

Beginning Band Basics

**Montana Band Masters
Montana Music Education Association
Professional Development Conference**

**Thursday, October 19, 2017
Bozeman High School
Bozeman, Montana
8:30 – 10:00 AM**

**Dr. Laurie Lafferty, Clinician
with the assistance of students
from
Chief Joseph Middle School 6th Grade Band
Michel Sticka, Director of Bands
Jeffrey Ruffcorn, Team Teacher**

6th Grade Demonstration Group

Flute - Mae Strizich
Clarinet - Troy Vaughn
Bass Clarinet - Anne Baldwin
Alto Sax - Finn Berg
Tenor Sax - Kaylie Monforton
Trumpet - Osker Patterson
Trombone - Aden Matosich
Baritone - Colter Lapp
Percussion - Jake Adams

Laurie Lafferty, Professor Emeritus, The University of Akron, received her undergraduate degree from Baldwin Wallace College, a Master's in Music Education from Youngstown State University, and a Ph.D. in Music Education from Kent State University. Her teaching assignments at Akron included wind & percussion pedagogy, rehearsal techniques, student teaching supervision, University Band, and graduate core music education classes. Prior to her appointment at Akron Dr. Lafferty was a band director in Ohio for 23 years. Throughout her teaching career her junior high and high school bands consistently received superior ratings at Ohio Music Education Association sponsored district and state adjudicated events. In addition, her bands and horn ensembles performed at local, state, and national conferences under the direction of many nationally known composers and conductors.

Dr. Lafferty is an active member of the Ohio Music Education Association, serving on various state committees, holding district office, and adjudicating at district and state level competitions. She has served as guest conductor and guest clinician at conferences throughout the United States.

Dr. Lafferty has articles on music education published in *The Instrumentalist*, *The Band Director's Guide*, *Triad*, and *Contributions to Music Education*. In addition, she has young band arrangements published by Carl Fischer, Heritage Press, Ludwig Music Publishing, and Great Works Publishing.

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Beginning Band Basics

Clinic Outline

Pedagogical Premises

- It is much easier to teach correct playing habits from the very beginning than to correct bad habits “down the road”.
- Musicality starts with the establishment of good tone and good technique.
- Good tone and good technique are obtained through the development of good embouchure, posture, and playing position.
- Repetition is Mastery
- Keep it simple.
Don't over complicate.
- In order to establish correct playing habits the teacher must move slowly and deliberately.
- The challenge of playing the instrument correctly will keep students from becoming bored
OR
- It is not necessary to play lots of notes to keep students interested in band.
- Teaching is not telling.
Covering is not teaching.
- Living in the world of “should” is not productive.
- Young students need to see things in black and white.
- The teacher must maintain a steady pulse for the student at all times.
- The tongue should be introduced only after the embouchure is firm and stable.
- Note reading should not be a part of the first lesson.
- As band director's we are like “general practitioners.”
Good private lesson teachers are the specialists; i.e., heart surgeons, podiatrists, etc.
- With good pedagogy and persistence, we have the skills and knowledge to keep our “patients” healthy at all levels.
- “Commonalties”
 - Breathing
 - Posture
 - Relaxed Neck and
Shoulders
 - Head Alignment
 - Instrument brought to the student NOT the student
to the instrument
 - Position must look comfortable
 - Hand Position
 - Straight Wrists
 - Quick, firm, relaxed finger motion

- Elbows away from the body
- Rounded Embouchure
Aperture in center of mouth
- Flat, firm chin, No puffed cheeks

The First Day

- First Lesson
 - Establish correct playing fundamentals
 - Establish a serious but positive attitude toward band.
 - Establish correct playing fundamentals
 - Establish a serious but positive attitude toward band.
 - Establish structure and procedures
 - Establish good classroom management
 - Present technical information clearly and logically
- Fun is doing something well
- Not necessary to learn a melody at the first lesson.
- Students will appreciate a serious (but positive) environment in which to learn.
- The amount students can accomplish will vary from school to school and class to class and will depend on...
 - Instrumentation
 - Number of Students
 - Time Allotted
 - Experience of Teacher
 - Sophistication of the Students
- The goal of the first lesson is to get the students started correctly.
- Reinforce the importance of respecting the efforts of each student in the class. Everyone needs to feel comfortable to do their best.
- A wise teacher will guide the students through these first steps in a careful and thoughtful manner, teaching only what the students are able to learn in the time allotted and not simply “cover” the material to “get through the entire lesson.”

First Day Demonstration

In the beginning . . .

From the very beginning, every aspect of a teacher's approach to his or her students, parents, colleagues, and administration is important in establishing the attitude and environment necessary for a successful instrumental music program. Students in a high school band are only as strong as the musical foundation they received in their first years of band.

