

# SIGHT SINGING

SEE ALSO SPERSA  
PUBLICATIONS:  
MUSIC READING: 1  
MUSIC READING: 2

SIGHT SINGING

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SIGHT SINGING

HARMONY COLLEGE 1983

Q. What is sight singing?

A. It is the ability to perform music vocally with reasonable accuracy of pitch and rhythm at first sight. MAJOR ASSUMPTION: THAT ONE CAN READ MUSICAL NOTES!

Q. How is this accomplished?

A. In much the same way as learning to read any other language. Certain symbols denote certain sounds of pitch and rhythm. We already know all the sounds. It is simply a matter of matching up the symbols with the sounds you know.

Q. Is it really that easy?

A. Yes.

Q. Do I need perfect or absolute pitch?

A. Definitely not.

Q. How long will it take me to become an accomplished sight singer?

A. No one knows. Here are some factors which will affect your learning time:

1. Previous musical experiences - playing an instrument, singing in a chorus, quartet or church choir, or in any other organization.
2. The amount of time you are willing to devote to the effort.
3. Your sense of pitch relationships; your ability to sing in tune with others and with the true scale. (These may be a result of #1.)
4. Knowledge of rudiments of musical notation, especially pitch, but also key signatures, clefs, scales, etc.

Q. When do I start?

A. Now.

XX

I must assume that everyone is able to sing a major scale with reasonable pitch accuracy. Apply numbers to the basic seven note major scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

The numbers cover two octaves. For our purpose the numbers will refer only to MAJOR scales. Why?

If you know the sol-fa method, you may use it; but try to translate into the number system. (Or sing quietly.)

SING the following scale number exercises using any pitch as "tonic", or I. You must concentrate and think about the sound of the pitches you are singing and their relationship to I. 7 means the 7th note of the scale BELOW I.

Let I be a pitch relatively low in your range.

1. 1 3 5 3 1 1 2 3 2 1 1 5 3 2 1 1 5 3 5 1 1 3 4 5 1 1 3 2 7 1
2. 1 5 4 2 1 1 5 6 5 1 1 3 5 3 1 1 3 4 5 1 1 2 1 7 1 1 3 2 7 1
3. 1 7 1 3 1 1 7 1 3 5 3 4 5 3 1 1 5 3 2 1 5 3 4 5 1 1 3 4 5 1
4. 1 2 3 1 5 5 6 5 4 3 5 3 1 3 5 5 3 5 3 1 2 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 5 1
5. 1 2 3 4 1 1 7 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 3 4 5 3 1 1 3 5 4 1 1 4 5 3 1
6. 1 5 3 5 1 1 2 1 7 1 1 3 4 5 6 5 3 2 5 1 3 4 5 3 6 5 3 2 7 1
7. 1 5 3 5 1 1 3 4 5 1 5 3 2 5 1 1 2 3 1 4 4 5 3 2 1 1 3 2 7 1
8. 1 5 4 2 3 1 2 3 1 5 1 5 6 4 5 5 3 4 2 1 3 1 3 5 1 3 1 3 4 5
9. 1 5 6 5 3 5 4 3 5 1 5 4 3 4 5 5 3 2 3 1 5 3 4 6 5 5 3 4 2 1
10. 1 3 5 1 5 1 3 2 7 1 1 5 4 6 5 5 3 4 2 1 5 6 5 4 3 3 4 5 2 1
11. 1 3 4 5 6 5 3 4 5 1 1 5 4 2 3 5 3 2 7 1 1 5 6 4 5 4 3 2 5 1
12. 1 2 3 2 1 3 5 3 1 5 1 5 6 5 3 1 5 4 2 5 1 7 1 3 5 1 3 1 7 1
13. 5 6 5 4 3 1 2 3 1 5 1 7 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 1 1 2 3 4 1 1 4 6 4 1
14. 1 2 1 7 1 1 5 3 5 1 1 3 4 5 1 1 5 4 2 3 1 2 3 1 4 3 5 6 4 3
15. 5 4 3 5 2 1 3 5 6 5 1 4 3 7 1 1 3 5 4 6 5 3 4 5 1 1 5 3 2 1

On the following page is an exercise similar to that above except that the tonic note (1) should be towards the top of your vocal range. 7, 6, 5, etc. indicate pitches lying below the tonic.

Select a tonic in the upper part of your range. Remember to concentrate on the sound of the pitches. You should strive to develop a "feeling" for each scale degree and its relationship to the tonic note.

1. 1 7 1 2 1    1 7 6 7 1    1 7 1 5 1    1 2 1 5 1    1 5 6 7 1
2. 1 7 6 5 1    1 5 6 5 1    1 5 7 1 5    1 2 1 5 1    1 2 3 1 5
3. 1 5 4 5 1    1 7 5 1 2    1 3 1 5 1    1 5 6 7 1    5 1 3 2 1
4. 1 2 3 5 1    1 3 2 7 1    1 2 3 7 1    1 2 3 7 6    5 6 5 2 1
5. 1 5 3 5 3    1 5 6 5 1    5 6 5 4 5    5 1 2 5 1    5 4 3 4 5
6. 5 6 7 5 1    5 3 5 1 5    7 5 6 5 4    5 4 3 4 5    5 3 4 2 5
7. 6 5 6 7 1    1 5 3 4 5    1 3 4 5 1    1 2 7 5 1    1 7 2 5 1
8. 1 6 2 5 1    1 2 1 6 5    1 3 2 5 1    1 3 6 7 1    1 3 6 2 5
9. 1 6 5 4 5    1 6 4 5 1    1 3 4 2 7    1 6 4 6 1    1 7 6 2 1
10. 3 2 1 5 1    3 6 2 5 1    1 4 6 5 1    3 1 6 4 1    1 6 4 5 1
11. 1 4 3 4 5    5 4 5 6 5    5 4 3 4 5    4 5 3 4 5    4 6 5 7 1

Now select a tonic near the middle of your range.

