

Preparation for voice testing

Before you begin, stand comfortably and try to stay as relaxed as possible. If your vocal cords are relaxed, they will perform better, often resulting in a more accurate pitch. You should also warm up your voice ahead of time so that you will be prepared to test yourself properly.

To warm up: Stretch, bubble, sigh and siren and hum for at least 5 mins then sing a familiar tune repeating and changing your start note each time... higher and lower.

Vocal range tests

You will be asked to choose a note that you believe is in the middle of your range. You will then be asked to sing up the scale, to as high as you feel comfortable. We will repeat singing down the scale determining your low range. You may be asked to repeat on different vowels and words at the top and bottom of your range.

Classification of your singing voice

Singing voices are categorised into six groups: bass, baritone, tenor, alto, mezzo-soprano and soprano. The classification of the singing voice is important because knowing your own classification allows you to work comfortably within your range without straining your voice.

In the context of singing, however, vocal range often means musically useful notes, as not all of the notes human voice can produce are suitable for particular singing style or performance conditions.

Most men fall into the baritone category, while most women fall into the mezzo-soprano category. It is important to note, however, that you do not want to strain your voice too hard to reach higher or lower notes – doing so can be damaging to your voice.

Note: The ranges for each voice are only a guide. There are always exceptions.

Bass

The bass is the lowest male singing part in a choir. It is rare, however, to find a true bass singer. Most men probably sing bass-baritone because they can access some of the lower notes at times.

Baritone

A baritone lies in between a bass and a tenor voice.

Tenor

The highest male voice is a tenor. Some men sing tenor and are also capable of producing a clear falsetto (notes in a much higher range) sound. These singers are called counter-tenors.

Alto

The alto is the lowest choral singing range for women inside of a four-part harmony. However, some women do have an even lower range. This part is known as contralto.

Mezzo-Soprano

Mezzo-sopranos sing in a range that is between an alto and a soprano. The quality of this range is somewhat heavier and darker than the soprano voice, but it also resonates in a unique way in the higher range.

Soprano

The highest female part is the soprano. Sopranos usually sing the melody part in a harmony or as a part of a choir.

Take a look at these:

- Mariah Carey magnificent range spans across 5 octaves 2 notes and a semitone (E2-G#7), her vocal type is lyric soprano.
- Christina Aguilera vocal range is 4 octaves (C3-C7), vocal type is mezzo-soprano.
- Freddy Mercury vocal range was 1 semitone away from 4 octaves (F2-E6), quite rare for male voice.
- Michael Jackson vocal range was also nearly 4-octave.
- Whitney Houston range was 3.2 octaves (A2-C6), mezzo-soprano.
- Celine Dion range is 3 octaves 1 note and 1 semitone (B2-C#6).
- Beyonce vocal range is 3.1 octaves (approximately B2-C6); vocal type is mezzo-soprano. Despite relatively lower range, she is a technical singer with amazing voice control and a stunning vibrato.

