

WHOLE CLASS STUDENT BRASS YEAR 1

PREPARATION

The Preparation Level does not have any notation and is therefore not included in the books.

HOLDING THE INSTRUMENT

Scroll through the pictures to show the correct hold for each instrument. Click on an image to enlarge it. For a more in depth explanation, scroll down to the videos below the pictures.

MAKING A SOUND

We suggest doing this exercise with just the mouthpiece, to avoid all the distractions associated with holding an instrument for the first time. The focus is on buzzing to produce a sound, but doing this with the drum track is a good opportunity to introduce some musical basics, such as feeling the beat.

TONGUING A NOTE

This is a tongue twister if said fast enough, but here it is used to help differentiate the use of the tongue, lips and teeth in starting a note. You can say any phrase with normal tongue use, then without the tongue, and draw comparisons with clarity of speech and note production.

DURATION & PITCH

The students may have been introduced to these concepts at KS 1. Use the mouthpiece again without the instrument to buzz these exercises. It is extremely important for brass players to be able to distinguish differentiations in pitch.

Students may well need reminding about tonguing.

DYNAMICS

The class should feel and move to the beat. Encourage them to show the dynamic changes with arm movements like orchestral conductors. The backing track is very long - just use as much of it as you need.

The students should also try playing loudly and quietly on their instruments, conducted by the teacher or another student.

PULSE & RHYTHM

It is important to be consistent with the terminology, and not use beat and rhythm interchangeably. To help establish this differentiation, listen to the song, sing it, and then tap the underlying pulse/beat on the thighs. Then listen and sing again, clapping the rhythm of the words. Next, have half the class clapping the beat, while the other half claps the rhythm. Finally, buzz a line with the mouthpiece.

TEMPO

Have fun finding movements to show the tempo changes.

PREPARATION FOR READING MUSIC

We believe that students don't find reading music difficult if they are introduced to it from the outset, and that continually writing the note names into their books does them no favours in the long run. This exercise is designed to help them learn the difference between lines, ledger lines and spaces on the staff.

PLAYING A NOTE

Finally, for this level, the students try to get a clean, clear sound on their instruments.

The terms 'semibreve' and 'rest' will be introduced properly in the next level, but if you get the students to play for 4 beats and stay silent for 4 beats at this stage, they should find it easier to understand those terms when they encounter them properly in Level 1.

LEVEL 1

The lesson boxes on this page - like all the boxes on the site - are colour-coded. The orange ones are for treble clef instruments, while the teal coloured ones are for bass clef. Boxes which cater for all instruments, allowing bass and treble clef instruments to play together, are shown by a blend of orange and teal.

For this level, we provide 'Low' and 'Mid' versions of some of the exercises. This is because beginners are often only comfortable in either the lower or higher ranges of their instrument, and it is important that both groups are able to feel that they are succeeding from the outset.

The exercises follow the same pattern: the title identifies the learning outcome, there's a brief instruction and then usually a video-based exercise. The icons in the bottom right-hand corner of each video allow you to switch to full screen mode and also change the tempo.

FINDING THE NOTES

This exercise is the first in which the whole class attempts to play at the same pitch together. It is also an opportunity for you to identify which of your students are most comfortable in the low range and which find mid range easier. It is vitally important that they can see themselves starting to succeed in one of these ranges, and understand that it's ok to struggle with the other one at this stage.

Start with the Bb backing track. The highlighted instruments should play first, attempting to match the pitch they are hearing. Then all the other instruments can join in, attempting the same pitch using the fingering shown beneath the notes. Scroll down to repeat the exercise with the other backing tracks if you have Eb and F instruments in your class.

This exercise can look complicated at first sight, but the directions included in the videos should make everything clear. The class is likely to become bored and fidgety if the different sections are made to wait too long for their turn to play, so the aim is to enable everyone to be actively involved for most of the time. **Book page 1**

TIME SIGNATURES

This exercise is also a good opportunity to talk about bars, bar lines, accents, the first beat of the bar and whole bar rests. Follow the prompts in the videos. **This exercise is not in the books.**

SEMIBREVES, MINIMS & CROTCHETS

This is a fun piece performed without instruments, to help students internalise the rhythmic values. You might want to use the Kodály rhythm method for this. As there is no pitch notation, **this exercise is not in the books.**

IMPROVISING

We believe that students should be introduced to the idea of improvisation from the very beginning, even when they only know 2 notes. If this happens, they won't be daunted when required to improvise later in their musical careers.

We suggest playing the backing track and encouraging everyone to experiment at the same time, even though it will sound terrible! After that, you can get them to play their ideas singly or in small groups, or perhaps playing around a circle, with each student taking just 2 bars before the next one takes over. As there is no notation, **this exercise is not in the books.**

SEMIBREVES, NOTES & RESTS

The learning outcomes are to play 2 notes, correctly identifying the pitch, and to revise semibreves and whole bar rests, aiming for complete silence during the rests.

Treble clef books: these exercises are on pages 2 and 3. Pages 2b and 3b are bonus extras, not on the website, that enable the treble clef instruments to play together.

Bass clef books: these exercises are on pages 2 and 3.

MINIM NOTES & RESTS

The learning outcomes are to understand the time signature of 4/4, plus minim notes and rests.

The treble clef boxes include a tutti version to enable playing together in harmony for the first time. Bass clef instruments can join in using their books.