12. 1 3 5 6 5    3 4 5 5 1    3 5 5 6 7    1 5 3 4 5    1 5 7 1 5
13. 3 5 3 2 1    5 5 4 7 1    5 5 6 2 1    5 3 4 5 7    6 7 1 5 5
14. 5 5 4 4 3    2 3 4 5 1    3 2 5 2 1    4 3 2 5 3    3 5 4 2 7
15. 5 7 2 4 3    4 2 7 5 1    1 5 2 5 3    5 4 5 2 1    5 5 5 7 1

On the following pages are some "real notes". However, instead of singing these in the usual method, please sing them as numbers in the keys indicated. The first pitch on each line is 1. Good luck.

Handwritten title or notes at the top left.

1 1 3 7 2 1 1 2 2 2 1 1 3 2 2 1 3 5 1 1 3 4 5 1 1 3 2 2 1

Handwritten musical notation for staff 1, treble clef, G major.

2 1 5 4 2 1 1 3 5 1 1 3 5 3 1 1 3 4 5 1 1 2 1 2 1 1 3 4 2 1

Handwritten musical notation for staff 2, treble clef, G major.

Handwritten note: "Key Signature"

3 1 7 1 3 1 1 7 1 3 5 3 4 5 3 1 1 5 3 2 1 5 3 4 5 1 1 2 4 5 1

Handwritten note: "BASS"

Handwritten musical notation for staff 3, bass clef, G major.

4 1 2 3 1 5 2 6 4 3 5 4 1 3 5 2 3 4 5 1 2 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

Handwritten note: "BASS"

Handwritten musical notation for staff 4, bass clef, G major.

5 1 2 2 4 1 1 7 1 3 4 5 4 3 2 4 5 3 1 1 3 5 4 1 1 4 5 3 1

Handwritten musical notation for staff 5, treble clef, A major.

Handwritten musical notation for staff 6, treble clef, B-flat major.

Handwritten note: "BASS"

Handwritten musical notation for staff 7, bass clef, B-flat major.

Handwritten musical notation for staff 8, treble clef, A major.

Handwritten musical notation for staff 9, treble clef, B-flat major.

Handwritten musical notation for staff 10, treble clef, B-flat major.

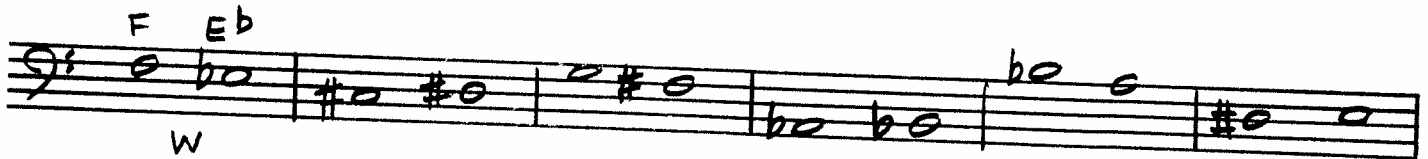
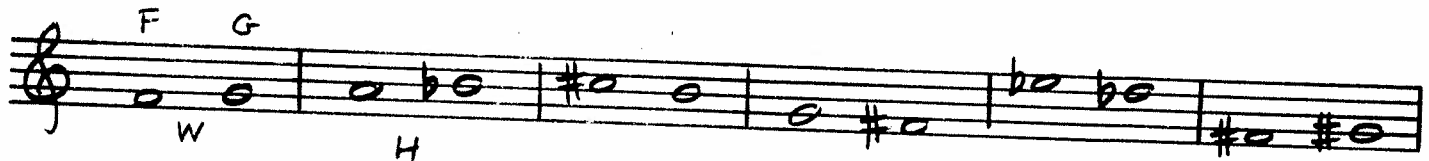
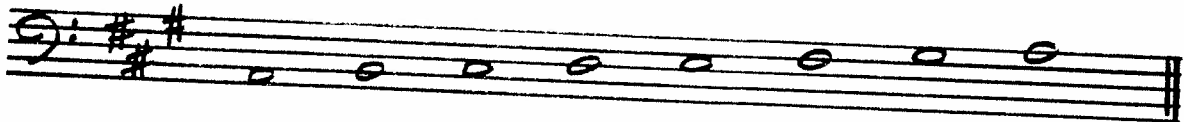
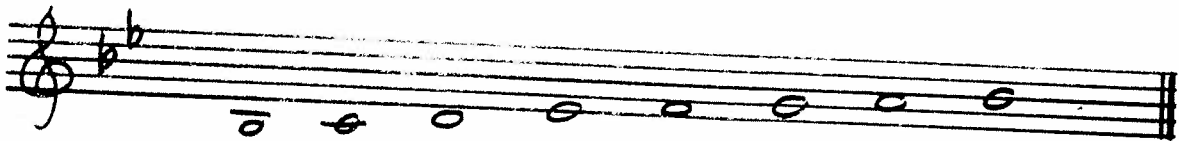
1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10

4 2 2 7  
6 7 5 5 3 1 5 4 3 7  
6 5 5 7 2 4 2 7  
5 5 2 5 2  
5 4 4 5 3 2 7  
3 4 3 4  
4 7  
2 7  
6 2 5 2 5 2 2  
2 6 7 5

# MUSICAL INTERVALS

## Definition:

The intervals in the major scale come quite naturally to us because of our past musical experiences. We don't think about the sizes of the intervals when singing scales even though, in the scale, not all of the intervals are the same. Some are larger (whole steps) than others (half steps). These intervals are also called SECONDS because each one covers two adjacent letters of the musical alphabet.



