

GET IN SYNCH - and have FUN doing it!

**FACT: SYNCHRONIZATION:** The activity of two or more things at the same time or rate.

**FACT: UNITY:** The state of forming a complete and harmonious whole, especially in an artistic contest.

**FACT: UNITY, VOCAL SKILLS, ENERGY are in all four categories!**

**FACT: The Judge Category Description Book on “unity” and “synch”:**

**Sound Category:** “Synchronization is a necessary element of harmony accuracy.” “The sound judge rewards a performance in which total unit sound exists, i.e., chords are locked from the moment they are sounded.”

**Music Category:** “Musical unity is achieved when all members of the ensemble are singing vowels correctly and simultaneously, and are singing chords in tune and together. “...errors in synchronization may be from several causes, including inaccurate interval singing, lack of synchronization within and between sections and an unlike approach to vocal production.”

**Expression Category:** “The components of synchronization - attacks and releases - are considered together because they go hand in hand; one is the beginning and the other is the ending. “ ...each syllable involves an attack and a release. The term ‘internal synchronization’ is often used to refer to the vertical togetherness which must exist within words and phrases if the unity of the presentation is to be maintained.”

Example: I STOLE THE GOLD FROM YOUR HAIR

Ah- eeSto—I-I-theGol-I-IdFro—mYou—rHai——r

“Unity strengthens characterization and emotional communication. Every technical and artistic element must be executed together in order to eliminate distractions and allow the listener to hear and understand the story. ...voices should be produced in a like manner, creating a strong, unified vocal character rather than an assortment of voices.”

“Unity will be strengthened when the performers understand the lyrical message, deliver a unified tempo or pulse, cohesive interpretive plan, and a unified dynamic plan.”

“Synchronization difficulties and the resulting lack of unity may result from individual skill levels in breathing, vowel production, and energy.”

**Showmanship Category:** “...a performing group, whether it be chorus or quartet, is a unit, single entity, and care must be given in planning all facets of the presentation so that the group appears to be a unit rather than a collection of individuals.” “...a uniform approach to matters such as stance and intensity of facial expression...help achieve a unit look.”

## **CHECKLIST FOR SYNCH - FACT - it takes team work!**

- Locked and ringing chords
- Vocal Skills
- Correct vowel choices
- Uniform vowel production
- Accurate intervals
- Section unity
- Attacks and releases of phrases
- Attacks and releases of syllables
- Delivering a unified lyrical message
- Delivery of unified tempo or pulse
- Vocal character
- Unified breathing
- Unified dynamic plan
- Unified energy
- Unified visual presentation
- Uniform stance
- Equal amounts of intensity of facial expressions

## **SYNCH THIEVES:**

- **CONSONANT BLENDS:** spending too much time or varying amounts of time on a consonant blend (examples: br, gr, fr, pl, sk, thr, gl)
- **CONSONANTS:** spending too much time on a consonant
- **VOWELS:** spending too much or not enough time on a vowel
- **BREATHS:** disagreeing on or not knowing the length of breaths
- **DROPPING PHRASE ENDS:** breath support wanes
- **OVER-ENUNCIATING WORDS, EXCESSIVE TENSION IN THE JAW OR TONGUE**
- **JAW MOVEMENT:** over-dropping the jaw
- **CHOPPY SINGING**
- **GAPS IN THE SOUND**
- **SOUND SITTING - PARKING YOUR SOUND/AIR**
- **DIPHTHONGS:** too early, too late, too slowly, too quickly, not at all
- **ENERGY:** mental or physical differences
- **EMOTIONS:** disunity of level of passion or intensity in emotions
- **EMOTIONS:** disunity of choice of emotion
- **STYLIZING:** scooping, swooping or sliding between notes
- **MENTAL FOCUS:** being "out to lunch", distracted, lazy or undisciplined

## **FUN ACTIVITIES for UNITY: diagnosis — prescription :**

1. Internal Synch - Johnny One Note
2. Tempo - "doot" or "book it"; Dr. Beat
3. Pulse - backbeat vs. downbeat identification
4. Breath length unity - suspended, QB, pause, tempo, personal plan, staggered
5. Rhythms - clap, gesture, book/doot
6. Reducing consonant interference - kinesthetic gesture
7. Cohesive interp, pacing - sing with eyes closed
8. Energy - Sing to 50, 100, 500, 1000
9. Energy - Lightbulb wattage - 50, 75, 100, 150
10. General unity: Right vs. Wrong
11. General unity: Demo group or perform 1/2 and 1/2
12. General unity: Coaching under glass
13. Unity of word sounds, pacing, breath timing: Direct with the Director
14. Tempo, interp, pacing, breath timing unity, choreo timing: silent performing
15. Resonance unity: Use of "Ah" or "Oh" space; space invading arms
16. Gaps in sound or choppy singing: bubble
17. Stylizing: bubble, ssss, right vs. wrong, kinesthetic attachment

## **FICTION(?) about synch and unity: Yes or NO?**

1. The director is responsible for maintaining the tempo of a song.
2. A chorus loses points when a member forgets a move.
3. When evaluating a quartet performance, lack of musical unity can be more readily identified because discrepancies between the four voice parts are more obvious to the listener.
4. A basic requirement of the Music Category is that all members of the ensemble sing the correct notes.
5. Consonants should be dropped in the middle of a word - example, "remebber" instead of "remember" or "hot" instead of "heart."
6. When considering a blended, unit sound, quality of sound is the first consideration.
7. Vowel sounds should be formed by altering the external mouth position.
8. Consonants must be adequately articulated so that lyrics are understandable, but not to the degree that tone flow is noticeably interrupted.
9. It is important that all members of the ensemble participate fully and commit themselves to creating the same character by giving up thoughts of self and inhibition.
10. Unit sound occurs when tones are properly produced, accurately tuned, blended and balanced.