

50 Ways to teach Line (gathered by Archibeque & Trent Patterson)

1. Have your singers use their arms and hands to draw the phrase. Use imagery such as an arch, including the concepts of arsis and thesis.
2. Ask your singers to pretend to pull something elastic or sticky, such as taffy as they sing through each phrase.
3. Have each singer pretend to play tug-of-war with a partner, but their goal is for both of them to remain balanced and exert equal energy. (Don't let your partner win!)
4. Each singer uses a rubberband carefully, stretching and pulling with each new phrase.
5. Ask your singers to pretend they are ironing a shirt, gently smoothing the surface.
6. Have your singers pretend they are swimming in a pool, gently treading the water without splashing!
7. Invite your singers to make gentle circles in a forward motion throughout the phrase.
8. Singers put their hands on the abdominal muscles (tummy) to find the low breath, and sing each phrase on one breath. This is especially wonderful for rehearsing Renaissance music!
9. Tell your choir "the sound or phrase must ride on the breath." Keep air moving!
10. Remind your singers that the air must move faster as the line intensifies or goes higher and must also go lower in the body.
11. Draw the phrase shape on the chalkboard.
12. Have your choir sing on one pure vowel, phrase by phrase.
13. Sing each phrase on only vowels, eliminating the consonants.
14. Have your singers use their arms and hands to create the spin during each phrase. Use imagery such as spinning a plate on your finger, or a spinning top.
15. Recite the text with inflection and energy.

16. Use a lot of vocal modeling with your choir. Example: "This is what I hear... Do you like that? How could I improve it?" Demonstrate correctly.
17. Over-exaggerate what the choir is doing to make your point.
18. Record rehearsals and have your singers listen and evaluate.
19. Play recordings of good and bad singing. Singers need to hear great examples, as well as great non-examples.
20. Use a consonant such as v or z and buzz each phrase, then sing.
21. Purchase videos on vocal warm-ups such as Charlotte Adams or Henry Leck.
22. Always insist on musicality and expressivity during warm-ups!
23. NEVER accept unmusical singing, ever. Or singing without facial expression!
24. Don't just teach notes, and then expect your choir to "become musical." Charles Hirt: "Teach the music. The notes will come."
25. Teach phrase by phrase.
26. Choose literature which helps to build a sense of line-- Latin, canons, folk songs
27. Begin each rehearsal with a simple tune or canon, listening for tone and line.
28. Pulse long notes in a slow tempo piece, then reconnect long tones with that same sense of energy.
29. Have your singers lean in slightly at the beginning of each new phrase, using head.
30. Make your singers take a physical step on the first note of each new phrase.
31. Use phrases such as "The secret of singing is in the breathing."
32. Have your singers tap the divisions or subdivisions while they sing.

33. Tell your singers that each note must lead somewhere, have direction, or crescendo. Paul Salamunovich: "Launch the first note of each new phrase."
34. Ask your singers what word or words are most important. "Where are we going or heading?" Circle or mark in score.
35. Singers must draw or mark phrases in their scores. Did they mark every breath? Did they draw in crescendos or decrescendos??
36. Insist that your singers draw in each crescendo or decrescendo where the editor has simply written *cresc.* or *decresc.*
37. Have the singers imagine they are gently pulling a slinky through the middle of the body.
38. Unsupported tone = no line in singing. Teach abdominal/pelvic support.
39. Listen to individual rows or sections of the choir for line and expressive phrasing. Make it a contest to see who can be the most musical. Have the students help evaluate. Peer judging improves musicianship of singers.
40. Have your singers open eyes wide on long notes. Grow or go....
41. Practice crescendos and decrescendos for a certain number of counts on various vowels. Isolated vocalises such as this were often used by Robert Shaw.
42. Resist the temptation to teach only fast pieces. Try beginning with something legato and flowing.
43. Deep sea fishing for marlin. Keep line taut!
44. Pretending to be a swan, smooth on top, paddling like heck underneath
45. Smooth riding car with good shock absorbers
46. Pretend to hold up a plate glass window using your thumbs.
47. Hold arms around a barrel.
48. Slowly bend the knees during a phrase to increase abdominal support.

49. Breathe for the length of the phrase. Make last note most beautiful.

50. Sing phrase bent over like a rag doll.