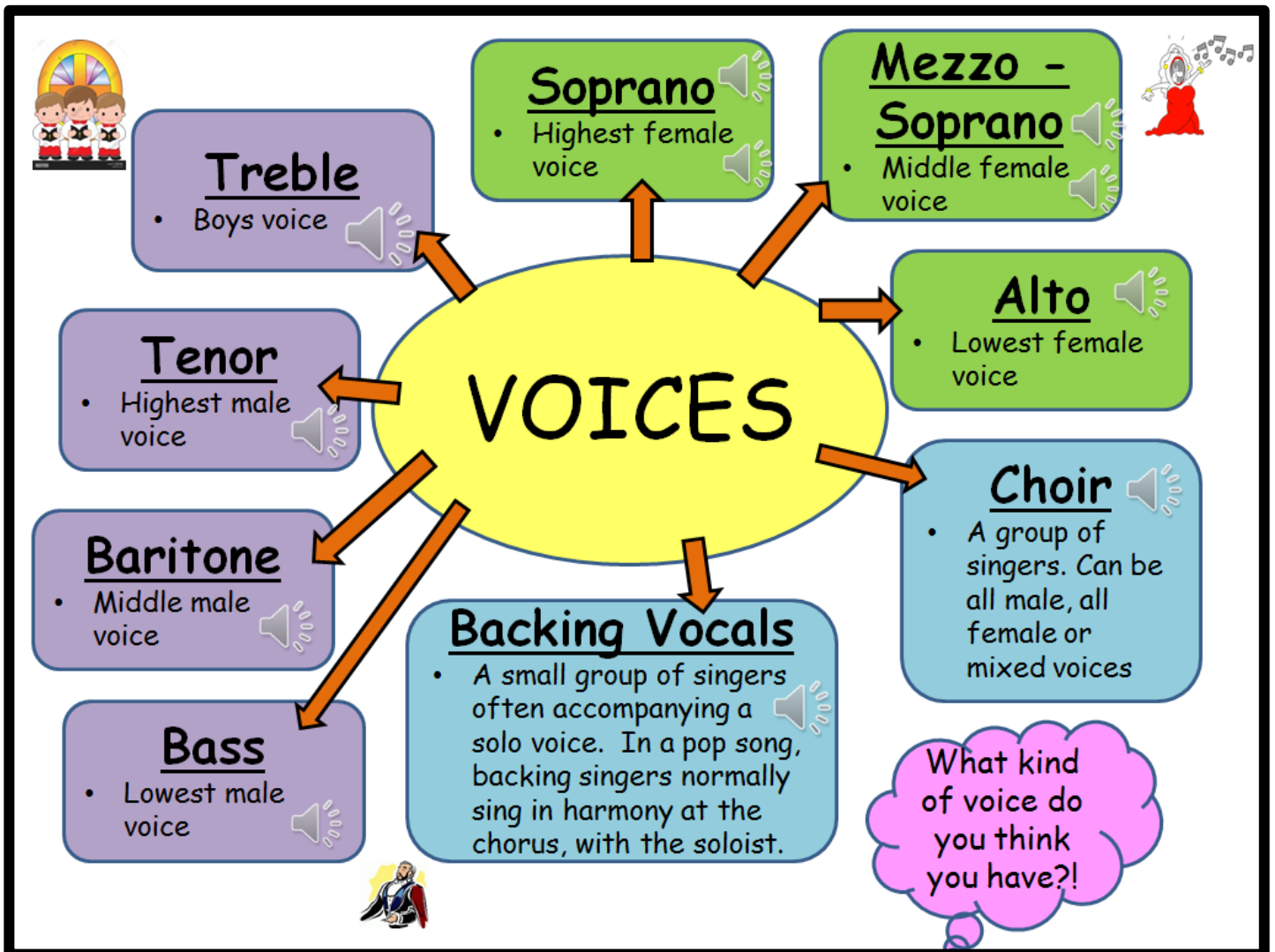




Vocal Music Revision Notes! National 3/4/5 Level

To revise this topic, you need to understand:

- Different types of voices there are
- Vocal specific concepts like A CAPPELLA, ACCOMPANIED, MELISMATIC etc.
- Types of Vocal Works you need to be able to identify.



Listen to examples of these voices on Youtube and analyse the pitch in what they are singing. Voice types are female or male then ask yourself - is it high? Medium? Low? The term SATB is short for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass and often is used in chorus items within an Opera (mixed voice singers, singing as a choir but called a chorus which means the rest of the cast).

Vocal Concepts:

A Cappella

Voice(s) alone, no instrumental accompaniment.



