

SINGING (Subject Code: 40): Syllabus Requirements

ACCOMPANIED SONGS

Programme planning

In Grades 1–5, candidates must perform *three* accompanied songs, one chosen from each of Lists A, B and C, as well as an unaccompanied traditional song of their own choice.

In Grades 6–8, candidates must perform *four* accompanied songs, one chosen from each of Lists A, B, C and D, as well as an unaccompanied traditional song of their own choice.

Discretion should be used in choosing songs that suit the candidate’s vocal qualities and that display variety and contrast of style and mood.

Languages

In Grades 1–5, all items may be sung either in their original language or in a published singing translation in any other language.

In Grades 6–8, the song chosen from List B *must* be sung in its original language (i.e. French, German or Italian). The remaining three items in the programme may be sung either in their original language or in a published singing translation in any other language. Overall, however, in Grades 6–8 candidates must ensure that they sing *in a minimum of two different languages* in the four accompanied items.

The syllabus details the languages/singing translations for all the listed editions (except for English-language songs that are published without singing translations).

Keys

The syllabus details the published keys and vocal ranges for all items (except for those items encompassing more than one key, for which only the vocal range is specified). Where the syllabus cites more than one edition for a particular song, keys are listed for all editions, and, where there are different keys, the edition in the highest key is presented first. The vocal range is given for the first-listed edition only (unless there are slight variants in range between editions).

The vocal ranges are presented using the Helmholtz system, i.e.:

- c'' (–b'') one octave above middle C (upwards to B)
- c' (–b') middle C (upwards to B)
- c (–b) one octave below middle C (upwards to B)
- C (–B) two octaves below middle C (upwards to B)

All items may be sung by any voice and in any key, published or transposed, suited to the compass of the candidate’s voice, except for those items from operas, operettas, oratorios, cantatas and sacred works in Grades 6–8 (Lists A and D) where a particular voice and key are specified (although original pitch may be adopted in Baroque pieces, if appropriate).

Editions

Candidates may use any edition of the syllabus items, except where a specific arrangement is indicated (i.e. where the arranger's name is presented in bold type).

The listing of editions in this syllabus is given only for guidance and for the purposes of correct identification and is not intended to be comprehensive since many of the syllabus items are available in a large number of song collections and editions. The information on published keys, vocal ranges and translations is likewise given for guidance only.

Songs marked **(F)** or **(M)** either contain words that indicate or suggest a male or female singer or are associated with a particular role, but this information need not be regarded as obligatory. Pronouns may be changed, at the candidate's discretion, as may other gender-specific words that are easily substituted.

Verses and repeats

Unless otherwise indicated in the syllabus, candidates should perform all items complete, although they may omit straightforward repeats of sections (i.e. where the music *and* words are unchanged and therefore little is added to the overall effect of the performance).

In verse/chorus songs, the choruses are required. *Da capo* and *dal segno* indications should be observed, unless otherwise indicated.

Singing from memory

All items in all grades must be sung from memory, except for items from oratorios, cantatas and large-scale sacred works, where candidates are permitted to sing with score, if they wish, in accordance with accepted performance practice.

Accompaniment

A live piano accompaniment is required for all items in Lists A, B, C and D. Candidates must provide their own accompanist, who may remain in the examination room *only* while engaged in accompanying. Candidates may be accompanied by their teacher but are not permitted to accompany themselves. The examiner will not act as an accompanist (except in the Sight-Singing test).

UNACCOMPANIED TRADITIONAL SONG (folk song)

In all grades, candidates are required to perform an unaccompanied traditional (folk) song of their own choice, from memory. A traditional song is defined as a folk song originating among the native people of a region and forming part of their culture. The following genres are not suitable: hymns; national anthems; stylized folk song arrangements (i.e. that would rely on their piano accompaniment for the full musical effect to be achieved).

The unaccompanied traditional song may be sung in any language. A short translation should be provided for the examiner when words other than English are used. The song may be sung in any key comfortable for the candidate, and, if required, the first note or key-chord may be played on the piano to establish the pitch.

The examiner will be looking for simple, expressive singing that is in tune and shows musicality, confidence and inherent rhythm. Dynamics and tempi should be chosen to best

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interpret the style and character of the song. The words should be delivered clearly so as to communicate the mood and characterization and to tell the story naturally.

