

Vocal Skills Ladder

Step 2: Additional Techniques

Mouth Shape:

- Vowel sounds play an important place in mouth shape. Singers need to change the shape of their mouth to achieve head voice/falsetto as well as how to belt or achieve several different tones e.g. grit or rasp.
- The shape needed for different songs will depend on the genre and style of the song, for example for a jazzier song the vowel sound 'eee' is often extended and rasp is applied, it is important to learn how to apply these techniques safely.
- Exercises can vary depending on the mouth shape and sound desired. To lift the soft palate and achieve a clear 'oo' sound, imagine the lips as a polo mint.
- Sucking your thumb whilst singing for a part of a song also helps to open the soft palate and achieve a more affective mouth shape.
- Singing scales and note patterns with different vowel sounds (eg: 'ha', 'oo', 'ah' or 'ee') can help to explore different sounds created just by manipulating the mouth shape.

(Links: <https://youtu.be/fCxmDUl8U>, <https://youtu.be/RTokGPc34wo>)

Suggested songs that use various vowel sounds are "*Mr Brightside*" - The Killers, "*Pompeii*" - Bastille, "*Marry You*" - Bruno Mars, "*Valerie*" - Amy Winehouse & "*Feel Good Inc*" - Gorillaz.