Curriculum Exemplar for Music: Choral Concert Performance Preparation

**Title of Unit:** Choral Concert Performance Preparation

- **Repertoire:**
  - **Discipline:** Treble Chorus
  - **Timeframe:** 13 weeks (approximately 20 partial rehearsals)

**Objective:** Students will perform this choral composition in an ensemble setting.

By reading and performing this selection, students will exhibit level appropriate reading, vocal technique, ensemble practice, critical listening skills, as well as knowledge of historical, cultural, and stylistic connections. This exemplar is intended to expand students’ prior knowledge and skills from Beginner level choral experience, and Early Childhood, Elementary and Intermediate classroom music instruction. Through regular rehearsal, teacher feedback, and student self/peer assessment, there will be a clear growth and refinement of student performance.

**Summative Assessment:** Concert Performance

Assessment may include recording to be evaluated by students, teachers, and/or administrators in addition to live performance evaluation.

**Sequential Guide Tasks:**

Technique: In the process of performing this piece, students will develop their technical ability to:

- Read and follow own part within a 2-part score
- Use correct mouth shape for specific vowels
- Use correct and uniform vowels for the text
- Sing with appropriate diction – focusing on mindful use of tongue, lips and teeth for consonants
- Connect inhalation and air stream with phrase length
- Recognize and sing correct phrases
- Sing in tune
- Sing individual parts

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- Sing accurate pitches in relation to other voice parts
- Use appropriate voice placement (chest vs. head)
- Sing collaboratively with accompanist

**Musicianship:**

- Sing expressively with the voice and the face
- Project mood, interpreting the song
- Follow gestures of the conductor, including attacks and releases
- Balance between parts
- Blend within section
- Employ self awareness and assessment of technique and pitch
- Connect concert etiquette and performance practice
- Demonstrate appropriate ensemble decorum
- Continue rehearsal routine
- Perform Very Easy – NYSSMA Level 2 ensemble literature
- Distinguish between soprano and alto (Part I & Part II)

**Listening:**

- Listen to a variety of recordings, including choral and instrumental literature
- Distinguish between good and poor tone
- Listen to other voices and voice parts, while singing
- Blend own voice to balance dynamic level, within and among sections
- Perform with appropriate intonation and self monitoring skills
- Self assess using musical terminology
- Employ teacher modeling
- Echo tonal patterns and rhythms
- Listen to and critique audio and/or video recordings of ensemble performances
Musical elements and notation:

- **Tonality:** Explore Major tonality
- **Rhythm:** speak, count and/or tap rhythm / part
  
  \[ \frac{2}{4} \]

- **Timbre:** introduction to appropriate singing voice
  - introductions and interludes of accompaniment

- **Harmony:** descant
  - increased rhythmic independence

- **Dynamics:** \( mp \)
  
  \[ \text{mf} \]

  crescendo

  decrescendo
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- Notation: treble clef

  - measure
  - bar line
  - staff
  - fermata
  - breath mark
  - key signature
  - time signature

History, culture, style:

- Analysis of title and composer of musical selection(s)
- Perform with characteristic style of music
- Historical / geographical / cultural connections of repertoire
- Folk music of the world
## Sequential Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Goals &amp; Objectives</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Formative Assessments</th>
<th>Common Core Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read and follow own part within a 2-part score</td>
<td>As the students enter the room, a full performance recording of &quot;Simple Gifts&quot; is played.</td>
<td>Performance assessment of ensemble pitch, rhythm accuracy and appropriate vowel formation and tone.</td>
<td>Reading for Information: Questions re: details of text through critical listening and performance characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use correct mouth shape for specific vowels</td>
<td>As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform exercises focused on vowel formation, diction, tone and breath control.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use correct and uniform vowels for the text</td>
<td>Students learn the main melody of &quot;Simple Gifts&quot; by rote, on a neutral syllable.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sing with appropriate diction – focusing on mindful use of tongue, lips and teeth for consonants</td>
<td>Students listen to the recording of &quot;Simple Gifts&quot; while following along with their music. Discuss as a class the style of the music, and performance characteristics demonstrated on the recording.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Connect inhalation and air stream with phrase length</td>
<td>Students are asked to look at their music and answer questions about the following: title, composer, time signature, and key signature. Review definitions and locations in the vocal score as necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sing in tune</td>
<td>Students are asked to look at their music and speak the soprano line in rhythm through measure 11. Identify note names and values for this section of the piece: sixteenth, eighth, quarter and half. Students add pitch and sing the soprano line through measure 11.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue rehearsal routine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Listen to a variety of recordings, including choral and instrumental literature</td>
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<td>Employ teacher modeling</td>
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<td>Echo tonal patterns and rhythms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explore major tonality</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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### Rhythm: speak, count and/or tap rhythm / part

- $\frac{3}{4}$

### Timbre: introduction to appropriate singing voice

### Tempo: ritardando

### Notation:
- Treble clef
- Measure
- Bar line
- Staff
- Key signature
- Time signature

### Analysis of title and composer of musical selection(s)

Students identify the appropriate vowel shape for the following words: gift, come, down, be, right/delight. Students sing the soprano line through measure 11 with correct vowel formation, pitch, and rhythm. The teacher will adjust vowel formation as necessary to create a uniform and blended choral sound.