Another name for a WHOLE STEP is MAJOR 2nd; another name for a HALF STEP is MINOR 2nd. You know the sound of these intervals already.

How can you learn to recognize a MAJ 2 or a MIN 2 on the printed page? On the white keys of the piano MIN 2nds occur between E and F and between B and C. All others are MAJ 2nds. A and B, C and D, D and E, F and G, G and A. Examine the following and identify all the MAJOR and MINOR 2nds.

Handwritten musical notation on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves contain a sequence of notes with handwritten annotations above them, possibly indicating intervals or fingerings.

I repeat - when singing scales, or most easy music, it is not necessary to think about these intervals, even when the key signature contains several sharps or flats. It's automatic - we have been conditioned by the sound of the major scale from early childhood.

Sing these examples with numbers. Is the music barbershop? Why?

Three numbered musical examples (1, 2, 3) for piano accompaniment. Each example consists of a treble and bass staff. Example 1 is in C major. Example 2 is in B-flat major. Example 3 is in D major. Each example includes handwritten numbers (1-5) below the notes, likely indicating fingerings. The music is written in common time (C).

There are more on the following page.

4

5

As noted earlier, when there are no accidentals in the music (key signatures are NOT accidentals) you don't have to think about MAJ 2nds and MIN 2nds; it's automatic. But you MUST THINK ABOUT the intervals when there are accidentals in the music.

When accidentals are added to the musical alphabet (ABCDEFG) the intervals will change. Some MAJ 2nds may become MINOR 2nds; some MIN 2nds may become MAJ 2nds; some may not change at all. In the example following change the MAJ 2nds to MIN, and the MIN 2nds to MAJ, using only #'s.

*write out*

Now, do the same thing using only flats.

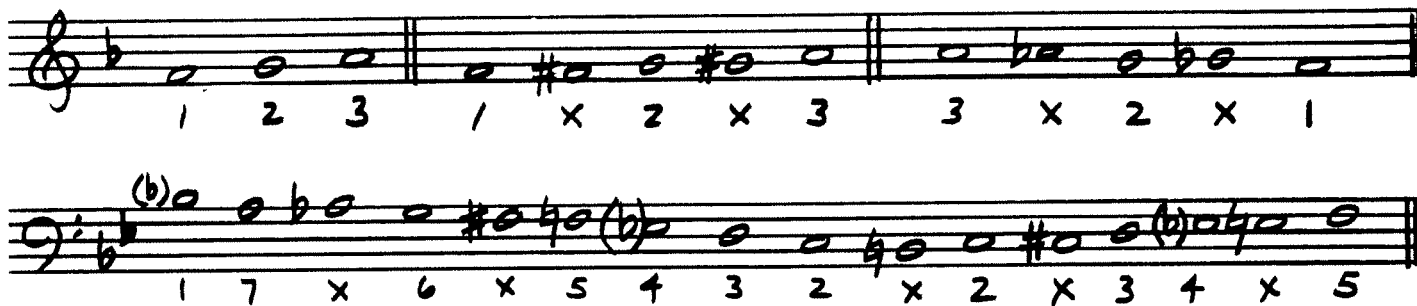


If the same sign is placed before each note of the interval the size of the interval remains unchanged.



(Sharps or flats)  
ACCIDENTALS are NOT in key signature

Read these examples which illustrate ordinary use of accidentals. Parentheses around sharps, flats are reminders of signs in the key signature which you must remember. Again, these are NOT accidentals.



Obviously, recognition of MAJ and MIN 2nds (whole and half steps) is very important to successful sight singing. This recognition must come before you can sing the sounds of the intervals which you already know. Ideally, this recognition should be instantaneous. Here is an example which you MUST PRACTICE ALONE. It will be most helpful if you have a keyboard instrument to check your progress.

As key of Bb is not accidentals!

1. Numbers are NOT scale degrees - 5 SPW Counts

W H W M2 - m2

1

these #s!

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

If ADJACENT letters of the musical alphabet represent intervals called SECONDS, what about the other intervals? How about an interval covering three letters? Or 6? Or 7? Identify:

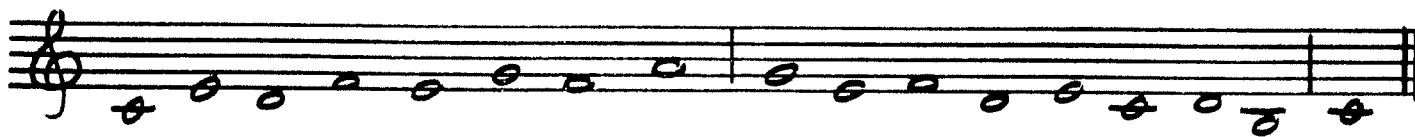
Although you are now busy counting lines and spaces, with some practice you'll be able to identify these intervals quite quickly. NOTE. In an even-numbered interval (2nd, 4th, 6th, 8ve) one of the notes is always on a line and the other is on a space. What about odd-numbered intervals?

### THIRDS

When the pitches in the interval skip a letter (A-C, F-D) (You must think up or down from the first note), regardless of sharps, flats, or naturals, the interval is a 3rd - always. Note that both notes of the interval are on lines OR spaces. It's an odd-numbered interval. Thirds are easy enough to sing if you will THINK the pitch between the 2 notes of the interval. Sing these examples with numbers. Note the key signature and remember which pitches are raised or flatted. With a little practice you'll be able to sing all the correct pitches without using numbers at all.