As with any teacher who works with young students, the instrumental music teacher must realize that it is easier and more beneficial to teach basic concepts correctly than fix bad habits later. The teacher must move slowly with a definite concept of what skills must be learned and when and how these skills should be taught. Teaching a student correct embouchure, posture, hand position, a concept of steady pulse, and the ability to read notes and rhythms accurately must be the priority of the instrumental music teacher. At the same time, the teacher must instill in his/her students a positive but serious attitude towards band. With a good attitude and proper playing fundamentals, the students will be able to move ahead quickly when ready.

The First Class

Introducing students to their instrument will take more time than the normal band class will allow. Instructors should make arrangements with the building principal to create a schedule that allows ample time for the first lesson. Regular classroom teachers must be provided with this schedule well in advance so they are able to plan their classroom schedule accordingly. To ensure that the individual problems of both the students and their instruments can be dealt with effectively, the first lesson should be done in relatively small groups of like instruments.

From the very first lesson students must be taught the proper way to approach his or her instrument. This is crucial in their development of an understanding of playing an instrument and making music. The students will be very excited. If they have had an instrument at home prior to the first lesson, they probably will have attempted to play on their own. This playful and likely incorrect approach must be overcome by establishing a correct routine for assembling and practicing the instrument. The instructor, first by demonstration (one step at a time) and then by helping individual students, teaches how to assemble the instrument. This process must be carefully monitored at each subsequent class to ensure that students develop the correct habits.

The first sounds should be produced on the mouthpiece or head joint alone. This helps the student to understand and form the correct embouchure without having to be concerned with the complete instrument. Students should be able to produce a sustained tone (4 steady counts) on the mouthpiece alone before trying to produce a sound on the assembled instrument. This process should be followed individually with each student before the entire group plays together. Each time a student plays (either on the mouthpiece alone or on the entire instrument), be sure that he/she sits with the back away from the chair and both feet flat on the floor. The back should be straight, arm and elbows should not rest on legs or the back of the chair. Each student should have his/her own music stand adjusted to the proper playing height. In addition, make sure that the classroom environment is calm and positive. Each student needs to feel comfortable to try without fear of ridicule from classmates.

Once students can produce a tone on his/her mouthpiece, students can re-assemble the instruments. The same process as before is repeated, only this time students will be trying to produce a specific pitch. It will now be necessary to demonstrate the proper hand position for each instrument.

Following the first lesson, students should be urged to practice at home for short periods of time only. Ten minutes twice a day will minimize fatigue resulting in improper playing habits. Students should have a wire music stand at home to use each time they practice. Emphasize the importance of practicing correctly with correct embouchure, posture and hand position. Many bad habits have been formed at home sitting on a bed practicing.

Progress from the first class should be steady but deliberate and controlled. Students will sense success from small achievements completed correctly. Each small step puts more demands on a student's mental and physical resources. It is important not to strain the endurance of young instrumentalists by over-extending the range or technical demands. This will only jeopardize the embouchure and concept of steady pulse.

Begin with music that consists of whole notes alternating with whole rests. Gradually eliminate the rests until the students can play an entire line (8 measures) without a rest. The range should not exceed three notes in these early weeks. Once the student has developed the muscle strength to sustain a line of whole notes, the tongue can be introduced using repeated quarter notes.

New teachers often worry about students' boredom when moving at this slow pace. This will not become an issue to the students if the challenge of performing correctly is always maintained as a goal and the class activities are varied. For example,

when reviewing material or adding new lines, ask students to play lines individually. On other lines have one student play measures 1, 3, 5 and 7 and everyone playing measures 2, 4, 6 and 8. The teacher must always maintain a steady pulse by counting, clicking fingers and/or clapping. Once students have learned to play exercises, incorporate them into a short warm-up at the beginning of each class. For example, if the class has learned exercises 1-15 and is ready to move on, the instructor would use exercises 1, 5, 6, 10 and 13 (if appropriate) as a non-stop warm-up. This repetition provides review of previously learned materials and helps to develop endurance. In music, as in other academic subjects, the instructor must continuously build onto previously learned skills. Once a skill has been learned, it must be reviewed and added onto, not forgotten. Additional variety can be added to the class by having students write counts (in pencil) under each note in a line of music.

In addition, work sheets can be given to the students identifying lines and spaces, clef signs, measures, rests, and note names. (Never allow students to write note names or fingerings in their music. This only becomes a crutch and prevents students from becoming proficient at reading musical notation.) The worksheets will help students read and understand musical notation and aid the teacher in evaluating what the students really know. These written exercises should be short and to the point, helping students understand musical concepts while still allowing ample playing time in the rehearsal.

As students progress through this slow, systematic process and accomplish their first song (very often Mary Had A Little Lamb). The students will develop a true sense of success through effort along with the skills and attitude that will allow them continued success.

