' attention to that. Allow for discussion around the reasons should that arise.)

c. D D D



d. De-stin-y: De - stin - y

e. T T T

f. G G G



g. To-ge-ther

To - geth__ er

h. H H H

i. M M M



j. High Moun-tains

High moun - tains