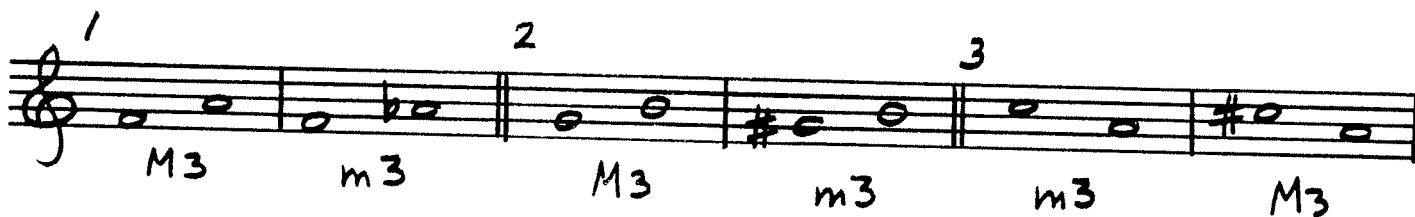
♩ = a "THINK" note.

In scales and scale-like passages of music, all 3rds are quite easy to hear. Conditioning by the major scale guides your ear to the correct pitch. Sing.



You may have suspected that some 3rds are larger than others. Yes, there are both MAJOR and MINOR 3rds. The previous example used both MAJOR and MINOR 3rds. You sang them correctly because they all lie within the major scale. You may also have begun to learn note/number association, and you might have been thinking the "missing note" in each interval of a 3rd.

Study the following example which illustrates the difference between MAJOR and MINOR 3rds. Sing and compare the differences in sound.



Listen to these 3rds. Are you able to differentiate between MAJOR and MINOR 3rds by sound alone?



Sight singing 3rds, or any interval containing accidentals demands thinking of 2 or 3 things at once. First of all, generally speaking, if the upper of the 2 notes of the 3rd has been raised, the 3rd is MAJOR. If it has been lowered, it is a MINOR 3rd. The converse is also true. If the lower note has been raised, it will be a MINOR 3rd; if lowered, a MAJOR 3rd. Exceptions in normal music notation are rather rare and needn't concern us here.

Try singing some melodic passages which contain 3rds altered by accidentals. Examine the key signature and commit to memory the pitches which are altered by it. These are not accidentals, remember? As you sing the examples, try to think whether you are going to make the interval larger or smaller than it would normally be in the basic major scale. NOT whether it is MAJOR or MINOR - only whether it is LARGER or SMALLER. Reread the previous paragraph. Sing with numbers. You may use the basic number for the altered pitch if you wish, or sing "and". It may also help to use the "THINK NOTE" for a while. Good Luck.

The image contains five musical staves, numbered 1 through 5, each showing a melodic line with specific intervals marked for alteration. The staves are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Notes: C4, D4, E4 (marked with #), F#4 (marked with x), G4, A4, B4, C5. Intervals marked: 6 (between E4 and F#4), x (between F#4 and G4), 6 (between G4 and A4), x (between A4 and B4).
- Staff 2:** Bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Notes: G3, A3, B3 (marked with #), C4 (marked with x), D4, E4, F#4 (marked with #), G4, A4, B4, C5. Intervals marked: x (between B3 and C4), x (between C4 and D4), x (between F#4 and G4).
- Staff 3:** Treble clef, key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Notes: C4, D4, E4 (marked with #), F#4 (marked with #), G4, A4, B4, C5. Intervals marked: 7 (between E4 and F#4), x (between F#4 and G4), 7 (between G4 and A4), x (between B4 and C5).
- Staff 4:** Bass clef, key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4 (marked with #), G4, A4, B4, C5. Intervals marked: x (between B3 and C4), x (between D4 and E4), x (between F#4 and G4).
- Staff 5:** Treble clef, key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Notes: C4, D4, E4, F#4 (marked with #), G4, A4, B4, C5. Intervals marked: x (between E4 and F#4), x (between F#4 and G4), x (between G4 and A4), x (between B4 and C5).

There are additional examples on the following page.

6

7

8

Try this two part example.

Mastery of sightsinging is something that eludes many professional musicians, even singers. Actually, professional singers are among the worst sightsingers. Solo singers usually sing the melody, and they probably knew it long before they had to sing it. If they didn't know it, they took the music home and played it on the piano to learn it so they could show up at the first rehearsal and not be embarrassed. Harmony parts in choral music are usually not very demanding - many repeated notes and rather uncomplicated harmonies. Besides that, very few professional singers HAVE to sightsing. They usually work with an accompanist who helps them by playing their part when the singer isn't sure of it.

The fact that you are in this class is a tribute to your industriousness. You enjoy hard work. You love to spend long hours practicing to achieve a goal which you will not even use in your daily work. You will practice at mealtimes, practice singing scale numbers upon arising, in the shower, while going to breakfast, and going to classes. You will sing scale numbers in Joe Liles' General Sessions. You will almost never be free of the compulsion to improve your sight singing technique. When you sing TAGS you will be thinking of scale numbers and intervals. Success in sightsinging requires this kind of dedicated approach. I wish you well.

Obviously sightsinging requires more than simply reading pitches accurately. Reading the rhythms correctly is also a part of the total picture. Reading rhythms is much easier than reading the pitches, as you will see. It is the combination of pitches and rhythms that presents problems for the music reader. It may be obvious by now that reading even a simple melody requires one to think of many things at the same time.

The key of the music.

Whether the accidentals raise or lower the pitch. Easy with sharps and flats. What about naturals?

What degree of the scale is called for?

What is the note value? Quarter, Half? Dotted note?

And don't forget the words.