Clarinet

Assembling the Instrument

1. Have students take instrument cases to another area of the room and set the cases flat on a table. If no table is available, students should put cases on the floor and sit or kneel beside their instrument.
2. Instruct students to gently open the case with the handle below the opening.
3. Students carefully remove each section of the clarinet (except the bell) one section at a time and grease each cork with cork grease. It is best to demonstrate this to the students before having them proceed. Be careful that they 1) do not use too much cork grease, 2) do not smear it on other parts of the clarinet, and 3) wipe off their fingers after they are done. No more class time should be taken to grease corks. From this point on greasing corks is something students do at home.
 - Note: If time permits, this step could be completed by the instructor before students come to class. This saves valuable time during the first lesson and students can be taught this procedure in the next 2 or 3 lessons.
4. Students remove one reed from their reed case and let it soak in their mouths.
5. Keeping the reed soaking in their mouths have students gently pick up the lower joint and hold it in the left hand, palm up, keys up.
6. Using the right hand, students pick up the bell and gently push and twist the bell onto the lower joint. Set the lower joint and bell down with keys facing up.
7. Students now pick up the upper joint and place it in the palm of the left hand with the keys facing upward. Using the third finger depress the ring key on the second tone hole. This raises the bridge key. Pick up the bell and lower joint with the right hand. Making sure no keys are depressed with the right hand, students gently push and twist the two sections together without allowing the bridge key to “collide” with the lower joint. Check the bridge key on each instrument for proper alignment.
8. Holding the partially assembled clarinet in one hand, add the barrel by gently pushing and twisting.

9. Students now remove the mouthpiece cap and add the mouthpiece, making sure that the open face of the mouthpiece aligns with the thumbhole. The larger end of the ligature is slipped gently over the mouthpiece (it should not be tightened down at this point). Replace mouthpiece cap.
10. Students now carry the instrument to their seats. Do not allow students to "dangle" their clarinet off to the side. The clarinet should be carried perpendicular and in front of the student's body to avoid damaging the instrument.
11. Remind the students to be patient and not try to play the instrument. They will be very excited at this point and it is easy for them to lose control.
12. Once seated, students remove the mouthpiece cap, take the reed from their mouth and slip the thick portion of the reed under the ligature. Align the reed so it is straight and almost even with the top edge of the mouthpiece (If the reed is gently pressed against the mouthpiece only a very slight rim is visible). The ligature is on the stock (below the carved part of the reed). Students tighten the ligature screws. These screws only need to be tightened enough to hold the reed in place. Be sure students do not over tighten.
13. Each instrument and reed must be checked by the instructor before proceeding.
14. Gently replace the mouthpiece cap to prevent reeds from drying out.
 - Note:
 - i. Because of the complex nature of assembling the clarinet, the instructor must be sure to demonstrate each step in the process; moving slowly and systematically, watching and helping students throughout the entire procedure.
 - ii. The corks on new instruments tend to fit very tightly. Students may need help fitting parts together.
 - iii. Students will need reinforcement of this procedure at each successive class or short cuts will be taken and instruments will be damaged and/or reeds will not be soaked.

Finger Exercises

1. Students slide out to the edge of the chair, sit up tall, and put feet flat on the floor.

2. Instruct the student to rest the clarinet on the right knee and left shoulder.
3. The right-hand thumb is placed under the thumb rest at the point where the skin and the finger nail meet.
4. Have each student place the left thumb on thumbhole at 2 o'clock with the fleshy part covering the tone hole and tip of the thumb in position to operate the register key.
5. Next, the student places the first three fingers of the left hand and the first three fingers of the right hand on the appropriate tone holes. Hands must be curved in a natural C position (no claws) and fingers flat to cover the tone holes completely. Fingers should not be leaning against side keys. The fleshy part of the fingers must sink into the tone holes. Check each student to be sure the hand position is correct. Make sure the "little" fingers are not tucked under the clarinet but resting on the low F (right side) and low E (left side) keys.
6. With the clarinet supported by the right knee and left shoulder students lift all 6 fingers and the left thumb slightly off the keys. Then in rhythm, have students replace fingers one at a time --Thumb 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, right pinky (on the low F key), left pinky (on the low E key). Do this exercise very slowly many times. Insist that students stay with you as the fingers are called off. Check students carefully to make sure that hand and finger position is correct. Students can and should watch their fingers while doing this exercise to see as well as "feel" the correct position.

Producing a Sound

1. Students remove the mouthpiece with the barrel from the instrument being careful not to disturb or damage the reed. Set the body of the clarinet down carefully with keys up so students can work on the mouthpiece & barrel alone. Remove the mouthpiece cap.
2. Students remain on the edge of the chair, back straight, feet flat on the floor.
3. Ask students to stretch their bottom lip slightly over their bottom teeth as if saying the sound "voo". Pull the chin down and flat. This is not a natural position and some students will need help with this concept.

