

SOUNDS GOOD!

CHOIR

Created by Daniel Segner

SOUNDS GOOD & GOOD MEMORIES CHOIRS

Singer Resource – Choir & Music 101

ABOUT SOUNDS GOOD CHOIR

Local, no-audition neighborhood choirs led by professional conductors and accompanists. Prior experience is not required, all musical levels welcome. Sounds Good has choirs in the city and suburbs of Chicago. Sounds Good has 3 musical “seasons”: Spring, Summer, Fall. The Spring session features general choral repertoire, “Summer Rocks” features popular music from the 50s, 60s, 70s, with a band, and Fall programming is based around the holiday season. Learn more at www.soundsgoodchoir.org.

CHOIR BASICS

Generally speaking, **Sopranos** and **Altos** are female voices in high and medium pitches. **Tenors** and **Basses** are often male voices in medium and low pitches. There are female tenors and female basses – it is just a matter of how low they can sing! If you don’t know what vocal part (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) you sing, your conductor will place you in the correct section.

Everything you need to succeed in a choir can be learned in regular attendance at rehearsals. Make sure to bring your sheet music to every rehearsal and a pencil to take notes from your conductor. Look up from your music at the conductor often! Your natural inclination as a singer may be bury your attention in your sheet music, especially when exposed to a new experience, new music, and new people. Active listening and visual engagement help demystify the musical process.

Some other basics about choir and singing with Sounds Good:

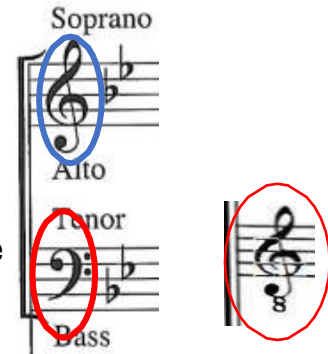
- 1) **Sign-in** at the beginning of every rehearsal with the Choir Liaison (volunteer for the choir).
- 2) **Sit with your vocal part** – each choir’s setup may be different, don’t be afraid to ask where your vocal part sits in rehearsal.
- 3) **Kindness** – In our culture, no individual singers are singled out or criticized. In addition, it is not okay for you to correct your fellow singers; if you notice that your voice part isn’t learning something as well as you might like, please ask the conductor to work with your entire section.

HOW TO READ MUSIC

There is nothing special or difficult about reading music. Everyone (and at Sounds Good we mean *everyone*) can succeed in choir with any level of music reading ability.

To Start:

- You read music like a book: *left to right, top to bottom*.
- Sheet music contains the vocal part and accompaniment, so while reading your part, other parts are happening simultaneously.
- Sop./Alto read the **Treble Clef**
- Tenor/Bass read the **Bass Clef** *Tenors sometimes use the Treble Clef with an 8 to signify the lower pitch.*
- Music is divided into scores, bars/measures, and phrases.
- Each syllable of the lyrics to a song has a corresponding note that dictates its rhythm.



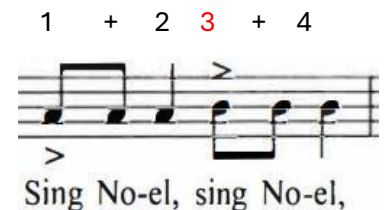
Rhythm and Note Location:

Time Signatures – Right next to the treble and bass clefs at the first measure of the piece is the time signature: Two numbers stacked like a fraction that dictate the number of beats in a measure and the *type* of note that gets 1 beat.

The most common time signature is 4/4 – four beats in a measure, and the quarter note gets the beat. 6/8 means six beats in a measure and the eighth note gets the beat.



Rhythm – In this example, a 4/4 bar of music has a collection of quarter notes and eighth notes. Since the quarter note gets 1 beat, it takes 2 eighth notes to get 1 beat. For instance, the 2nd “sing” is on the beginning of beat #3. This example is counted rhythmically as “1 and 2, 3 and 4”.



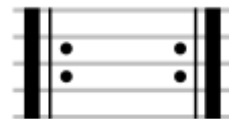
Staccato
Shorten note



Accent
Harder attack

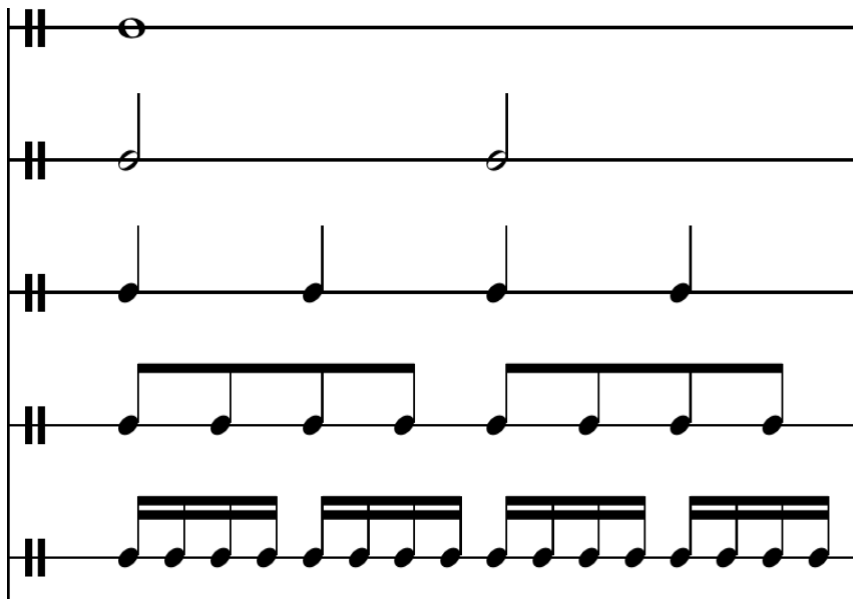


Fermata
Hold note



Repeat Signs
Bars of music between these signs are repeated.

