

# SELF-ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL FOR SINGERS (SAPS) INSTRUCTIONS

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The SAPS was created to help you to evaluate your own singing over time. The tasks were chosen to provide practical measures of vocal function and performance. The rationale for the selection of the exercises is given in the book *Sane Singing: A Guide to Vocal Progress*. The SAPS is not designed to compare you to anyone else or any particular standard.

In this assessment, you will record five exercises and a musical selection of your choice. Then you will use the recordings to evaluate your singing, recording your observations on the **SAPS Scoring and Comment Document**. Allow about a half hour to complete the recordings. It is suggested that the recordings be done on one day, and the listening, scoring, and comments be done on another day.

Tasks 1 through 5 are audio recordings. Task 6 is the only one that requires video, but feel free to capture video for all tasks. Tasks 1-5 are best recorded a cappella. The audio should be of high quality, but the video doesn't require any special resolution or lighting.

For Tasks 2 and 5, there are two versions, "advanced" and "simplified". Use either. Feel free to adjust ranges or shorten any of these exercises as needed. Where different keys are given, start with the most comfortable key, or transpose to suit your voice. You can learn a lot about your voice's capabilities even with a very small range of pitches. Do not do anything that causes discomfort. Breathe when you feel the need. Make a note of the parameters you used to test yourself (range, alterations, beginning and ending measures, tempi), so that you have a starting point for future assessments.

Basses, baritones, and tenors will sing the tasks an octave lower than written.

Guide to vowel sounds used in the technical tasks:

/a/ = A as in FATHER

/e/ = E as in CAFÉ (like Spanish or Italian, no diphthong – not /eɪ/)

/i/ = I as in MACHINE

/o/ = O as in NO (like Spanish or Italian, no diphthong – not /oʊ/ or /ow/)

/u/ = U as in FLU

Reference recordings for the SAPS can be found at [sanesinging.com/saps](http://sanesinging.com/saps). People who do not read music will be able to learn the exercises with the recordings on an equal footing with music readers.

## Task 1. SCALES

/a/ vowel. Legato. One or two of the following keys. Record three ways: 1. slow and soft; 2. fast and soft; 3. fast and loud. Figure out the metronome speeds used and write them on the comment sheet after you listen to the recording. Optional: Repeat with different vowels.

### Scale - low

Musical notation for a low scale in B-flat major, 12/8 time. The first staff shows the ascending scale from G2 to G3. The second staff shows the descending scale from G3 to G2, marked with a '3' above the first measure, indicating a triplet of eighth notes.

### Scale - medium

Musical notation for a medium scale in B-flat major, 12/8 time. The first staff shows the ascending scale from B-flat2 to B-flat3. The second staff shows the descending scale from B-flat3 to B-flat2, marked with a '3' above the first measure, indicating a triplet of eighth notes.

### Scale - high

Musical notation for a high scale in B-flat major, 12/8 time. The first staff shows the ascending scale from B-flat3 to B-flat4. The second staff shows the descending scale from B-flat4 to B-flat3, marked with a '3' above the first measure, indicating a triplet of eighth notes.

**Task 2. ARPEGGIOS – Select either “advanced” or “simplified”**

/a/ vowel. Legato. One or two of the following keys. Record three ways: 1. slow and soft; 2. fast and soft; 3. fast and loud. Figure out the metronome speeds used and write them on the comment sheet after you listen to the recording. Optional: Repeat with different vowels.

Arpeggios (advanced) - low

Three staves of musical notation for arpeggios in D major (two sharps). The first staff contains a continuous eighth-note arpeggio. The second staff, marked with a '4', contains a quarter-note arpeggio. The third staff, marked with a '7', contains a half-note arpeggio. All staves end with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Arpeggios (advanced) - medium

Three staves of musical notation for arpeggios in C major (no sharps or flats). The first staff contains a continuous eighth-note arpeggio. The second staff, marked with a '4', contains a quarter-note arpeggio. The third staff, marked with a '7', contains a half-note arpeggio. All staves end with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Arpeggios (advanced) - high

Three staves of musical notation for arpeggios in Bb major (two flats). The first staff contains a continuous eighth-note arpeggio. The second staff, marked with a '4', contains a quarter-note arpeggio. The third staff, marked with a '7', contains a half-note arpeggio. All staves end with a double bar line and repeat dots.

/a/ vowel. Legato. In the alternative "Arpeggios" task that follows, the small notes are not sung. They are there to help you with the modulation to the next higher key.