It doesn't seem possible that our poor brains can do all this at once. But they can, and they do.

It helps, however, to break down the study of sightsinging into several areas. We have previously discussed some of the problems and, I hope, aids to reading pitches.

## RHYTHM


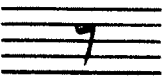

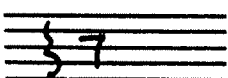
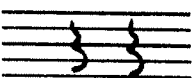
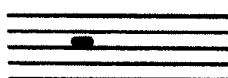

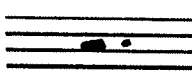
Although it is true that we take great liberties with the rhythmic interpretation of barbershop music, it will be nonetheless helpful for you to have a basic understanding of the principles of rhythm notation and to possess the skill of reading rhythms at sight.

The composer (arranger) chooses some note value to be the UNIT OF BEAT in the music. It could be any note value but generally, in popular music as well as in barbershop music, the quarter note (♩) is most frequently used as the unit of beat.

You know that a quarter note (♩) is equal in time to 2 eighth notes (♪♪), and that 2 quarter notes equal the time value of a half note (♪). A dot (·) increases the length of a note by half, so a dotted quarter note (♩·) equals three 8th notes (♪♪♪) or a quarter plus one 8th note (♩♪). A dotted half note (♪·) is equal in time value to three quarter notes (♩♩♩), or a half plus a quarter note (♪♩). Sometimes the dot is replaced by a tie (—). Thus a time value equal to a dotted quarter note (♩·) could be written (♩—). And a dotted half note (♪·) equals (♪—).

Since most barbershop music uses the quarter note as its UNIT OF BEAT, we'll concentrate on exercises that use rhythmic patterns most likely to be found in barbershop music.

RESTS are another important aspect of the rhythmic notation of music. A rest represents a moment of silence. Silence is as much a part of the music as sound. Comparisons of note value and rest value follow:

			=			
			=			
	or		=		or	
	or		=		or	
	or		=		or	
	or		=			

Only infrequently will you encounter other rhythmic values in barbershop music.

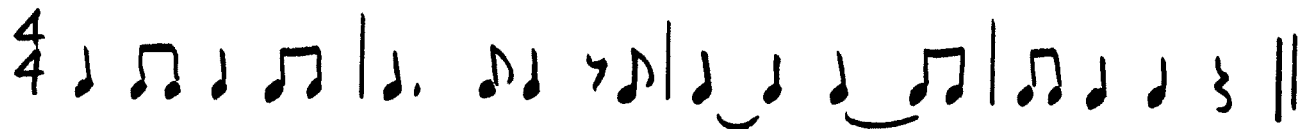
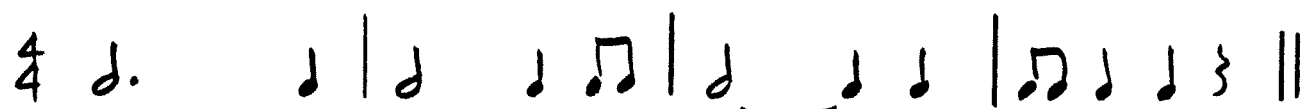
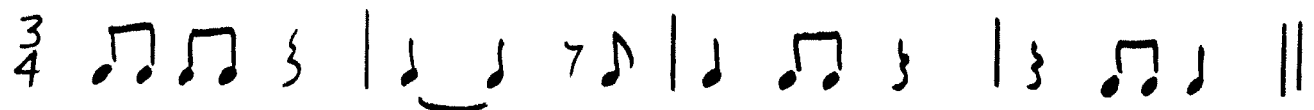
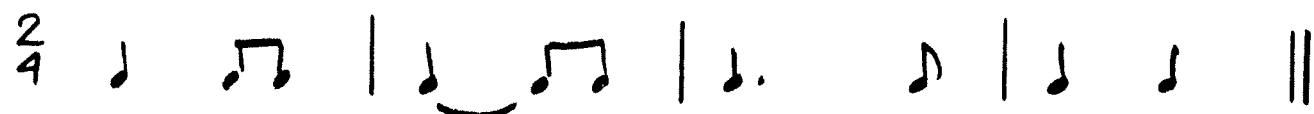
Here are some rhythm exercises for you to practice. It is best to sing these for someone who is knowledgeable (and honest) enough to point out any errors that you commit. **SUGGESTION:** Tap a firm beat with your hand (avoid using the feet) and sing each note value on the syllable "TA". Sing TA for the entire length of the note. Never sing staccato. Remember, the syllable is TA (not TUT). When tapping the beat, do not use a "lazy" motion, but tap the desk sharply and bring the hand up smartly exactly halfway through the beat. This will take some practice, but it is well worth the effort as you will begin to develop a precise sense of beat and rhythm. Do all of this while mentally counting 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 etc. according to the number of beats in the measure. The counting part will eventually become automatic, that is, you won't have to count silently when you start to feel the beat and the number of beats in a measure. It takes PRACTICE.

2 4	♩		♩ ♩		♩ ♩		♩		
2 4	♩ ♩		♩ ♩		♩		♩ ♩		
3 4	♩ ♩		♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩.		
3 4	♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩.		
4 4	♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		
C	♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		♩ ♩ ♩		

Compose two similar examples. Ask your friends to sing them.

2 4					
3 4					

The following examples are a little more challenging. They contain some ties, some rests, and some dotted notes. SPEED is not important, but ACCURACY is. Don't hurry. Start slowly and work up to faster tempos the 7th or 8th time you do them.



Compose two similar examples. Try singing them BEFORE writing them down.