Notes and Rests



whole note which occupies an entire measure of 4/4 music.

half note which is half the value of a whole note.

quarter note which is half the value of a half note.

eighth note which is half the value of a quarter note.

sixteenth note which is half the value of an eighth note.

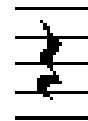
Each note has an equivalent symbol for *rests*, or parts of the music where you are not singing, but the rhythm continues.

Whole Rest

Sits under the second line of the staff.

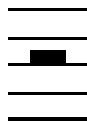


Quarter Rest

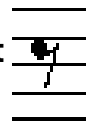


Half Rest

Sits above the third line of the staff.

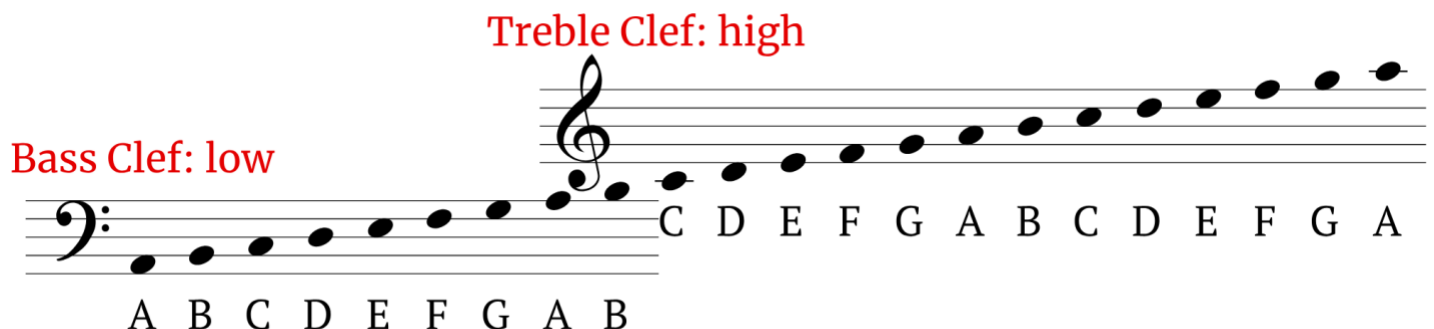


Eighth Rest



Note Names (Treble and Bass Clefs)

Each line on a staff represents a note name A-B-C-D-E-F-G with a corresponding pitch. Use this as a reference when figuring out the name of the note you are singing.



Dynamics These symbols indicate the relative intensity or volume of the music you are singing.

Pianissimo - *Extremely soft* ***pp***

Piano – *Soft* ***p***

Mezzo Piano – *Moderately soft* ***mp***

Mezzo Forte – *Moderately loud* ***mf***

Forte – *Loud* ***f***

Fortissimo – *Very Loud* ***ff***

Crescendo – A gradual increase in volume. This symbol can be extended under many notes to indicate that the volume steadily increases during the passage.



Diminuendo/Decrescendo – A gradual decrease in volume. This symbol can be extended under many notes to indicate that the volume steadily decreases during the passage.



HOW TO PRACTICE OUTSIDE OF REHEARSAL

Virtual Friday Rehearsals – Every Friday during each session, we hold an additional Friday virtual rehearsal on Zoom at 10am. A recording of this rehearsal is later posted on YouTube. Registered singers interested in participating receive the zoom link no later than Thursday to take you to the Friday Zoom rehearsal.

Score Study – Read your score! Brush up on lyrics, search for all the dynamics in a specific piece, identify where your part sings vs. where it doesn't, and follow along with the score while listening to the practice tracks.

Practice - As part of additional, individualized practice, Sounds Good has developed practice tracks for each piece of music divided by voice parts. These practice tracks can be downloaded directly from the Sounds Good Choir website, or can be accessed by going to our YouTube channel.

>Types of Practice Tracks

Full Mix, All Parts – *All voice parts singing together.*

[Voice Part], Louder – *The selected voice part (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) is played louder than the other voice parts to simulate singing in your voice section in rehearsal.*

[Voice Part], Isolated – *The selected voice part (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) is the only part played with the accompaniment.*

>Finding Sounds Good Practice Tracks on YouTube

1. Go to www.youtube.com
2. In the search bar, type “Sounds Good Choir” and press enter.
3. The first or second result on the page is the Sounds Good Choir *YouTube Channel*, click the link.
4. On the Sounds Good Choir *YouTube Channel* page, the second section of videos is titled “Practice Tracks – Current Session”. If you click on the title, it will open the playlists for practice tracks divided into voice parts.
5. Find your voice part’s practice track playlist. Click on the playlist.

>Finding Sounds Good Practice Tracks on our Website

1. Go to www.soundsgoodchoir.org
2. Go to the tab or menu at the top of the page labelled “For Singers”.
3. After clicking or hovering on “For Singers”, select Practice Tracks – Sounds Good (Fall)”.
4. Scroll down to the piece you want to rehearse, and click the link to either download it to your computer or stream it from YouTube.

>Tech Support

Contact info@soundsgoodchoir.org if you need any help with accessing, downloading, or using the practice tracks.