4. Students to take their thumb (nail side down) and insert about one half inch into their mouth, pushing the fleshy part up against the top teeth. The mouth should then close around the thumb without collapsing the chin. This is the basic embouchure.
5. Individually, take each mouthpiece and place about one half inch into the student's mouth. Be sure the mouthpiece is against the top teeth, a small portion of the red of the lip is over the bottom teeth and the chin is down and flat. The head is neither up or down, but looking straight ahead. Do not let go of the mouthpiece. Ask the student to close his/her mouth around the mouthpiece. While holding the mouthpiece push it gently up against the top teeth and instruct the student to blow fast air through the mouthpiece. A rather high pitch should sound (Concert F#). If there is no sound ask the student to pull her/his chin down and away from the mouthpiece, keeping the chin stretched (you may need to pull the chin down with the index finger of your right hand). Once the student can get the correct sound, have the student try the same procedure without your help.
6. After each student has completed the above procedure, have the entire group sustain the pitch for 4 counts followed by 4 counts of rest. Repeat this several times. Be sure to take time to help those students who are having difficulty. Always maintain a steady, audible pulse once the students begin playing the whole note, whole rest exercise.
7. Instruct students to reassemble the instrument. The reed will need to be inspected again to make sure it has not been moved in the process.
8. One at a time place the mouthpiece in each student's mouth. The student should not have his/her hands on the clarinet at this point. The clarinet is angled down at approximately 35 degrees. The embouchure is the same as above. Ask the student to blow into the instrument the same as before. If everything is correct, the pitch produced will be a G (concert F).
9. Instruct the student to hold the clarinet using the right-hand position learned earlier but with the left hand holding the barrel making sure the mouthpiece is gently pushed up against the top teeth. Ask the student to blow fast air into the horn with no fingers down. The pitch produced should again be a G.

10. Repeat this procedure with each student. Check that the chins are down and flat, and mouthpiece is up against the top teeth.
11. *Note: It is possible to tell if the mouthpiece is secure against the top teeth by trying to gently wiggle the mouthpiece in the student's mouth while she/he is playing. If the mouthpiece wiggles the mouthpiece is not secure, if the whole head moves the mouthpiece is secure.
12. Always remind the student to push up against the top teeth. Pushing down will close off the reed and cause the student to squeak or get no sound at all.
13. Having the left hand holding the barrel allows the student to push up against the top teeth for the open G. This helps embouchure formation greatly in the first few weeks. Once the embouchure is secure it is a simple habit to break.
14. Constant and consistent reinforcement of these fundamentals at each class will be necessary if students are to develop proper playing fundamentals.

Disassembling the Instrument

1. When the lesson has ended students replace the mouthpiece cap and return quietly to their instrument cases.
2. Students remove the reed and return it gently to the reed case.
3. The clarinet is disassembled in the reverse order in which it was assembled (reed comes off first). Have the students swab out each section before placing it back into the case. The weighted end of the swab should enter the larger end of each section and be pulled out through the smaller end.
 - Note: Chamois swabs are often found in student line clarinets. These tend to be very thick and must be cut down before using to prevent them from getting stuck in the clarinet. If one should get stuck, do not force it; take it to the repair shop. Using a cotton or silk swab is a much better alternative.
4. Once the first 3 steps have been completed, students return to their seats. Review a few of the main points of the lesson, encourage them to practice 10 minutes two times each day and give each student a copy of the first lesson *Reminder Sheet*. Compliment them

on what they did well, reinforce problem areas. Make sure they know when and where the next class meets. Dismiss students in an orderly fashion.

Extra Considerations

1. Start all students on the same type and strength of reed (LaVoz medium soft is an excellent reed for beginners). This not only helps young students have consistency in their playing but also helps the teacher in diagnosing and solving performance problems.
2. Do not be too quick to move students to a stronger reed. Although a harder reed will help the sound, using a harder reed too soon will cause the chin to collapse. Students should play on a medium soft reed until the chin is firm and not in danger of collapsing. This can take two to three years.
3. Make sure students always have 4 good reeds. Students should rotate these reeds daily and when not in use keep them stored in a plastic or metal reed case. Insist that students keep these reeds on their music stands during every band class. This way they can change reed during class if one seems to be wearing out or if one becomes cracked.
4. Encourage beginning students to purchase a good high quality mouthpiece before starting the clarinet. Not only will it produce a better sound than a stock mouthpiece but will also make the instrument respond easier, thus increasing the likelihood of success in the early stages.

