

Voice Types and Range Identification

Voice Classification

In music, “voice classification” is defined as:

A tool for singers, composers, venues, and listeners to categorize vocal properties like range and tone color into categories.

[Classical 101 | Your Voice-type And How To Find It](#)

The range of a voice is determined by the thickness and length of the *vocal folds* (sometimes called vocal cords). Think of a drum or horn: the larger the instrument, the lower the range of pitch.

In Choir, there are 4 main voice ranges:

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

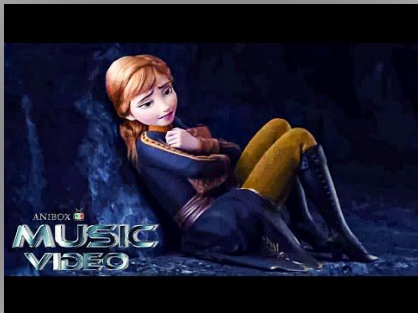
Bass

These are classified by pitch range and tone color, NOT gender.

Soprano

A soprano has the highest voice in choir, and often sings the melody. Sopranos *sometimes* have a lighter sound to their voice, however can gain strength and vocal weight with age and maturity.

Kristen Bell:



Multiple Soprano Examples:



Aksel Rykkvin:



Kristin Chenoweth:



Alto

Alto is the second highest singing part in choir. The choral Alto part is often sung by Mezzo-Sopranos, unchanged voices, and voices in transition. Altos often sing harmony. The Alto voice *sometimes* carries more vocal weight and a darker color.

Idina Menzel:



Jessye Norman:



Keala Settle:



Jakub Józef Orliński
(counter-tenor):



Tenor

Tenor is the third highest voice in the choir. It is notated by the treble clef but sung an octave lower. Some tenors can still sing in the alto range but have a lower range that they can sing in as well.

Jonathan Groff:



Luciano Pavarotti:



Leslie Odom Jr. and
Lin-Manuel Miranda:



Ben Platt:



Baritone/Bass

Baritone/Bass are the lowest voice range in choir and notated in Bass Clef. Basses will often have a rich resonant sound in the lower register, while Baritones can be lighter and lyric.

Johnny Cash:



Paul Robeson:



Avi Kaplan:



Bryn Terfel:



Voices in Transition

Some voices don't fit into one voice classification AND it's important to remember that voice classifications can change over time. Vocal ranges can change based on many circumstances.



(Some sensitive subject matter)

Tessitura

Vocal RANGE refers to the full range of pitches a singer can sing, from their *very* lowest note to the *very* highest. The range examples given here are for experienced or professional singers. Young or inexperienced singers may have a more limited range that fluctuates frequently. This is normal and expected!

TESSITURA refers to a singer's *comfortable vocal range*, and where the voice most often sits. A good way to think about your tessitura is where you feel like you could sing for hours without feeling vocal fatigue. A singer may be able to sing in the Tenor range, but feel more comfortable singing staying within the Alto tessitura. Developing voices may find their tessitura change on almost a daily basis.

For beginning singers, developing good vocal technique and the ability to sing both melody and harmony take priority over vocal range.

Take it Home!

Your vocal range assignment!

E2

Important: this self-assessment does not take the place of vocal placements & assessments by vocal instructors, but it is a good place for you to explore your vocal range!

1. Warm up: sirens and slides are a good place to start.
2. Sing along with the video and write down the lowest and highest notes you can comfortably sing. Play all or parts of the video as many times as you need to get the right notes written down.
3. Look at the following chart and determine in what range your voice falls.
4. [Complete this form](#)

Vocal Ranges in Relation to the Piano