Students sing the first 11 measures of the piece a capella and with piano accompaniment.

**Language:** Identify connections between words & their use through musical vocabulary

**Counting & Cardinality:** Know number names and counting sequence for the rhythmic values of the song.

**Operations & Algebraic Thinking:** Generate and analyze patterns through performance of soprano line rhythm

**Number & Operations – Fractions:** Understand fraction equivalents through performance of rhythmic values.

**Measurement & Data:** Work with time through accurate rhythmic performance
| Perform with characteristic style of music | In addition to week one, add:  
Sing individual parts  
Sing accurate pitches in relation to other voice parts  
Use appropriate voice placement (chest vs. head)  
Distinguish between soprano and alto  
Listen to other voices and voice parts while singing  
Perform with appropriate intonation and self monitoring skills  
Distinguish between good and poor tone  
Introduction to appropriate singing voice | As the students enter the room, a full performance recording of "Simple Gifts" is played.  
As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform exercises focused on vowel formation, diction, tone and breath control.  
We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in week 1.  
Students are asked to locate and look at the alto line from the beginning of the piece through measure 11. Students make comparisons between the alto and soprano lines - is it lower or higher, stepwise or skipping motion between notes, same or different rhythms, are there any sections of unison, etc.  
Students speak the alto line through measure 11, reviewing note names and values used in this section. Students learn the pitches for the alto line through measure 11, singing it a capella and with piano accompaniment.  
Students sing their assigned part (soprano or alto) together with voice parts played through measure 11. | In addition to week one, add:  
Assessment for retention of week 1 skills and knowledge.  
Ensemble assessment of part independence | In addition to week one, add:  
Reading Foundational Skills: Print concepts through reading music notation and following one’s own part  
Speaking & Listening: Evaluate speaker’s point of view by analyzing the musical composition  
Measurement & Data: Represent and interpret data by identifying musical intervals  
Ratio & Proportional Relationships: Ratio concepts and use of reasoning to solve problems through the analysis of the linear and vertical arrangement of rhythmic relationships. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In addition to weeks 1–2, add:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In addition to weeks 1–2, add:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sing collaboratively with accompanist</td>
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<td>Employ self awareness in assessment of technique and pitch</td>
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<td>Blend within section</td>
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<td>Perform with appropriate intonation and self monitoring skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harmony – increased rhythmic independence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Associate vowel formation with tone quality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As the students enter the room, a full performance recording of &quot;Simple Gifts&quot; is played.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform exercises focused on vowel formation, diction, tone and breath control.</td>
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<td>Students sing their assigned part from measure 1 through 11 with piano accompaniment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have students speak measures 13 through 22 on their own part. Identify locations where rhythms for each vocal part are slightly different. Have each section learn their own voice part, focusing on the soprano divisi in measures 13 &amp; 14. Put soprano and alto parts together for measures 13 through 22.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review vowel formation for text in measures 13 through 22. Have students identify correct vowel sounds for each word in this section. Have sopranos and altos sing their parts separately to demonstrate appropriate vowel formation. The teacher will adjust vowel formation as necessary to create a uniform and blended choral sound.</td>
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<td>Sing the entire piece from the beginning through measure 22, focusing on correct pitch, rhythm, vowel shape, and vocal tone, both a capella and with piano accompaniment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>In addition to weeks 1–3, add:</td>
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In addition to weeks 1–3, add:

- Assessment of small groups within sections for retention.

Reading For Information:
Describing overall structure of event, ideas, concepts or information by analysis of musical form.

