



## Lesson: Vocal Improvisation

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### OVERVIEW

Students will combine vowels and consonants in music ostinati to create vocal improvisations in groups. This lesson correlates to the Vocal Production and Enunciation lesson found in the “Lesson Plans for Rehearsing” folder of this curriculum.

### LEARNING GOAL

Students explore and create vocal improvisations in groups utilizing vowels and consonants.

### RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Video/ audio of a vocal improvisation such as Ella Fitzgerald singing *One Note Samba* (search the internet for a clip)

Student copies of:

- [Vocal Improvisation Assignment Sheet](#)

### PROCESS

1. Listen to/ watch example(s) of scat singing and vocal improvisation
2. Offer opportunities, either within the full choir rehearsal, or in small groups, to explore vocal improvisation. (Option: simply have students add some vocal improvisation over the piano interludes of *Through All Things* during rehearsal or try to embellish one of the warm-ups.) Students may feel apprehensive at first but with a little encouragement they will relax and have great fun exploring their voices.
3. Once students are comfortable exploring improvisation divide them into small groups of 3-4 to create a short (1-2 minute) improvised vocal ensemble. Suggest that they start with one person making a vocal ostinato and then add each person in succession until the entire group is singing. If they feel it doesn't sound good, they simply stop and try again.
4. Once each group feels like they have created a solid ensemble sound have them share with another group or allow each group to share with the entire class.

### EXTENSIONS

Have students take a simple familiar song, like “Row Your Boat” or “Twinkle Little Star”, and improvise on it.

# Vocal Improvisation Assignment

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## Objectives:

- Explore vocal improvisation
- Improvise in a group for 30 seconds
- Stay in the same meter
- Stay in the same key
- Share improvisations with another group and/or the entire class



## Instructions:

1. Gather in a group of 3-4 students

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2. As a group explore syllables that you can use in your vocal improvisation. List a few of them for reference:

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3. Choose a range/key/note to start and explore with your voices
4. Once your group feels confident, Student 1 starts with a vocal ostinato pattern and continues repeating it
5. Student 2 adds a different vocal pattern in the same key
6. As students 1 & 2 continue, students 3 joins in and then student 4 also joins in, remembering to stay in the same key and tempo
7. If it doesn't sound cohesive simply stop and try again with new sounds. Simple with repetition is good to start.
8. Pair up with another group and provide feedback based on the following question:
  - Are all parts in the same meter?
  - Are all parts in the same key?
  - Do the syllables of each student's part fit well together?
  - What suggestions would you give the other group?
9. Revise with recommendations and share with the entire class if there is time