These examples are even more challenging. They contain ties across the barlines, and dotted rests. Start slowly and work up speed gradually. Tap the beat with precision. Do you feel that you are developing a "feel" for the 1st beat, the 2nd beat, etc. Rhythm is a natural and very physical phenomenon. Something in our brains lets us know when the first beat should occur, and when the 3rd beat is, and so on. You may even begin to feel a tendency for the final beat of the measure to "lean into" the first beat of the next measure. This is your automatic beat counter and metronome starting to work.

The image contains ten musical examples, each consisting of a time signature and a two-measure phrase. The examples are as follows:

- Example 1:** 2/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 2:** 2/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 3:** 2/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 4:** 3/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 5:** 3/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 6:** 3/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 7:** 4/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 8:** 4/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 9:** 4/4 time. Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.
- Example 10:** Common time (C). Measure 1: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.

Compose additional examples here.

2 4				
3 4				
4 4				

Normally in music there is a slight stress on the first beat (down-beat) of a measure. In an orchestration that's where the tubas and string basses, and the bass drum would play. These patterns of stress vary depending on the meter signature of the music. ( > ) represents a normal stress, and ( > ) a lesser stress. Unmarked notes in these examples would receive no stress. These stress marks (accents) are not used in the notation of music under normal circumstances. They are simply felt by the performers and become a part of the interpretation of the music. We are talking about loudness here, NOT length. But the difference in loudness between a stressed note and an unstressed note may be quite subtle. Often it is more felt than heard. Note these stress patterns.

2 4	♪	♪		♪	♪		♪	♪		♪						
3 4	♪	♪	♪		♪	♪	♪		♪	♪	♪		♪			
4 4	♪	♪	♪	♪		♪	♪	♪	♪		♪	♪	♪	♪		

## SYNCOPIATION

When a composer/arranger deliberately designs the music in such a way that the normal stress patterns are altered, either by eliminating a stress beat, or by placing the stress on a normally unstressed beat or part of a beat, the effect is known as syncopation. Please read this paragraph a second time.

Sing these examples:

The image displays ten musical examples of syncopation, each on a single staff. The time signatures are: 2/4, 2/4, 2/4, 3/4, 3/4, 3/4, 4/4, C, and C. Each example shows a sequence of notes with stems and beams, illustrating how the normal stress pattern is altered. For instance, in the 2/4 examples, the first beat is often missing or the second beat is emphasized. In the 3/4 examples, the first beat is often missing. In the 4/4 examples, the first or second beat is often missing. The common time (C) examples show similar patterns of missing or emphasized beats. Each example ends with a double bar line.

Some syncopation patterns, especially in jazz writing, can become very complex. In barbershop music you will rarely find patterns more complicated than those above.

## WHAT ABOUT 4ths?

There are two kinds of 4ths commonly used in musical notation, but they are not called major and minor 4ths. Instead the terms PERFECT and AUGMENTED are used. Let's examine the PERFECT 4th first. With very little practice you will be able to recognize and sing this important interval correctly every time it occurs. Listen to these PERFECT 4ths and sing them. Both ascending and descending.



Sing PERFECT 4ths ABOVE notes played by the instructor.

SING PERFECT 4ths BELOW notes played by the instructor.

One of the reasons that this is so easy is that every note of the MAJOR scale except one has a scale tone a PERFECT 4th above it. And every note of the scale has a PERFECT 4th below it in the scale - - - except one.



Which note (#) of the major scale does not have a PERF 4th above?  
Which does not have a PERF 4th below? In addition we tend to hear PERF 4ths as 1 up to 4, or 5 up to 1 in the scale. It's natural.

Written PERF 4ths are easy to identify. EXCEPT for the interval from F up to B (up, not down), a 4th is PERFECT when each note has NO pitch alteration sign (#, b, ♯) or when both pitches have the same sign. Read that again. Which of the following are PERF 4ths? Watch out for the key signature. Sing both ways - ascending and descending.





Here is an exercise containing MAJOR and MINOR 2nds and PERF 4ths.  
Practice it using a keyboard instrument to check yourself.

M2 m2 P4

1

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

4

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

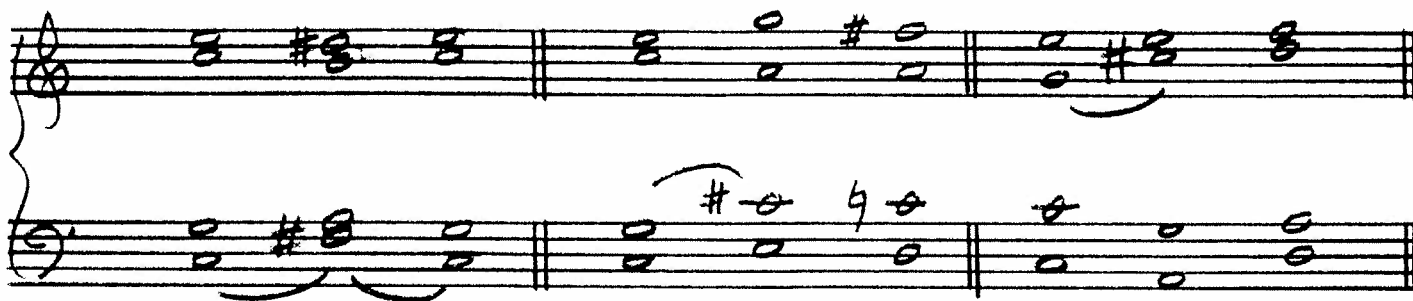
8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4

These examples illustrate typical occurrences of AUG 4ths in barbershop music. I am sure you have heard them all many times.

