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The Rule of 7

By Julie Knowles Adkins, Editor, Choral Focus (Oregon's ACDA newsletter)



Have you heard the expression, “less is more?” It seems like many conductors step up to the soapbox instead of the podium when verbally directing the choir. During the majority of your next rehearsals, consider using the Rule of Seven. Tell the choir what you want in seven words or less.

Here are a few of my favorites:

- We’re ready...I’ll know because you’re listening!
- Sit high...sit TALL.
- Wake up your face!
- Form the vowels inside your mouth.
- Get those bees in the jar moving! (ed. Note: Thanks, Loren!)
- Not louder...just more character.
- Polish your articulators.
- Sloppiosso!
- Put some rhythmic emphasis behind it.
- Consonant...crackle...like embers in a fire.
- Sing on the top of every note.
- Use muscles around the lips for clarity.
- Budget your energy.
- Vibrato: sounds like audible jello!
- Very quietly, but just as rhythmic.
- Not a place for a CRASHendo!
- Just caress it, don’t attack it.
- Let your imagination work overtime.
- More consonants...so the words become distinguishable.
- Let’s try it in English!
- Sneak a breath in the juiciest parts.
- Let the phrase swell like blown glass.
- Little pinpoints of sound.
- Don’t sing note...sing the mood.
- Be anxious to stop.
- Let yourself feel abundant joy!
- Constantly evaluate yourself and others.
- Sing two inches from the baby’s ear.

- Raise your face but not your neck.
- We need to re-evaluate at this time!
- Bravissimo!!