

# Singing

Listening, Singing, Playing, Reading and Recording, Creating, and Analysing are the basic components through which we express our musical skills and understandings.

The activity of singing is firmly imbedded in the Communicating and Interpreting Music strand of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum. The ability to use our voices effectively to express music is one of the most basic and yet essential music skills. Children need to learn to control the vocal mechanism to accurately reproduce or manipulate those elements of beat, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics, tone, colour - i.e. those components which are expressed in the Developing Practical Knowledge in Music strand.

Through singing, students can experience music in a unique social and uplifting contextual setting - the Understanding Music in Context strand.

As children become more experienced, they can develop the skills and confidence to improvise while singing and to compose their own songs - skills expressed in the Developing Ideas in Music strand.

Correct use of the voice will allow for healthy vocal expression. Strain on the voice will be alleviated if students are taught to stand correctly, breathe correctly and warm up the voice before extended periods of singing.

Take the time to sing every day - and enjoy the special group dynamics and essential skills development, which will naturally occur.

# Singing

## Teaching a song

- Echo method (phrase by phrase)
- Whole song
- Muscle memory

## Choice of songs

- Appropriate range
  - 5 to 8 year olds: notes B to E'
  - 8 to 12 year olds: notes A to F'
- Different metres

2	3	4	6
4	4	4	8
- Different rhythms
- Harmony/texture:
  - rounds
  - ostinato patterns
  - partner songs
  - descants

## Techniques

- Breath control – deep, rib-extending breaths
- Posture – tall, well-centred, relaxed
- Diction – clear consonants, uniform vowels (produced by everyone having the same mouth shape)
- Tone – appropriate to the style of the song
- Interpretation:
  - phrasing
  - word painting
  - use of dynamic contrast
  - appropriate tempo
- Choral speaking

## Resources

- Kiwi Kidsongs Collection (1 – 10)
- Sing Together
- Our Music Song Book
- Music Education handbooks
- Hei Waiata, Hei Whakakoakoa  
Fatuga Fa'asamoa | Aotearoa
- A and C black, ring-bound books
- A.B.C. Sing books
- MUSIKit and Up Beat etc

## Posture rap

Feet on the floor, one slightly ahead,  
Relax those knees, don't lock them dead!  
Hips rolled under, stretch the spine so tall,  
Sternum up, don't let it fall!  
Shoulders should be back and down,  
Head is high, don't wear a frown!  
Keep your hands down at your sides;  
Let the seam lines be your guide!  
This is how you stand to sing,  
If you want your voice to ring!

By Kenneth H. Phillips

## Reasons for out of tune singing

- Hearing disability
- Limited exposure to a good model
- Poor listening skills
- Restricted vocal range
- Poor coordination of vocal chords and hearing
- Poor choice of key to sing in

## How to develop singing in tune

- Begin with breathing games
- Hum the tune
- Make siren or train whistle sounds to encourage head tone
- Sing to "OO" rather than words
- Use hand signs to physically model the contour of the melody
- Pitch matching games, ie So-Me and So-Me-Lah
- Demonstrate the difference between singing and speaking through chanting (for example, "How would you call out to someone at a distance?")
- Encourage light, soft singing
- Ask the students to stand to sing
- Sing unaccompanied
- Give a sense of the key by singing the first phrase
- Make sure everyone hears and starts on the same starting note
- Conduct the children in so they know when to start
- Have the students sing in small groups or on their own
- At times, choose songs using the pentatonic notes only, which are easier to tune (Do, Ray, Me, So, Lah) = (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> notes of scale)
- Sing frequently