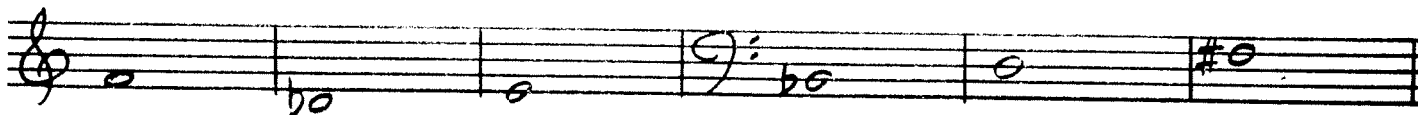


Find examples of augmented 4ths in the music you are singing this week. Note song title and measure number.

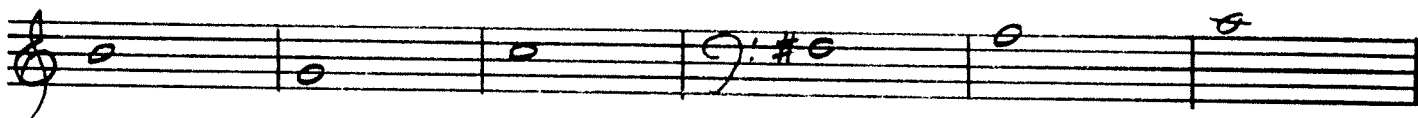
## FIFTHS - Perfect and otherwise

In this discussion you will notice some similarities to the discussion regarding **FOURTHS**. That is because these intervals are inversions of each other. This fact may also result in some confusion and difficulty in hearing and singing these intervals.

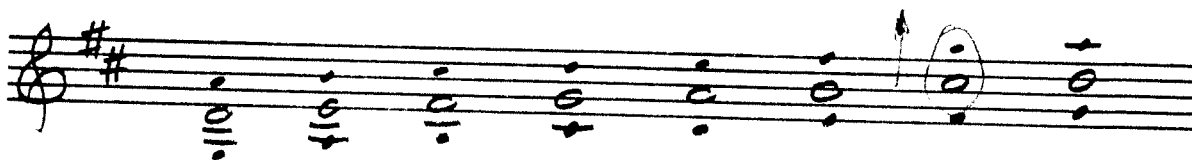
There 2 kinds of 5ths typically found in music notation. As with 4ths they are not called **MAJOR** and **MINOR**; but unlike 4ths, they are called **PERFECT** and **DIMINISHED**. With some practice you'll be able to sing **PERFECT** 5ths without difficulty. Sing **PERF** 5ths above these pitches:



Sing **PERF** 5ths below these pitches:



Within the major scale every note except one has a perfect 5th lying above it in the scale. And every note, except one, has a **PERF** 5th below it. Which do not?

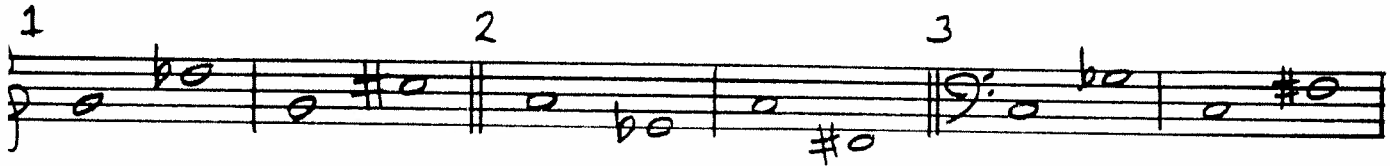


**PERFECT** 5ths are also easy to identify. The 5th is **PERFECT** when each note has no pitch alteration sign or when both notes have the same sign - - **EXCEPT FOR** the interval B up to F (not down, but up). Compare with the corresponding statement in the discussion of **PERFECT** 4ths.

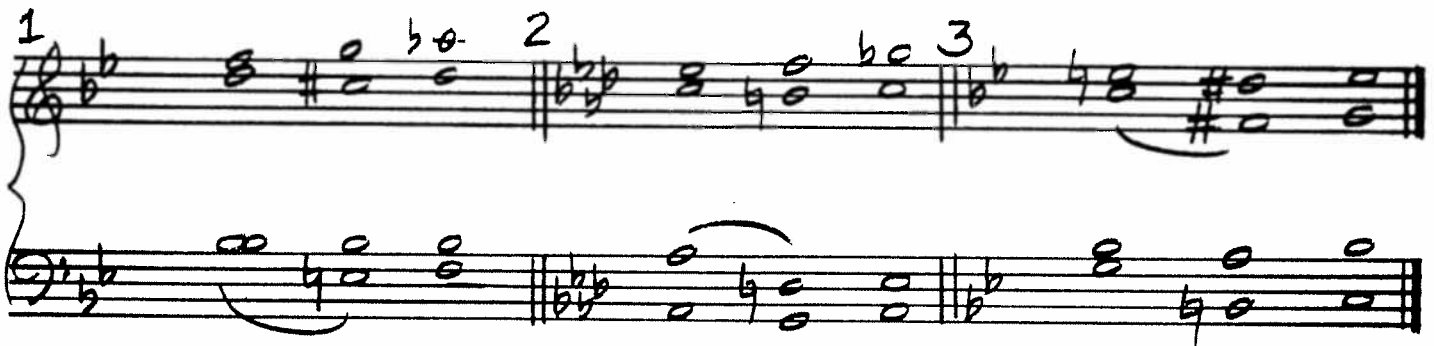
Which of the following are PERFECT 5ths? Note the key signature. Sing both ascending and descending.

The interval B up to F is unique among "white key" intervals. When the two notes have the same sign, or no sign, the interval is smaller than a PERFECT 5th and is called a DIMINISHED 5th. It is one-half step smaller than a PERF 5th.

