

Barbershop Voice Parts

Barbershop publishers use the familiar voicings of **TTBB**, **SATB** or **SSAA** on the cover. However, once you open to the sheet music, all three voicings are converted to **TLBB**: barbershop Tenor, Lead, Baritone and Bass. Because barbershop is close harmony and a cappella, experiment with different keys to fit the voices in your group. To learn more about suggested relative balance for each voice part, turn to the back page under *Barbershop Performance Best Practices*.

Tenor is the highest part, harmonizing above the Lead. Notated in the top staff, Tenor stems always point up. Tenor singers should have a light, lyric vocal quality. Male tenors usually sing this part in falsetto.

Lead is the second highest part, singing the melody. Notated in the top staff, Lead stems always point down. Lead singers should be prominent and have a dramatic and compelling vocal quality.

Baritone sings above and below the Lead. Notated in the bottom staff, Baritone stems always point up. Baritone singers should have a lyric vocal quality. Because the Baritone is constantly filling in different parts of a chord, the unusual voice leading can be very challenging, especially to the novice barbershop Baritone.

Bass is the lowest part, singing foundational notes. Notated in the bottom staff, Bass stems always point down. The Bass part should be as prominent as the Lead, with a big, robust vocal quality.

Barbershop Voicings

Vocal Range

SATB

SATB is notated with a traditional treble and bass clef, and does not use the vocal tenor or octave bass clef found in most barbershop arrangements.

SATB is intended for medium voices. The Soprano and Alto sing in the treble clef in the roles of barbershop Tenor and Lead. The Tenor and Bass sing in the bass clef in the roles of barbershop Baritone and Bass. *SATB works well for mixed groups.*

SSAA

The **octave bass clef** is used in **SSAA** arrangements, which may not be as familiar but is the correct notation. This indicates that the parts in the bass clef are sung an octave higher. *Note the superscript 8 at its top.*

SSAA is broadly intended for higher voices. Soprano 1 & 2 sing in the treble clef in the roles of barbershop Tenor and Lead. Alto 1 & 2 sing in the octave bass clef in the roles of barbershop Baritone and Bass. *SSAA works well for women, mixed, or unchanged male voices.*

We will be using this one:

TTBB

The **vocal tenor clef** is used in **TTBB** arrangements. This indicates that the parts in the treble clef are sung an octave lower. *Note the subscript 8 at its bottom.*

TTBB is broadly intended for lower voices. Tenor 1 & 2 sing in the vocal tenor clef in the roles of barbershop Tenor and Lead. Bass 1 & 2 sing in the bass clef in the roles of barbershop Baritone and Bass. *TTBB works well for men or mixed groups.*

Learn more at Barbershop.org/MusicInfo