

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Course Outline
Beginning Chorus**

Date: March 2003

Subject Area: Visual & Performing Arts

Proposed Grade Level(s): 9 – 12

Course Length: 1 Year

Grading: A - F

Number of Credits: 5/Semester

Prerequisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide beginning vocal instruction and general musicianship skills for all choral students. Instruction will include beginning music literacy and music theory and will emphasize differences in musical styles as they relate to the history of music and the interpretation of specific pieces. Emphasis will be placed on basic ensemble singing skills such as pitch matching, tone production, reading rhythms, and ear training. This class has no required after school performances, although students will be required to attend two local performances during the year as audience members.

GENERAL GOALS/PURPOSES:

The goals of this class are to introduce the student to successful ensemble singing through choral music, to improve their musicianship significantly, to help them develop an appreciation for working together toward a common goal, and to prepare them for more advanced choral study if they so desire.

STUDENT READING COMPONENT:

Students will read excerpts from various authors on choral and vocal technique, historical periods in classical music, and composers of different styles of music. Students will also explore and analyze the poetic texts of the pieces studied in the class.

STUDENT WRITING COMPONENT:

Students will be required to attend one live performance of an ensemble group each semester and write an essay critiquing the concert, comparing and contrasting the actual performance to the techniques they are learning in the course. They will also keep a journal of reflections and notes about vocal techniques and choral music.

STUDENT ORAL COMPONENT:

Regular in-class discussions will be conducted in order to assess the student's understanding of new concepts that have been introduced. Progress in vocal technique will be periodically evaluated while students sing together in small ensembles.

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

This outline is organized for content clarity rather than teaching chronology. While emphasis may be placed on one or two units of instruction in a given lesson, all of the units of instruction are intertwined. The evident level of student understanding and proficiency serves as the determining factor for the instructor's decisions regarding the unit(s) to emphasize at a given time. Most of the units include lecture, visual/aural demonstration of examples, guided and independent practice, critique, and student performance.

I. Orientation (1 week)

- a. Classroom rules
- b. Course expectations
- c. Grading policy
- d. Teacher assessment of students' previous singing experience through small group singing of simple melodies, questionnaires/pre-tests filled out by students, and student interviews.

II. Basic Vocal Production (continuous throughout the year)

- a. Posture—explores the optimum body position for producing a good, natural vocal tone; emphasis is on balance, support and developing stage presence
- b. Breathing—importance of planning the breaths, utilizing the full breath to support the tone
- c. Shape of the mouth—relaxed jaw, vertical opening, elevated soft palate, low larynx

III. Development of Choral Sound (continuous throughout the year)

- a. Singing in tune—matching the pitches played on the piano; listening to your own voice, to other singers in your section, to other singers on different parts
- b. Watching the director—entrances and cut-offs
- c. Diction—singing with uniform vowel shapes to obtain blend, producing clear consonants
- d. Dynamics—using breathing technique to support dynamic levels
- e. Phrasing—using dynamics to create musical phrases
- f. Facial expression

IV. Music Reading and Vocabulary (12 weeks, continuous reinforcement throughout the year)

- a. Note names
- b. Commonly used symbols
- c. Dynamic markings
- d. Rhythms, note values
- e. Time Signatures
- f. Major Scales
- g. Key Signatures

V. Listening to Choral Literature (4 weeks, continuous reinforcement throughout the year)

- a. Listening to audio selections and exploring historical perspectives on pieces from the various periods of classical music will also include selections from American jazz and contemporary artists
- b. Concert Attendance—Attend one concert per semester and write a critique of the performance as it relates to concepts learned in this course.
- c. Choral composers
- d. Careers in music—how recordings of music are produced; what careers are available in vocal and choral music

VI. Ear Training and Sight Singing (16 weeks, continuous reinforcement throughout the year)

- a. Solfege syllables
- b. Pitch matching exercises

- c. Singing major/minor scales and triads
- d. Basic range expanding exercises
- e. Chromatic scales
- f. Reading simple rhythms
- g. Sight singing in C major, F major

THIS COURSE WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE HSEE AND/OR FCUSD EXIT EXAMS IN:

Writing, Reading, and Language Arts

LAB FEE, IF REQUIRED: None

SUBJECT AREA CONTENT STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:

1.0 Artistic Perception—Processing, Analyzing and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Music

Units II, IV, and VI

2.0 Creative Expression—Creating, Performing and Participating in Music

Units II, III

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context—Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Music

Unit V

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing—Responding to, Analyzing and Making Judgments About Works of Music

Units I, V

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications—Connecting what is Learned in Music to Learning in Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Unit V

DISTRICT ESLRs TO BE ADDRESSED:

Students will be:

- **Self-Directed Learners** - Students will use the journal process to analyze and solve a variety of musical problems presented to them in class.
- **Effective Communicators** - As students learn performance skills, they will gain confidence that will help them be more self assured and professional in other areas of their lives. Students will also improve their written communication skills through reflection notes in their journals.
- **Quality Producers/Performers** - Students will develop an appreciation for the discipline required by the performing arts, thereby enhancing their work ethic and study skills.
- **Collaborative Workers** - Students will learn that they need to work together to produce a blended, musical choral tone, and that, while individual knowledge and effort is required, listening to their classmates is of the utmost importance.
- **Constructive Thinkers** - Students will analyze their own performances and solve tone production problems, using techniques that they learn as the course progresses.
- **Responsible Citizens** - Students will demonstrate that their individual effort is essential to the group product.

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