Clarinet

Lesson 1

Reminders:

1. Sit up tall, feet flat on the floor, back away from the chair. Keep head straight and facing forward.
2. Practice on mouthpiece in front of a mirror. Try to hold tone for 4 steady counts
3. Keep chin flat. Push mouthpiece up against top teeth. Stretch bottom lip slightly over bottom teeth.
4. Breathe deeply through your mouth.
5. Do finger exercise every day. Keep hands curved and fingers flat. Check to make sure tone holes are covered. Fingers should not lean against side keys.
6. Practice 10 minutes, 2 times each day.
7. Always swab out your clarinet & put reed away in reed case after each practice session.
8. Class is every _____ and _____. Bring your instrument, music stand, book, and a pencil with you each time.
9. Remember, never let other people play your instrument. It is not a toy, take good care of it.

First Day Trumpet

Assembling the Instrument

1. Have students take instrument cases to another area of the room and set the cases flat on a table. If no table is available, students should put cases on the floor and sit or kneel beside their instrument.
2. Instruct students to gently open the case with the handle below the opening.
3. Students then carefully remove the instrument from the case with the right hand on the valve casings and then transfer the instrument to the left hand.
4. Have students gently insert the mouthpiece into the instruments with the right hand, giving it a slight turn to the right to make sure it stays firmly in place.
5. Students now carry the instruments to their seats. Do not allow students to "dangle" their trumpet off to the side. The trumpet should be carried perpendicular and in front of the student's body to avoid damaging the instrument.
6. Remind the students to be patient and not to play the instrument. They will be very excited at this point and it is easy for them to lose control.

Producing a Sound on the Mouthpiece

1. Students now remove the mouthpiece (twisting to the left) and place their trumpets gently on the floor. The horn needs to be lying flat,
2. Students slide out to the edge of the chair, sit up tall, and put their feet flat on the floor with shoulders relaxed, head straight and facing forward.
3. Ask students to put their lips together in a normal relaxed position as if saying "em".
4. The teacher now individually places the mouthpiece in the center of the lips of each student using half top lip and half bottom lip. Instruct the student to "buzz" into the mouthpiece.
5. Lips should not roll in or push out.
6. Keep student from pushing his/her head and lips against the mouthpiece.
7. Do not allow the student to puff out cheeks.
8. The chin is down and flat.
9. Breathe through the mouth.

10. Once the student can produce a buzz, have the student try to hold the buzz for four steady counts.

11. If a student has difficulty getting a sound, have the student try:

- 1) buzzing without the mouthpiece
- 2) blowing air faster
- 3) pulling the teeth apart
- 4) think about their tongue placement to make sure the tongue is not up and blocking the flow of air

Holding the Instrument

1. Students now reassemble their instruments and sit with the correct posture (as above).
2. Instruct the students to bring their instruments to their lips while holding the instrument in the left hand with their fingers wrapped around the valve casings.
3. The entire weight of the horn is supported with the left hand, arm, and shoulder.
4. Students then place their right hand thumb between the 1st and 2nd valve, curving the fingers and placing one finger tip on the top of each of the 3 valves. (A good illustration is to say that a tennis ball should fit in the palm of the right hand.) The wrists are straight but relaxed.
5. The little finger is placed on top of the finger ring.
6. The instrument is held parallel to the ground with the elbows away from the body.

Producing a Sound on the Instrument

1. As the student holds the trumpet, individually guide the mouthpiece to the center of each student's lip, adjusting the playing position and posture at the same time. Have each student play into the horn, trying to produce a G (Concert F).
2. Many students will produce the G automatically. However, some students will not have the strength to produce this pitch. If a C (Concert Bb) is the only pitch the student can play, (both pitches are open) do not force the higher pitch. With time and practice all students will develop the strength to get the G. Forcing high notes too soon will only promote poor playing habits.

3. Once the student can get an “appropriate” sound, the student tries the same procedure without the teacher’s help.
4. After each student has completed this procedure, the entire group sustains the pitch for 4 counts with the teacher maintaining an audible beat. Be sure to take time to help students who are having difficulty. Make sure that a steady pulse is maintained.
5. Constant and consistent reinforcement of these fundamentals at each class session will be necessary if students are to develop proper playing fundamentals.

Disassembling the Instrument

1. When the class has ended students return quietly to their instrument cases.
2. Students remove their mouthpieces twisting gently to the left and put them back into the case.
3. The cases can now be closed and latched. Do not allow students to put music or books in their cases, as anything extra in the case will damage the instruments.

Extra Considerations

1. Trumpet/Cornet
 - 1) Recommended mouthpiece: Bach 7C
 - 2) Although the trumpet has completely overtaken the cornet in popularity, the cornet, because of its smaller size and conical bore, can be a much better choice for beginning players. It is a much easier for a young student to hold and the tone is much easier for a beginning student to control.