Geometry:
Identifying and describing shapes via analysis of melodic contour.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>In addition to weeks 1–4, add:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Perform NYSSMA Level 2 literature</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introductions and interludes of accompaniment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As the students enter the room, a full performance recording of &quot;Simple Gifts&quot; is played.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform exercises focused on vowel formation, diction, and breath control.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1 through 4.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students read the alto line in rhythm from measure 23 to the end. Students sing the alto line with correct pitch and rhythm.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students identify appropriate vowel shapes for the text from measures 23 to the end, and apply vowel shapes to their performance. The teacher will adjust vowel formation as necessary to create a uniform and blended choral sound.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students sing soprano and alto parts together from measures 23 to the end. To indicate what section has the melody, students could stand or raise their hand to show that they are currently performing the melody line.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students sing the entire piece with piano accompaniment, focusing on correct pitch, rhythm, tone and vowel formation.</td>
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</table>

**Speaking & Listening:**
Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative work through critical listening through performance in the ensemble setting.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As per weeks 1–5, with continued emphasis on part independence and balance both a cappella and with piano accompaniment</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 6 | As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for "Simple Gifts" is played, either at the piano or as a recording.  
As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform exercises focused on vowel formation, diction, tone and breath control.  
We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1 through 5 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy.  
Students label solfege syllables for their individual voice part from measure 1 through 11. Review voice parts as a class, singing each part on solfege from the beginning through measure 11.  
Students perform the entire piece with piano accompaniment, listening for correct pitch, rhythm, and vowel shape. |
|   | In addition to 1–5, add:  
Assessment of full ensemble’s performance of the entire piece.  
Assess individual performance for part retention. |
|   | In addition to 1–5, add:  
Writing:  
Draw evidence from text for analysis by labeling pitches with corresponding solfege syllables. |
| 7 | **As per weeks 1–6, with continued emphasis on part independence and balance both a cappella and with piano accompaniment** | As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for "Simple Gifts" is played, either at the piano or as a recording. As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform exercises focused on vowel formation, diction, and breath control. We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1 through 6 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy. Students label solfege syllables for their individual voice part in their music from measure 13 through 22. Each voice part sings their vocal line on solfege syllables from measure 13 through 22. Students sing the entire piece in two parts, both a capella or with voice parts, while the teacher listens for problem areas to isolate and review. Review as a class any problem areas discovered when running the piece, supporting with voice parts played on the piano. Have students solidify their assigned voice part through isolation and repetition of specific sections or measures. Students sing the entire piece with piano accompaniment with correct rhythm, pitch, tone, vowel shape, and blend. | **In addition to weeks 1–6, add:**  
**Assessment for part independence in small groups.** | **In addition to weeks 1–6, add:**  
**Reading For Literature:** Overall structure of story through motivic development |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th><strong>In addition to weeks 1–7, add:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow gestures of the conductor, including attacks and releases</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blend own voice to balance dynamic level within and among sections.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Dynamics:</strong> <em>mp, mf, crescendo, decrescendo</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use breath to create various dynamics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students mark score with pencil for dynamics, phrasing, tempo with teacher direction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for “Simple Gifts” is played, either at the piano or as a recording.

As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform a hissing sound that is pulsed in response to the conductor's gestures. The conductor varies the size of the right hand conducting pattern and raises and lowers the left hand to reinforce changes in dynamics, to which the students respond accordingly by hissing louder or softer.

We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1–7 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy.

Students are asked to look at their music with a pencil ready to make score markings.

Students are asked to identify the dynamic markings of the piece, in the order in which they occur, to circle them, and to provide both the English and Italian names. Vocabulary will include:

- *mezzo-piano* / medium soft
- *forte* / loud
- *decrescendo* / gradually get softer
- *piano* / soft

Students will perform the selection with the dynamics as indicated and circled, with reinforcement from the conductor's gestures.

---

**Reading For Information:**

Meaning of domain-specific words through music expressive markings.

**Language:**

Correct use for frequently confused words and clarification of misused vocabulary, such as the musical terms high versus low, soft versus loud and fast versus slow.

Acquire and use domain-specific words and phrases such as dynamic vocabulary in performance.

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The teacher will stop to reinforce dynamic contrasts or changes on an as-needed basis. This reinforcement may include bending ones knees for softer sections and standing taller for louder sections.

9  In addition to weeks 1–8, add:
    Notation: fermata, legato
    Tempo: ritardando

As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for “Simple Gifts” is played, either at the piano or as a recording.

As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform a hissing sound that is pulsed in response to the conductor's gestures. The conductor varies the speed of the right hand conducting pattern to create changes in tempo, to which the students respond accordingly by hissing faster or slower.

We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1–8 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy and dynamics as written.

Students are asked to look at their music with a pencil ready to make score markings.

Students are asked to identify the tempo markings of the piece, in the order in which they occur, to circle them, and to provide both their English and Italian names. Vocabulary will include:

- Legato / smoothly
- Fermata / hold until the conductor indicates

Reading For Literature:
Compare and contrast two or more versions of a story, as students respond to multiple recording of this song.

In addition to weeks 1–8, add:
Written assessment of tempo, dynamics, and other musical notation symbols used prior to week 9.
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### to continue
Ritardando / hold back a trifle

Students will perform the selection with the tempos as indicated and circled, with reinforcement from the conductor's gestures.

