

Instrument Selection Guide

Flute



The flute is the smallest of the beginner instruments. It is a very popular selection each year, but only a small portion of those wishing to play flute will be selected.

Physical Characteristics: Flute tones are produced by being able to focus an extremely small airstream to an exact location on the tone hole. The tear-drop-shaped lip will make it difficult to direct the air so precisely. Flute players should also have agile fingers for moving this multi-keyed instrument through a fast musical passage.

Other Considerations: Students with double-jointed fingers should avoid selecting flute as double-jointedness can cause lack of agility in the fingers.

Clarinet



The clarinet uses a "single reed" and a mouthpiece to produce the sound. Some clarinet students may be chosen to play Bass Clarinet as 7th graders.

Physical Characteristics: One necessity of clarinet tone production is the ability to make the chin flat. Orthodontia is okay, but if a student has an extremely rounded bottom row of teeth, the mouthpiece will be hard to place in the proper position for tone production.

Other Considerations: Instruction in clarinet can be meticulous. Students who are able to focus on and perform a detailed series of instructions could do well on clarinet. Clarinet players are also responsible for maintaining a working stock of 4-6 quality reeds. A box of 10 reeds costs \$17.50 and can last (with proper care) up to 4 months.

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Saxophone



The alto saxophone gives the impression of being both a brass AND woodwind instrument, however it is indeed considered a woodwind instrument. The alto saxophone (which uses a single reed like the clarinet) is a very popular instrument like flute and only a few students will be chosen to play it.

Physical Characteristics: Since the balance of the saxophone is maintained by the use of a neck strap, it is extremely important that students be able to sit up completely straight when asked to.

Other Considerations: Saxophone players are responsible for maintaining a working stock of 4-6 quality reeds. A box of 10 reeds costs \$23.00 and can last (with proper care) up to 4 months. Alto Saxophone students will have the opportunity after their first year of instruction to audition for Tenor Sax or Baritone Sax (based on their proven musical and behavioral abilities while playing alto saxophone).

Cornet / Trumpet



The cornet / trumpet is the smallest member of the brass family. The sound on cornet / trumpet is produced by buzzing into a small mouthpiece.

Physical Characteristics: While orthodontia is somewhat troublesome to a cornet / trumpet player, it is not impossible to make good sounds with braces.

Other Considerations: Cornet / trumpet parts usually have the melody (recognizable) part, therefore students who choose and are selected for cornet / trumpet should exhibit a confident demeanor, strong personality, and demonstrate a high level of self-motivation.

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Trombone



Trombone players should have good “musical ears”. The trombone is played like the other brass instruments (buzzing into a cup-shaped mouthpiece), but uses a slide instead of valves. The slide is not marked or notched and players rely on their memory and hearing to tell if they are in the EXACT proper location. Students with good musical ears should consider Trombone.

Physical Characteristics: While some might think that trombone players must have long arms, the truth is there are numerous accommodations that make it possible for students of all shapes and sizes to play.

Other Considerations: Great trombone playing takes good concentration and study. Many quiet academicians have excelled at trombone.