Trumpet Lesson 1

Reminders:

Sit up tall, feet flat on the floor, back away from the chair. Keep head straight and forward.

Place mouthpiece in the center of your lips.

Don't roll lips in or push mouthpiece against lips.

Practice in front of a mirror, buzzing on the mouthpiece alone. Try to hold the tone for 4 steady counts.

Breathe deeply through your mouth.

Hold trumpet parallel to the floor, thumb between the first and second valves, fingers curved with right pinky on top of the finger ring.

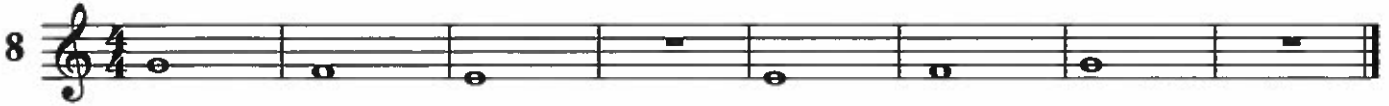
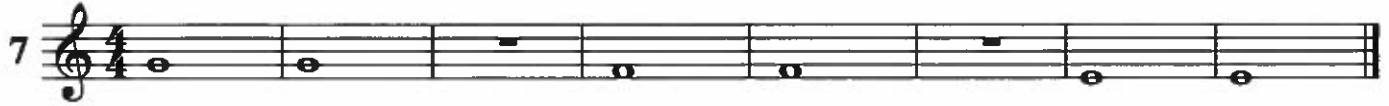
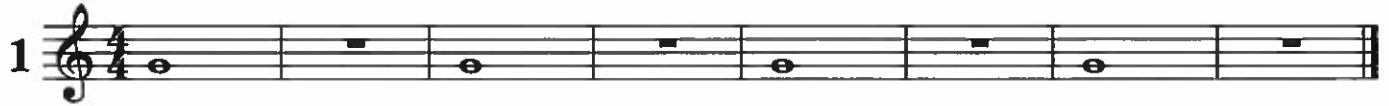
Practice 10 minutes, two times each day.

Class is every _____ and _____. Bring your instrument, music stand, book, and a pencil with you each time.

Remember, never let other people play your instrument. It is not a toy, take good care of it.

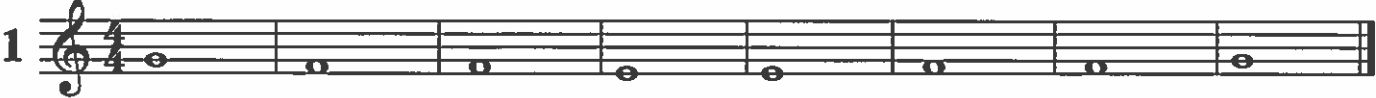
Band Sheet 1

Clarinet
Trumpet



Band Sheet 2

Clarinet
Trumpet

1 

2 


3 

4 

5 

6 

7 

8 

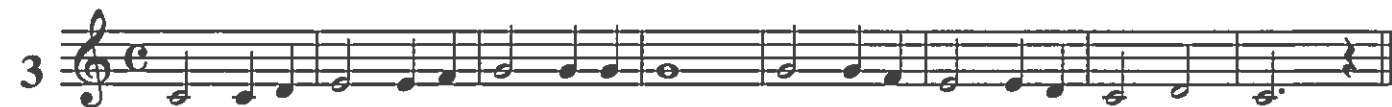
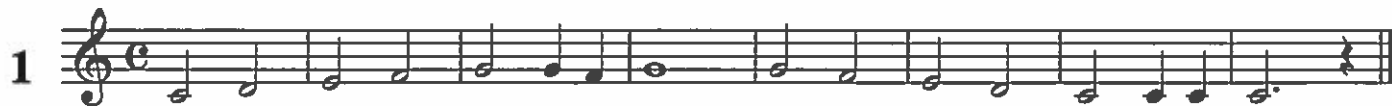
Band Sheet No. 3

Clarinet/Cornet



Band Sheet No. 4

Clarinet/Cornet



FLUTE

Checklist of Observable Behaviors

POSTURE

- Head is up and balanced between the shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed and over the hips
- Back is straight
- Feet are flat on the floor
- Body is on the front half and/or left corner of the chair

INSTRUMENT CARRIAGE

- Instrument is brought to the body not the body to the instrument
- Elbows are naturally away from the body
- Right wrist is straight
- Left wrist is slightly bent to allow for correct hand position
- Flute is parallel to the front plane of the face, neither pulled back or pushed out

HAND POSITION

- Fingers are curved with the fleshy part (pads) covering the center of the keys
- Right thumb is below the F or first trill key without extending beyond the flute
- Right pinky rests on or hovers above the Eb key
- Left index finger supports the flute between the bottom knuckle and first joint
- Left thumb is straight, hovering just above the B key
- Left pinky hovers over the Ab key

