

The Yanny vs. Laurel Debate: What Do You Hear?

My colleague, [Dr. Marshall](#), only hears "Yanny," and I can't hear anything but "Laurel." The two of us have engaging clinical debates on a regular basis, but who is right in this situation?

The answer is BOTH of us.

Your Hearing Abilities

Like the rest of the world is learning, which word you hear essentially depends on two variables - the listening individual's personal hearing abilities and the equipment that they are listening with.

The word *Yanny* essentially occupies the higher frequencies of sound whereas the word *Laurel* occupies the lower frequencies.

If someone has an increased ability to hear higher frequencies versus lower frequencies, they hear the word Yanny.

Those of us with more normal hearing or hearing loss in the higher frequencies are more likely to hear Laurel.

Audio Equipment Matters!

Additionally, the type of speakers that we are hearing the recording on matter as well. Really nice headphones or speakers will likely bring out the higher frequencies more. So in that situation *Yanny* is likely to be heard.

Typically most phone speakers and average headphones are going to emphasize the lower frequencies. Therefore, they are more likely to emphasize the word *Laurel*.

No Right or Wrong Answers

So you see - there is no right or wrong answer, and there is no one combination that makes someone more likely to hear one word versus the other. It is a meld of many

factors, once again proving that hearing is an amazing and almost miraculous sense that we continue to learn about more and more every day.

What do YOU hear?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X_WvGAhMIQ

About Michael Ferguson, MD

[Dr. Michael Ferguson](#) is an otolaryngologist with [WakeMed Physician Practices - ENT - Head & Neck Surgery](#). He treats adults and children of all ages for a range of ear nose and throat issues including sinus disease, thyroid problems and cancers of the head and neck. [Schedule an appointment with Dr. Ferguson today.](#)