

Harpsichord Stops: Predict the Sound

Keep the keys the same. Choose which sets of strings sound. A set is called a **choir**; your stop choices make a **registration**.

1 · CHOOSE THE ACTIVE CHOIRS

Our example instrument has one eight-foot (8') choir and one four-foot (4') choir. The ' symbol means 'foot' in these traditional register names. These switches show logical choices, not real control positions.

8' [ON] 4' [OFF]
Normal register

8' [OFF] 4' [ON]
One octave above

8' [ON] 4' [ON]
Both octaves

8' = normal register. 4' = 12 semitones higher. With 2 × 8', key C4 sounds C4 + C4: two choirs in the same register.

2 · SAME KEYS, DIFFERENT SOUNDING OCTAVES

Keys: C4–D4–E4–G4 in quarter notes (C4 = middle C). Staves show **sounding pitches**; paired notes sound together.

8' only



4' only



8' + 4'



3 · PLAN ONE CHANGE IN AN ORIGINAL PHRASE

Creative task: make your own registration plan. More than one plan works. Choose 8' only, 4' only or both. Choose different registrations for bars 1–3 and bars 5–8. Describe the change in sounding octaves. The staff shows **keys to play**. Change during silent bar 4; your teacher handles the controls.



Start: active stops (bars 1–3)

Change point (silent bar)

Bars 5–8

New stops: -----

Octave change: -----

Try it Cover the key; name the sounding pitches. Check your creative plan: **available stops** · **clear change point** · **intended contrast**. Confirm actual stops with your teacher.



Predict first; then listen to check.

tissimo.co/worksheets/harpsichord-stop-octave-map

72 quarter notes per minute · Piano synthesis: pitch/rhythm only, not authentic harpsichord stops or timbre.

One plan: 8' only in bars 1–3; change during rest bar 4; 8' + 4' in bars 5–8 adds the upper octave. Other plans can meet the rubric.

Mini-key — 8': C4, D4, E4, G4 · 4': C5, D5, E5, G5 · both: C4/C5, D4/D5, E4/E5, G4/G5