



## Antiphonning

The term “**Antiphonning**” comes from a style of performance in which vocal or instrumental ensembles alternate phrases and sections of music (antiphony). It is a way of performing a song in which a leader and responder(s) alternate performing successive parts of the song. It is a fill-in-the blank activity for singing a song.<sup>1</sup>

The goal is to perform the song as if only one person is singing with smooth, musical transitions between the leader and the responder(s).  
Example: [Video](#)

### Purpose of Antiphonning

- To develop inner hearing (aural) skills.
- To cause students to become active rather than passive learners.
- To cause students to think the whole song, not just parts of it.
- To study certain elements of a song.
- To cause students to become engaged in a study activity.

**Antiphonning** takes advantage of our seemingly natural tendency to complete a familiar song, melody, phrase, or saying. For example, the traditional knock that goes with the phrase, “Shave and a haircut” rhythm is an example of this need for completion. Who among us can resist knocking back the reply, “Two bits”?<sup>1</sup>

### Using Antiphonning with Your Students

**Activity I:** The leader begins singing and indicates the turn by gesturing to herself or himself or to the responder(s). [Video](#)

**Activity II:** “Let’s sing the song. Each time I put my hands behind my back, we will sing in our inner hearing. Each time I bring my hands in front of me, we will sing aloud.” [Video](#)

**Activity III:** This time as we antiphon, I will sing my part and during your turn, you will tap the rhythm of the song in your hands. [Video](#)

**Activity IV:** “As we antiphon, you sing the words of the song. Watch to see if you can tell what I am doing for my part.” Teacher performs solfege patterns for his or her part of the song. Discuss what students notice and the meaning of hand signs. [Video](#)

**Activity V:** After an initial antiphonning turn, for an additional challenge, the gestures may be left out. The absence of gestures forces the responders to listen even more closely to know when to begin. “No clues this time. Your ears will tell you when to sing and when to listen.”

**Activity VI:** To correct inaccuracies by drawing student attention to certain patterns, words, repetitions, or other elements of the song. When the teacher alone sings the inaccurate part the goal is for the students to hear that part sung correctly and make corrections. [Video](#)

### Other Ideas for Antiphonning:

- Antiphon with eyes closed.
- Students become the leader, the conductor. Example: [Video](#)
- Antiphon in partner groupings.
- Antiphon around the circle or classroom.
- Antiphon, leader with small group.
- Incorporate Antiphonning with other SongWorks strategies and techniques.

### Bibliography

Bennett P.D. & Bartholomew, D.R (1997). SongWorks I: Singing in the education of children. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.