Accompanied

Voice(s) with instrumental accompaniment: orchestra, band, piano etc.

UNISON

- Where voices (all male / all female / mixed) sing the song at the **same pitch / same notes**.
- Men and women can sing in unison and octaves - as male voices are lower.

HARMONY

- Where voices (all male / all female / mixed) sing the song at **different pitches/notes**.
- Singing in harmony can be in a minimum of 2 parts and can go to as many as 8 parts!



Descant

A counter-melody part written to be sung above the verse / chorus. Very popular in Christmas Hymns for the last verse.



Solo




One voice singing - can be with accompaniment or not.




Opera



- An opera is a drama set to music, and then acted and sung by singers accompanied by an orchestra. There are solo singers & a chorus.
- An opera is performed on stage with scenery & costumes, lighting & stage effects. The story may be comic, serious or a mixture of both.

ARIA = a song for a solo singer (or a few of the main characters) & orch.  


DUET = a song for 2 solo singers 

CHORUS = a piece for the large group of singers called "The Chorus".  

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5qmSEvDEGs>

Musical

- A musical is more modern than an opera. They include: acting, dancing, singing, costume *etc*
- Plot can be serious, comedy, romance etc. Accompanied by a band or orchestra. Solo songs, duets, chorus numbers. Performed in theatres or turned into films.

STROPHIC - where it's the same melody for each verse of a song. 

CHORUS - a song for a large group of singers called "The Chorus" - normally the rest of the cast.



Watch these examples on Youtube!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHd8Ug4IjN4>

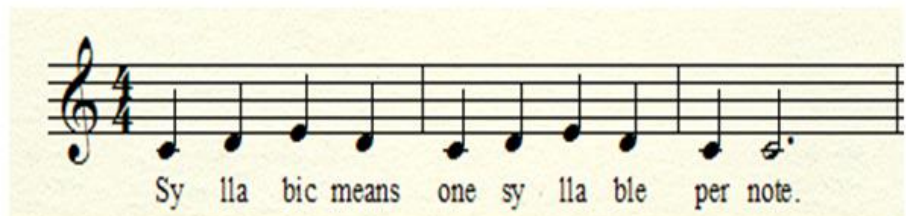


Word-Setting:

- If you are asked to comment on "word-setting", the answer is one of two options:



- **SYLLABIC**



- **MELISMATIC**



Create study cards with the concepts below and write the definition on the other side. To further deepen your learning, listen to each example on www.ataea.co.uk

Vocal Concept Revision!

Gospel

Waulking Song

Scat Singing

Aria

A Cappella

Syllabic

Pop

Bothy Ballad

Scots Ballad

Melismatic

Rap

Opera

Descant

Strophic

Mouth Music

Musical

Chorus

Accompanied

Gaelic Psalm

Harmony

Unison

Rock

Soprano

Solo

Backing Vocals

Baritone

Tenor

Alto

Soprano

Cadences

Cadences in Music are like punctuation in English. They're very important!

IMPERFECT CADENCE

Where the music sounds unfinished, normally occurs in the middle of a phrase.

? → V

PERFECT CADENCE

Where the music sounds finished, normally occurs at the end of a phrase or section of music.

V → I

Texture

"Comment on the texture in this excerpt..."

The answer will be one of these concepts:

HOMOPHONIC

Where the musical parts move at the same time – in blocks of sound.

POLYPHONIC

Where the musical parts move with a degree of independence – they do not move at the same time but instead, weave in and out of each other.

Tone

Made of up 2 semitones.
Notes which are a full step apart

C → D is a tone

F → G is a tone

Semitone

Shortest distance between two notes on a piano.

Notes which are a half step apart

C → C# is a semitone

F → F# is a semitone

Atonal

A tonality different from major or minor.

The music is not in any key – you can play any note!

Cluster

A "cluster" of notes, not from any specific chord, played together as a group.

Modulation

Where the music changes key. If the music is in C major, it may modulate to chord V which would be G major.

Cross Rhythms

Two contrasting rhythms played at the same time, against each other.

Contrary Motion

Two melodic lines moving in the opposite direction of each other. One part ascends while the other part descends – like a mirroring image.

Pedal

A sustained note in the bass or a repeated note in the bass.

Inverted Pedal

A sustained note up high or a repeated note in the higher registers.

- Try the quiz on mymusiconline.co.uk under "Vocal" and see how you get on!
- Some of the concepts mentioned on this page don't only apply to vocal pieces but can be found in many styles of music.
- Remember all your vocal styles from previous units - *scat singing, waulking song, both ballad, gaelic psalm, mouth music, scots ballad, African, rap, pop, rock etc.*