The teacher will stop to reinforce tempo changes on an as-needed basis. Reinforcement may include stepping the rhythm of the sung notes in place or in movement around the room.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th><strong>In addition to weeks 1–9, add:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Connect inhalation and air stream with phrasing</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Recognize and sing correct phrases</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Notation: breath mark, accent</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for “Simple Gifts” is played, either at the piano or as a recording.

As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform a hissing sound that is pulsed in response to the conductor's gestures. The conductor includes varied pauses, breaths and articulations as indicated with both the conducting pattern and the left hand, to which the students respond accordingly by hissing with pauses, breaths and accents.

We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1–9 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy and dynamics and tempos as marked in the score.

Students are asked to look at their music with a pencil ready to make score markings.

### In addition to weeks 1–9, add:

**Language:**
Use nuance in word meanings as related to musical expressive markings.

Written assessment of knowledge of breath and articulation markings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>In addition to weeks 1–10, add:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self assess using musical terminology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine appropriate locations in musical phrase to take a breath</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for “Simple Gifts” is played, either at the piano or as a recording.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform a hissing sound that is pulsed in response to the conductor's gestures. The conductor varies the nature of the conducting pattern and arcs the left hand to indicate phrases, to which the students respond accordingly by hissing in connected phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1–10 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy and dynamics, tempos, and articulations as written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to weeks 1–10, add:

- Assess student knowledge of phrasing concepts, through group discussion.

In performance, assess student retention of singing.

Measurement & Data:

- Measure lengths of musical phrases.
Students are asked to look at their music with a pencil ready to make score markings.

Students are asked how one decides where to breathe in a piece of music. They are led to respond to include the following:
- breath markings provided by the composer
- rests in the music
- punctuation in the text, including commas, periods

As a group, the class analyzes the score for phrase breaks. Each student writes additional breath markings into their score to indicate where breaths will occur. The teacher also instructs the students to draw legato, curved lines each phrase to indicate that it is to be sung smoothly and without an interrupting breath.

Students will perform the selection with the phrasing as indicated and circled, with reinforcement from the conductor's gestures.

The teacher will stop to reinforce phrasing on an as-needed basis. Reinforcement may include arching hand gestures and/or walking movements that correspond with the phrases.

<p>| 12 | In addition to weeks 1–11, add: Sing expressively with the voice and the face | As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for “Simple Gifts” is played, either at the piano or as a recording. | In addition to weeks 1–11, add: Reading For Literature: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project mood interpreting the song</th>
<th>As part of the choral warm-ups, students perform a hissing sound that is pulsed in response to the conductor's gestures. The conductor displays a variety of faces as the tempo and dynamics of the hiss are altered, representing basic emotions such as happiness and sadness. We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1–11 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy, dynamics, tempos, articulations, and phrasing as written. Students are asked to read the text of the music silently to themselves. Students are asked to summarize the overall meaning of the song's text. Students are asked to provide an equivalent statement for each phrase of the text in their own words. Students are asked to identify the story that they are telling with this song, and the mood of the storyteller. Students are asked how they can communicate the mood and meaning of the song beyond their singing, and are led to identify the use of facial expression and body language as expressive tools.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical, geographical, cultural connections of repertoire</td>
<td>Student evaluation of ensemble performance, using appropriate and effective facial expression, and body language to express the meaning of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk music of the world</td>
<td>Recount stories, fables, etc. through music lyrics analysis. Make connections between written text and other perspectives by paraphrasing lyrics. <strong>Language:</strong> Distinguish shades of meaning as students examine communicating the meaning of the song beyond their singing.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The teacher leads the students in a performance of the song, mirroring the appropriate body language and facial expression.

The teacher will stop to reinforce expression on an as-needed basis. This may include individual students watching the group and providing feedback, students singing to one another in pairs, or video recording the group and playing it back for students to see the overall group expression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13</th>
<th>In addition to weeks 1–12, add:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect concert etiquette and performance practice</td>
<td>As the students enter the room, the accompaniment for “Simple Gifts” is played, either at the piano or as a recording.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate appropriate ensemble decorum</td>
<td>Students are placed in concert standing order on the choral risers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen to and critique audio and/or video recordings of ensemble performance</td>
<td>We review the vocal and choral skills and techniques learned in weeks 1–12 that have resulted in the students' ability to perform this selection with pitch and rhythmic accuracy, dynamics, tempos, articulations, and phrasing as written with appropriate expression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In addition to weeks 1–12, add:</td>
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<td>Student assessment of concert recording both verbally and in writing.</td>
<td>Writing:</td>
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<td>Individual student performance of their part.</td>
<td>Create text in response to literary work as students critically respond to their performance.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Write opinion-supporting point of view through critical responses and written critiques of one’s own musical performance.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>