### Arpeggios (simplified)

4  
7  
10  
13  
16  
19  
22  
25

### Task 3. DYNAMIC CHANGES

Test in the easiest octave and a fifth (twelfth) of your range. Start as softly as you can with a continuous tone, crescendo to your loudest comfortable volume, then diminuendo back to your softest dynamic. Suggested tempo range is quarter/crotchet = 60-120 bpm.

### Dynamic Changes

Low voices start here:

7 High voices start here:

13

19

25

31 Low voices end here:

37 High voices end here:

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in 3/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with dynamic markings (crescendo and diminuendo) and voice entry/exit instructions. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The first six staves (measures 1-36) feature a continuous tone with dynamic markings. The seventh staff (measures 37-42) features a continuous tone with dynamic markings and a final double bar line.

#### Task 4. PITCH CONNECTIONS AND RANGE

/a/ vowel. Attempt p, mf, and f dynamics for each two-bar chunk. Connect each pitch change with a slide (portamento). Start on your lowest comfortable pitch and stop at the highest comfortable pitch where you can still connect the notes. If your range goes below or above what is shown, take it as far as your voice wants to go without discomfort. Progress by half steps as shown, or by whole steps. Quarter/crotchet = approximately 60 bpm.

### Pitch Connections and Range

*p, mf, f*

The musical score consists of eight staves of music in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a double bar line and repeat signs. The notes are connected by slurs, and dynamic markings (p, mf, f) are indicated above the first staff. The notes are: Staff 1: G4, A4, B4, C5; Staff 2: Bb4, C5, D5, E5; Staff 3: F#4, G#4, A5, B5; Staff 4: C5, D5, E5, F#5; Staff 5: G5, A5, B5, C6; Staff 6: D6, E6, F#6, G6; Staff 7: A6, B6, C7, D7; Staff 8: E7, F#7, G7, A7. The notes are quarter notes, and the slurs indicate a continuous pitch glide between notes.

### Task 5. VOWELS – Select either “advanced” or “simplified”

Start with /a/. Comfortable medium volume. Sing the "low" exercise slowly, then repeat faster. Suggestion: first time quarter/crotchet = 50 bpm, second time 100 bpm. Repeat with the following vowels: /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/. Optional: Try the "medium" or "high" keys to take you further into your upper range.

#### Vowels (advanced) - low

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff is marked "Staccato" and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest and a whole note C5. The second staff is marked "Legato" and contains the same sequence of notes, but with a slur over the first seven notes and a fermata over the final C5. A "3" is written above the first staff.

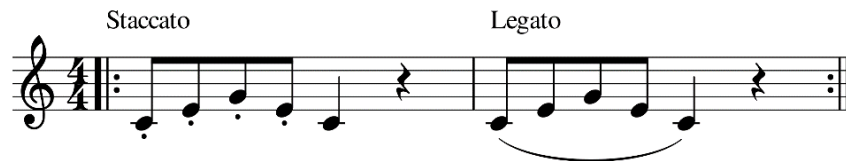
#### Vowels (advanced) - medium

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff is marked "Staccato" and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest and a whole note C5. The second staff is marked "Legato" and contains the same sequence of notes, but with a slur over the first seven notes and a fermata over the final C5. A "3" is written above the first staff.

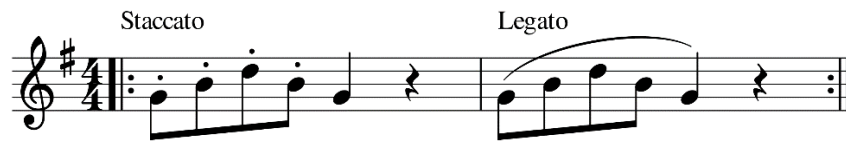
#### Vowels (advanced) - high

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff is marked "Staccato" and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, Eb4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, followed by a quarter rest and a whole note C5. The second staff is marked "Legato" and contains the same sequence of notes, but with a slur over the first seven notes and a fermata over the final C5. A "3" is written above the first staff.

## Vowels (simplified) - low



## Vowels (simplified) - medium



## Vowels (simplified) - high



### Task 6. PERFORMANCE VIDEO

Sing a well-prepared complete song or aria, either with accompaniment or a cappella. Record yourself on video from the front and from the side (profile view). Include your body from the top of your head down to your knees or lower. You can set up mirrors or two recording devices to capture both angles with one performance, or sing twice with the camera set for the different angle each time.

### EVALUATION

After you have completed all of the recording tasks above, please proceed to the **SAPS Scoring and Comments Document** which is available for download at [sanesinging.com/saps](http://sanesinging.com/saps).