

C. WRITING FOR VOICES

Voices are usually (although not always) grouped in four sections:

- Sopranos (high female voices)
- Altos (low female voices)
- Tenors (high male voices)
- Basses (low male voices)

Here is a typical layout of parts for a choir of mixed voices:

This layout is called "open score". Notice that, to avoid ledger lines, the tenor part is written an octave above the notes that are sung. This is shown by the "8" under the clef.

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, and Basses. The music is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Soprano part is on a treble clef. The Alto part is on a treble clef. The Tenor part is on a treble clef with an '8' below it, indicating it is an octave higher than written. The Bass part is on a bass clef. The notes are: Soprano (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Alto (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Tenor (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Bass (G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3).

Here is the same music laid out in "closed score". Here all the parts are written at sounding pitch. Accidentals have to be written in all the parts that they relate to. Singers are reading only their own parts - so in bar 4, the tenors don't know that the basses have an F#, so they have to have an F# one too. (In keyboard music there would be no need for the second F sharp.) Notice the direction of the stems.

The image shows the same musical score as above, but in a closed score format. All parts are written at sounding pitch. The Soprano part is on a treble clef. The Alto part is on a treble clef. The Tenor part is on a treble clef. The Bass part is on a bass clef. The notes are: Soprano (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Alto (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Tenor (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Bass (G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3). The stems for the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts are all pointing up, while the stem for the Bass part is pointing down.

Here is a passage in open and closed score. Fill in the missing parts. Flip stems (up or down) when necessary.

The image shows two musical scores for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The top score is in open score format, and the bottom score is in closed score format. Both are in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Soprano part is on a treble clef, the Alto part is on a treble clef, the Tenor part is on a treble clef, and the Bass part is on a bass clef. The notes are: Soprano (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Alto (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Tenor (G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4), Bass (G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3). The stems for the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts are all pointing up, while the stem for the Bass part is pointing down.