Candidates must ensure that the unaccompanied traditional song fulfils the following timings:

	<i>minimum</i>	<i>maximum</i>
<i>Grades 1–4</i>	1 minute	2 minutes
<i>Grades 5–8</i>	1 minute	3 minutes

Possible sources

There are no ‘set’ songs for this part of the exam and candidates are free to perform any song from any source or publication at any grade. The many available collections of traditional/folk songs include the following:

- Sing Together (*available in melody-only and accompanied editions: OUP*)
- Best of Folk Songs: 40 British, Irish and American Songs (*available in melody-only and accompanied editions: Schott ED 12881 or 12880/MDS*)
- The ABRSM Songbook, Books 1–5 (*ABRSM Publishing*) (*each album contains twelve unaccompanied traditional songs*)
- Folk Voiceworks: 30 Traditional Songs (*OUP*)
- The Library of Folk Songs (*Amsco AM 961521/Music Sales*)
- A Selection of Collected Folk Songs, Vols 1 & 2, arr. Sharp & Vaughan Williams (*Novello NOV190038 or NOV190040/Music Sales*)
- Folk Songs of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales (*formerly issued by Warner; now Alfred/FM Distribution*)
- The New Scottish Song Book (*Hardie Press*)

SIGHT-SINGING

Useful information

The Sight-Singing test is accompanied (by the examiner only).

The tests for Grades 1–5 are printed without texts and may be sung to any vowel (with or without consonant) or to sol-fa. The tests for Grades 6–8 are printed with clear, simple and singable texts in English; candidates may use these or they may sing to any vowel or sol-fa, if they prefer.

Separate bass-clef versions of tests are available for all grades: candidates should let the examiner know if they would prefer a bass-clef to a treble-clef test.

For practice purposes, two books of specimen sight-singing tests (Grades 1–5 and Grades 6–8) are available, published by ABRSM Publishing.

Preparation

Candidates will be given a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test (unaccompanied) before they are required to perform it for assessment. The examiner will play the key-chord and starting note before the preparation period and again before the actual performance.









Accompaniments

None of the sight-singing tests feature piano introductions and thus it is the candidate who starts the performance, setting the pulse and ‘shadowed’ by the examiner at the piano. In Grades 1 and 2 the piano accompaniments are minimal (occasional chords), with the top notes of the chords doubling the vocal line. In Grades 3–5 the accompaniments are slightly fuller, while in Grades 6–8 they are more akin to ‘real’ song accompaniments.

Parameters

There is a progression of note values through the grades (starting with only crotchets, minims and pairs of quavers at Grade 1), with rests provided at suitable breathing places. Italian and English descriptors are used (the Italian terms relating to the requirements of ABRSM’s Theory of Music grades). Dynamic markings are printed *above* the vocalist’s stave.

The table below shows the introduction of elements at each grade. Please note that these parameters are presented cumulatively, i.e. once introduced they apply for all subsequent grades (albeit within a logical progression of difficulty).

Grade	Length (bars)	Keys	Time	Vocal range	Intervals in vocal part	Texts
1	4	C, G & F majors	4/4	About a sixth, within the range of:  c'-d''  c-d'	Major/minor 2nds only, stepwise and diatonic, no repeated notes	None
2		D major	3/4		Rising major/minor 3rds within tonic chord	
3	8	B \flat major A minor		About an octave, within the range of:  c'-d''  c-d'	Rising and falling major/minor 3rds, cadential rising perfect 4ths, repeated notes	
4		A & E \flat majors E & D minors	6/8	 b \flat -d''  B \flat -d'	Rising perfect 4ths (or 4ths falling back to note of departure), rising and falling octaves	
5		E major B & G minors			Perfect 5ths, falling perfects 4ths	
6	8–10	A \flat major C minor		 b \flat -e \flat ''  B \flat -e \flat '	Major/minor 6ths, occasional chromatic notes	English (optional)
7		F \sharp minor			Occasional minor 7ths, chromatic semitones	
8	8–12	C \sharp & F minors			Diminished 7ths	

IN THE EXAM

Song list

Candidates should provide the examiner with a list of the songs they will be performing, in particular the *syllabus-number* (e.g. A16) for each song in each list. Blank exam programme & running order forms are provided at the back of this booklet and may be filled in for this purpose.

Performance and assessment

Candidates are advised to direct their performance towards the examiner (the ‘audience’), who will be listening even when he/she has to look down to write.

When marking, the examiner will pay attention not only to accuracy of notes and rhythm, but also to other elements inherent in a good performance, including appropriately balanced stance and posture, breath management, accuracy of intonation and consistency of pitch, quality, variety and gradation of tone, clear articulation and diction, flexibility and agility, suitable choice of tempo, appropriate phrasing, sure sense of style and mood, expressive interpretation and communication, and reliability of memory.

Marking scheme

Schedule of maximum marks for Grades:	1–5	6–8
Songs: <i>List</i> A	30	24
B	30	24
C	30	21
D	—	21
Unaccompanied Traditional Song	21	21
Sight-Singing	21	21
Aural Tests	18	18
Total	150	150