

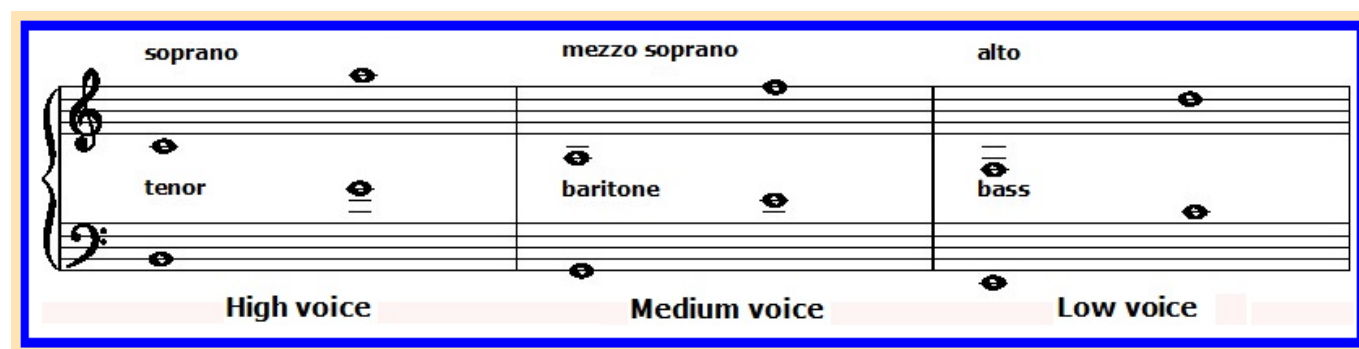
Vocal Ranges

[Music Cataloging at Yale \[1\]](#) ? [General music cataloging resources \[2\]](#)

Vocal Ranges according to *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*

Definitions for use in music cataloging

RDA does not define the ranges of vocal types. General practice is to follow the instructions given in the Subject Cataloging Manual: Subject Headings section H 1917.5: Base vocal range on the verbal indication on the item. If no vocal range is indicated, use the ranges specified in the New Harvard Dictionary of Music:



These ranges correspond to the following:

High voice

Soprano: C4-A5

Tenor: B2-G4

Medium voice

Mezzo soprano: A3-F5

Baritone: G2-E4

Low voice

Alto: F3-D5

Bass: E2-C4

Note: these definitions, from the New Harvard Dictionary of Music, are used in music cataloging, using the [Library of Congress Subject Headings \[3\]](#) and [RDA \[4\]](#).

Vocal ranges for solo or choral works may differ, as evidenced from the different ranges found in other sources. For example, see:

° The Wikipedia article on [vocal range \[5\]](#), which gives different ranges for operatic works and choral works.

° Catherine Schmidt-Jones' [article \[6\]](#) and [chart \[7\]](#).

° Grove Music Online definitions:

soprano: C4 to A5

mezzo-soprano: A3 to F#5

alto: G3 to E5 (and contralto as F3-D5)

tenor: roughly C3 to A4

baritone: A2 to F4

bass: F2 to E4

Octave designation: The International Standards Organization (ISO) system for register designations assigns "C4" to middle C (the first ledger line below the staff in treble clef). A commonly found British standard assigns "c1" to middle C.

Vocal Ranges

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Octave designations

International Standards Organization (ISO) system:

A musical staff with a bass clef on the left and a treble clef on the right. The staff is divided into seven sections, each representing an octave. The notes are: C1 (two ledger lines below), C2 (below staff), C3 (below staff), C4 (middle C, below staff), C5 (below staff), C6 (below staff), and C7 (two ledger lines above). Each note is a half note with a horizontal line above it. Below each note is its corresponding ISO designation: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, and C7.

British system:

A musical staff with a bass clef on the left and a treble clef on the right. The staff is divided into seven sections, each representing an octave. The notes are: C2 (two ledger lines below), C1 (below staff), c (below staff), c1 (below staff), c2 (below staff), c3 (below staff), and c4 (below staff). Each note is a half note with a horizontal line above it. Below each note is its corresponding British designation: C2, C1, c, c1, c2, c3, and c4.

Source URL: <https://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/vocal-ranges>

Links

[1] <http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music> [2] <http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/general-music-cataloging-resources> [3] <http://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/> [4] <http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/rda> [5] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vocal_range [6] <http://cnx.org/content/m12381/latest/> [7] <http://cnx.org/content/m12381/latest/vocalranges.png>