If you are especially observant, you may have had some music theory somewhere along the way, you may have noticed that AUG 4ths and DIMINISHED 5ths have practically the same sound. The following example will show you why. Some people make no distinction between these intervals by name, calling them all DIM 5ths, or AUG 4ths, or using both designations interchangeably. Another name is sometimes used for all these intervals - TRITONE, meaning three whole steps.



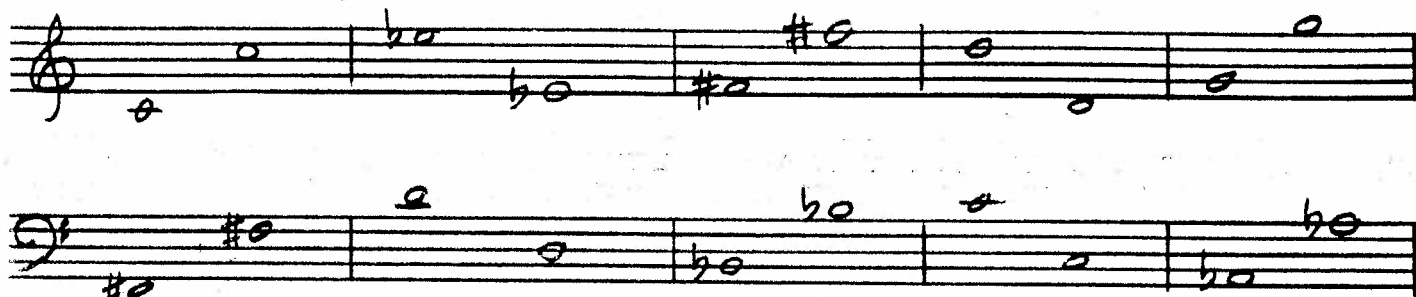
These examples show some typical occurrences of DIM 5ths in barbershop music. They rarely are found in the tenor part.



Locate other examples in the music you are singing this week. List title and measure number here.

## OCTAVES

An octave (8ve) is the distance from a pitch to the pitch with the exact same letter and sign either above or below. Listen to these octaves and practice singing them.



Here is an exercise that will help you learn the sound of this interval. Sing with numbers, slowly and carefully, being especially careful not to scoop when skipping up an octave.

Why spend time with the octave interval? Surprisingly, it's not always easy to sing well in tune. Bases will sometimes tend to "cheat" a little, shortening the interval when skipping up, and lengthening it when skipping down, adversely affecting the intonation of the performers. It's an important interval and should be practiced. Most octave skips are found in the bass part, seldom in the others.

Another reason to practice the octave is that it will help you in learning the sound of the SEVENTH interval.

## SEVENTHS

The interval of a 7th is a HALF or WHOLE step smaller than the interval of the octave. It's easiest to compare them to the 8ve. The MAJOR 7th is  $\frac{1}{2}$  step smaller than the 8ve, while the MINOR 7th is a whole step smaller than the octave. Therefore, the MAJOR 7th is a  $\frac{1}{2}$  step larger than the MINOR 7th. Compare.

The image shows two musical staves illustrating intervals of a 7th. The first staff contains four measures, each showing an interval of a major 7th. The intervals are: 1 (C4 to B4), 2 (D4 to C#5), 3 (E4 to D#5), and 4 (F4 to E5). The second staff contains four measures, each showing an interval of a minor 7th. The intervals are: 5 (G4 to F#5), 6 (A4 to G5), 7 (B4 to A5), and 8 (C5 to B5). The notes are written as whole notes on a treble clef staff.

Here is an exercise based on the major scale. Just think of singing a continuous scale (with numbers) and skip at the appropriate place. When you see a 7th skip, think of skipping "not quite an octave" and you'll be right.

The image shows a continuous major scale exercise across four staves. The scale is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are written as eighth notes. The exercise is divided into measures numbered 1 through 12. The 7th skip occurs at the end of measure 1 (G4 to F#5), measure 5 (D5 to C#6), measure 9 (A5 to G6), and measure 11 (F#6 to E7). The skips are indicated by arrows pointing to the notes.

If you're skipping up a 7th and the UPPER note has been lowered, think of shortening the interval just a shade more and you'll probably have it. Try these.

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

10 11 12

Here are some examples containing 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, and 7ths. Always establish a feeling of tonic before singing any example. Sing 1 3 5 3 1; or 1 2 3 4 5 3 1. Remember you must have the key signature in mind and observe accidentals carefully. Work slowly.

1 2

3 4

5 6

7 8 9

More on the next page.

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Includes an 'x' above the staff.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

1  
2  
Here are some 2 and 3 part examples. Some are fairly easy, but...  
Concentrate on good intonation. No scooping, sliding allowed.

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 8: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 9: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Musical staff 10: Treble clef, 6/8 time signature. Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

7

8

9

These following examples will require extreme concentration to execute. Work slowly and carefully.



There are less frequently met intervals that have not been included in this course. DIM 3rds, 4ths, and 7ths, and AUG 2nds and 5ths have been omitted. Isolated, they sound like other intervals we've studied. They present problems for instant recognition. If you're comfortable with intervals we've studied you will have little difficulty with other, rarer, intervals. Rely on your ear and you'll sight sing most of them. Listen to the harmony produced by the other three voices. Have fun.

Sightsinging a melody can happen only once. When you sing it the second time you are no longer sightsinging. If you wish to pursue the technique of singing at sight you will need a rather large body of material. Such material is seldom ever found in music stores. You may order these through your local commercial or college bookstore.

**MELODIA;** Cole and Lewis; Ditson Publishers

**THE FOLK SONG SIGHT SINGING SERIES, Books I - XII;** Oxford University Press