EMBOUCHURE

- Lower lip is relaxed and natural
- Lower lip covers a small portion of the embouchure hole
- Edge of the tone hole rests at the lip line
- Lip plate is parallel to the lips
- Aperture is an oval shape and is in the center of the lips
- Tone hole is centered with the aperture
- Cheeks are not puffed

TONGUE

- Tip of the tongue touches where the back of the top teeth meets the gums as if saying too
- Airstream remains constant
- Jaw does not move
- Tongue does not stop the sound

BREATHING

- Breath is through the mouth and is soundless
- Shoulders stay relaxed and do not rise
- Airstream is directed across the embouchure hole as if blowing on a candle 2 feet away
 - Direction of the air stream:
 - Low register – direct air downward (approximately 45°)
 - Middle register – direct air straight across tone hole
 - Upper register – direct air upward (approximately 45°)

MISCELLANEOUS

- When assembling the flute make sure the embouchure hole lines up with the center of the keys.
- Embouchure hole and fingernails should always face the ceiling.
- When two students share a stand, turn chairs inward so the students can keep proper posture.

CLARINET

Checklist of Observable Behaviors

POSTURE

- Head is up and balanced between the shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed and over the hips
- Back is straight
- Feet are flat on the floor
- Body is on the front half of the chair

INSTRUMENT CARRIAGE

- Instrument is brought to the body not the body to the instrument
- Elbows are naturally away from the body
- Wrists are straight
- Clarinet is centered with the body at approximately a 30 degree angle

HAND POSITION

- Fingers are curved with the fleshy part (pads) covering the tone holes
- Right thumb is beneath the thumb rest where the nail and skin meet
- Right pinky hovers over the F key
- Left thumb is straight, pointing towards 2 o'clock
- Left upper corner of thumb just touches the register key
- Left pinky hovers over the E key

EMBOUCHURE

- Lower lip is slightly over the bottom teeth
- Chin is down and flat
- Mouthpiece is up against the top teeth
- Corners of the mouth are in and firm
- Lips form a seal around the mouthpiece
- Cheeks are not puffed

TONGUE

- Tip of the tongue touches near the top of the reed as if saying too
- Airstream remains constant
- Jaw does not move
- Tongue does not stop the sound

BREATHING

- Breath is through the mouth and is soundless
- Mouthpiece stays in contact with the top teeth
- Shoulders stay relaxed and do not rise
- Airstream is fast and directed through the instrument

MISCELLANEOUS

- In the beginning stages, the ability to play Concert F# on the mouthpiece and barrel is a good indication of a well formed embouchure
- As the student progresses, the ability to play Concert C on the mouthpiece alone is a good indication of a well formed embouchure

SAXOPHONE

Checklist of Observable Behaviors

POSTURE

- Head is up and balanced between the shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed and over the hips
- Back is straight
- Feet are flat on the floor
- Body is on the front half of the chair

INSTRUMENT CARRIAGE

- Instrument is brought to the body not the body to the instrument
- Elbows are naturally away from the body
- Wrists are straight
- Mouthpiece angle is slightly below parallel
- Neck strap supports the weight of the instrument

HAND POSITION

- Fingers are curved with the fleshy part (pads) centered on the keys
- Right thumb is beneath the thumb rest where the nail and skin meet
- Right pinky hovers above the Eb key
- Left thumb is straight, pointing towards 2 o'clock
- Left upper corner of thumb just touches the octave key
- Left pinky hovers above the G# key

EMBOUCHURE

- Lower lip is slightly over the bottom teeth
- Chin is down and flat
- Mouthpiece is up against the top teeth
- Corners of the mouth are in and firm
- Lips form a seal around the mouthpiece
- Cheeks are not puffed

TONGUE

- Tip of the tongue touches near the top of the reed as if saying too
- Airstream remains constant
- Jaw does not move
- Tongue does not stop the sound

BREATHING

- Breath is through the mouth and is soundless
- Mouthpiece stays in contact with the top teeth
- Shoulders stay relaxed and do not rise
- Airstream is fast and directed through the instrument

MISCELLANEOUS

- In the beginning stages, the ability to play Concert G# on the mouthpiece and neck is a good indication of a well formed embouchure
- As a student progresses, the ability to play Concert A on the mouthpiece alone is a good indication of a well formed embouchure
- Center position is preferred.
 - When student is too small to maintain proper right hand position, it may be necessary to move the saxophone to the side of the right thigh. Correct carriage and posture must be maintained.

