

# TECHNIQUE 101

## LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

1. Students will understand and demonstrate four aspects of good, healthy singing technique:
  - a. Posture
  - b. Breathing
  - c. Warming up
  - d. Listening

### ACTIVITIES:

1. Ask students to brainstorm what is needed for good singing. Encourage them to think about what singers must do with their bodies to sing well.
2. Watch the Class Notes Video [How To Sing Well](#).
3. Prepare and present each aspect of good singing. Start with posture. Select a favorite classroom song and sing it in “slouch” or “sloppy” position.
4. Students will have fun exaggerating bad posture. After “sloppy” singing, ask them to show you good position, modeling it yourself. Repeat the same song and ask students to assess the difference, both in terms of what they hear and how they feel. Make a mental note to notice and compliment at least one student’s posture during each class session.
5. Create a “Posture Checklist” and hang it in a visible place in the classroom. Choose simple language with imagery. It might look like this:

#### POSTURE CHECKLIST

- Plant both feet firmly on the floor.
- Shoulders and arms hang loose.
- Feel a string gently lifting up on the very top of your head.

6. Next, address breathing. Buy a bag of small balloons and give one to each student. Ask students to hold the balloon up to their mouth with one hand while placing their other hand on their abdomen. Instruct them to fill the balloon first by breathing with their chest, then again by filling their “stomach” or diaphragm with air. You might need to practice a few times. Compare and contrast the difference in feeling.
7. Explain the importance and benefits of warm-ups for singers. Use a sports analogy. Athletes must warm up their bodies before they play their sports so they don’t get hurt. Singing works the same way. Together with your students, do the exercises mentioned in the video: lip trills and sirens. Incorporate these into your daily classroom routine.
8. Emphasize the importance of listening while singing. While singing familiar classroom songs, verbally point out some things you notice in order to cultivate that same skill in students. For example, “Did you notice that a few people rushed on the chorus, and then we weren’t singing together?” Rhythmic inconsistencies may stand out more clearly than tonal issues. To work on pitch matching and listening, as students to stand in a circle. Go around and assign each student a generic designation: high, middle, or low. Just like “numbering off.” Do not sing or define the pitch for them. Ask them to simply hear it in their head. On the count of three, as them to sing and hold their pitch out loud. As they hold their pitch, ask them to hear another sound from the circles. When you say “Switch!” they should move to the new pitch they were hearing. Then, “Switch back!” If you are doing this with good listening, the “switch back” will sound even better the second time. None of this will sound particularly tonal, so be prepared to celebrate the dissonance. The activity is most successful with older elementary or middle school students or students who have a lot of experience successfully matching pitch.
9. Listen to other singers in as many contexts as possible- live or recorded- and critique and respond to their sound. If you can see the singers singing, comment on their posture, breathing, or other elements of physical technique.

STANDARDS:



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1. K-3. 1. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2. Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm, and expressive intent.
2. Grades 4 – 5. 1. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 4.1.2.3.2. Sing and play alone and in a group demonstrating proper posture, breathing, technique, age-appropriate tone quality and expressive intent.
3. Grades 6 – 8. 4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique. 1 Respond to or critique a variety of creations or performances using the artistic foundations. Music. 6.4.1.3.1. Analyze and interpret a variety of musical works and performances using established criteria.



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