

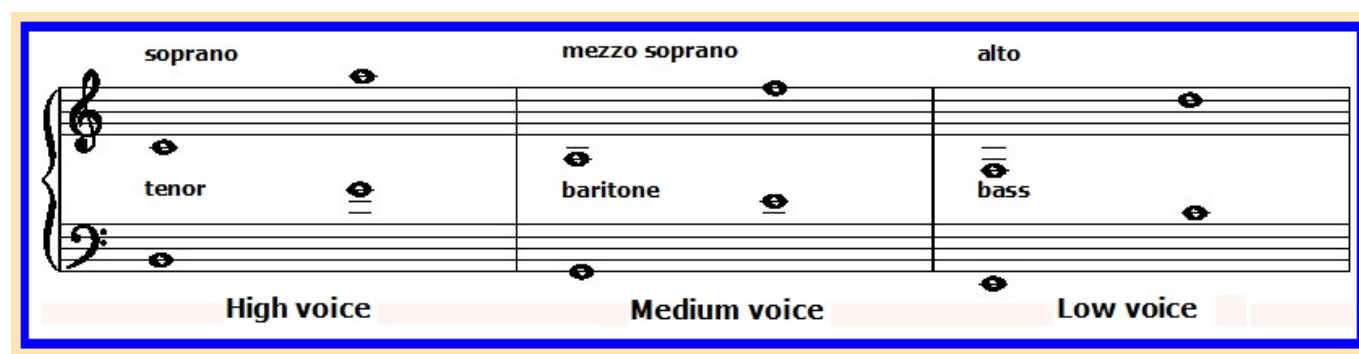
Vocal Ranges

[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

Published on Yale University Library (<https://web.library.yale.edu>)

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 of the note C. Each section contains a whole note C. Below each note is a label: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, and C7. Above each note is a symbol representing the octave: C1 has three lines below it; C2 has one line below it; C3 has one line below it; C4 has one line below it; C5 has one line below it; C6 has one line below it; and C7 has three lines above it.

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 of the note C. Each section contains a whole note C. Below each note is a label: C2, C1, c, c1, c2, c3, and c4. Above each note is a symbol representing the octave: C2 has three lines below it; C1 has one line below it; c has one line below it; c1 has one line below it; c2 has one line below it; c3 has one line below it; and c4 has three lines above it.

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>