TRUMPET

Checklist of Observable Behaviors

POSTURE

- Head is up and balanced between the shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed and over the hips
- Back is straight
- Feet are flat on the floor
- Body is on the front half of the chair

INSTRUMENT CARRIAGE

- Instrument is brought to the body not the body to the instrument
- Elbows are naturally away from the body
- Wrists are straight
- Angle of the trumpet is parallel to the floor

HAND POSITION

- Right hand fingers are curved
- Pads of the right hand fingers rest on the valve caps
- Right hand thumb is up against the leadpipe between the first and second valves
- Right hand pinky rests on the finger hook
- Left hand supports the weight of the instrument
- Left ring finger is placed inside the finger ring
- Remaining left hand fingers and thumb are wrapped around valve casing

EMBOUCHURE

- Lips are as natural as possible as if saying the letter m
- Mouthpiece is centered vertically and horizontally
- Corners of the mouth are firm
- Chin is down and flat
- Cheeks are not puffed

TONGUE

- Tip of the tongue touches where the back of the top teeth meets the gums as if saying tah
- Airstream remains constant
- Jaw does not move
- Tongue does not stop the sound

BREATHING

- Breath is through the mouth and is soundless
- Shoulders stay relaxed and do not rise
- Airstream is fast and directed through the instrument

MISCELLANEOUS

- The only reasons to use the finger hook for holding the instrument are while placing a mute in the bell and/or turning pages.
- Pitch tendencies:
 - Concert B or written C# (fingered 1-2-3) is extremely sharp.
 - Concert C or written D (fingered 1-3) is sharp.
Both notes require the use of the 3rd valve slide.

TROMBONE

Checklist of Observable Behaviors

POSTURE

- Head is up and balanced between the shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed and over the hips
- Back is straight
- Feet are flat on the floor
- Body is on the front half of the chair

INSTRUMENT CARRIAGE

- Instrument is brought to the body not the body to the instrument
- Elbows are naturally away from the body
- Right wrist is flexible
- Left wrist is straight
- Trombone is angled slightly below parallel

HAND POSITION

- Right hand fingers are curved with palm facing the player
- Pads of the right hand thumb and first two fingers are in contact with the slide brace
- Left hand supports the weight of the instrument
- Left thumb is around the bell brace
- Left index finger rests on the mouthpiece receiver
- Remaining left hand fingers wrap around the cross bar

EMBOUCHURE

- Lips are as natural as possible as if saying the letter m
- Mouthpiece is centered vertically and horizontally
- Corners of the mouth are firm
- Chin is down and flat
- Cheeks are not puffed

TONGUE

- Tip of the tongue touches where the back of the top teeth meets the gums as if saying tah
- Airstream remains constant
- Jaw does not move
- Tongue does not stop the sound
- Legato tonguing technique should be used for non-natural slurs

BREATHING

- Breath is through the mouth and is soundless
- Shoulders stay relaxed and do not rise
- Airstream is fast and directed through the instrument

MISCELLANEOUS

- It is acceptable to switch an advanced high school player to bass trombone
- Students should not use their fingers to find slide positions
- Trigger should not become an automatic substitute for 6th and 7th positions

SNARE DRUM

Checklist of Observable Behaviors

POSTURE

- Head is up and balanced between the shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed and over the hips
- Back is straight
- Feet are flat on the floor shoulder width apart
- Elbows are slightly forward or even with sides of the body
- Forearm and elbow of each arm form an L shape to the instrument
- Elbows are comfortably away from the body (approximately 3 to 6 inches)

INSTRUMENT

- Instrument is parallel to the floor
- Height of the drum allows the forearms to be slightly below parallel
- "On – off" switch is directly in front of the player

GRIP

- Left and right hands mirror each other at all times
- Thumb is parallel to the stick
- Second joint of the index finger and thumb are the only things gripping the stick, with the index finger wrapped around the stick
- The three back fingers are close to the stick but do not touch
- The back of the hand remains parallel to the floor
- The pressure from the thumb and index finger is firm but never tight
- Grip is approximately 1/3 into the length of the stick

STROKE

- Strokes are even
- Stick height is 3, 6, or 9 inches
- Sticks form a 90 degree angle
- The head of the stick comes down approximately 1 inch above the center of the drum
- Wrists are relaxed and used to pull the sound out of the instrument

MISCELLANEOUS

- Insist that all percussion students purchase the same high quality oak stick, either:
 - Pro Mark 2B or
 - Vic Firth general
- Insist that beginning students rent or purchase a drum kit that includes:
 - A practice pad or snare drum on an adjustable stand
 - A set of high quality bells
- Matched grip has the advantage of transferring to all of the other percussion instruments and is currently advocated by most professionals
- Quarters can be placed on the backs of the hands to help maintain proper playing position
- Percussionists must learn to play both snare drum and mallets
- Always refer to your percussion players as "percussionists," not as "drummers"