Treble clef books: these exercises are on pages 4 and 5. The tutti version is on page 5b.

Bass clef books: these exercises are on pages 4 and 5.

CROTCHETS - 2 NOTE WALTZ

The learning outcomes are to understand the time signature of 3/4, and to use crotchets and crotchet rests. **Treble and bass clef books: page 6 for Low and 7 for Mid.**

THE LONG NOTE CHALLENGE

This exercise does what it says on the tin! It is repeated at various points in the course. The count in at the start is good practice for coming in on time at the start of a piece. Each student is responsible for noting the time they have achieved - you can download a chart for them to make a note of this. The focus should be on whether a student is doing better each time, so that even low achievers have a sense of progression. **This exercise is not in the books.**

PLAYING IN PARTS - SKATERS' WALTZ

The first two boxes allow the students to practise the parts for their own clef, and then all the parts come together in box three. Draw attention to the repeat marks. **Book Page 8.**

PERFORMANCE - LENTO

All the levels finish with a performance piece which showcases what has just been learned. This one provides practice in observing whole bar rests. **Book page 9.**

LEVEL 2

From this point onwards, there is no separate mid range notation, as all students will hopefully be able to play the lower notes.

There are two sets of fingering for the french horns: one for those in F and one for the more unusual Bb ones. Despite their differences, both types of french horn should always use the same backing tracks, which are the ones in the key of F. If a french horn has a thumb trigger, it is called a double horn, and operating the trigger will switch it from F to Bb.

The Eb tuba now has separate notation. Any Bb tuba player still struggling with the lower notes could use the Eb tuba notation instead, although the fingering positions for this option have not been included.

FINDING THE NOTES

Notation and fingering for each note are shown for every instrument. Each student should look for the correct staff for their instrument and work their way across it.

Start with the Bb backing track. The highlighted instruments should play first, attempting to match the pitch they are hearing. Then all the other instruments can join in, attempting the same pitch using the fingering and slide positions shown on the staff. Scroll down to repeat the exercise with the other backing tracks if you have those instruments in your class.

Students with treble clef instruments will be learning C# and D, those in bass clef will learn B and C, and the new notes for Eb tubas are D and Eb. These notes will feature throughout Level 2. **Book page 10.**

WALKING

This tune is written to allow students to practise the new notes they have just learned. The new note for treble clef instruments, C#, features in the tune 'Moonbeams' later in this level.

The different parts take it in turn to play, to allow the individual sections to be heard clearly. The videos are highlighted to show when each group should play.

Students with bass clef instruments will need to look out for the key signatures and accidentals. **Book page 11.**

IMPROVISING

We have supplied a sample question, but feel free to use your own, or allow your students to think of new ones. **Book page 12.**

SIGHT READING (FUNKY BEAT)

Students should be taught to look at the music carefully before attempting to play it, assessing elements such as the key signature, note length and pitch, and the duration of rests.

The highlighting in the videos shows when each instrumental section should play. **Book page 13.**

PITCH MATCHING

At this stage in their musical career, most students are still some way from being able to accurately pitch their notes, so this exercise is designed to help with that. Instead of being told the name of the note to play, students listen and attempt to match the pitch they have just heard. The fingerings and slide positions required are shown in the charts. **Book page 14.**

MOON BEAMS

In this tune, treble clef instruments play the new note of C# for the first time. When the tutti version is played, each section changes key, so the change of key signatures will need to be noted. **Book pages 15 - 17.**

THE LONG NOTE CHALLENGE

This exercise does what it says on the tin! It is repeated at various points in the course. The count in at the start is good practice for coming in on time at the start of a piece. Each student is responsible for noting the time they have achieved - you can download a chart for them to make a note of this. The focus should be on whether a student is doing better each time, so that even low achievers have a sense of progression. **This exercise is not in the books.**

PERFORMANCE (LET THE SUN SHINE THROUGH)

All the levels finish with a performance piece which showcases what has just been learned. This is more challenging because the treble and bass clef instruments play contrasting parts in bars 5 – 9. **Book pages 18 & 19.**

LEVEL 3

FINDING THE NOTES

Notation, fingering and slide positions are shown for every instrument. Each student should look for the correct staff for their instrument, listen to the note and play it in the gap which follows.

Start with the Bb backing track. The highlighted instruments should play first, attempting to match the pitch they are hearing. Then all the other instruments can join in, attempting the same pitch using the fingering and slide positions shown on the staff. Scroll down to repeat the exercise with the other backing tracks if you have those instruments in your class.

Students with treble clef instruments will be learning A and E, Eb tubas will learn C and G, and the new notes for bass clef will be G and D. These notes will feature throughout Level 3. **Book page 20.**

ON PARADE

This tune is written to showcase the new notes for this level. It is an exercise in achieving accurate pitching through breath control and embouchure. **Book pages 21 - 23.**

PITCH MATCHING

Before doing this exercise, you should make sure your students understand the concept of semitones. The piano keyboard illustration is provided as an aid to explanation. **Book page 24.**

EASY DOES IT

Fingering and slide position guides are provided as a reminder - we suggest that students actually play them as an exercise rather than just using them for reference. **Book page 25.**

IMPROVISING

The backing for this exercise is a drum track, so any of the notes the students know will work, although we suggest restricting them to no more than 4 notes. With the harmony removed, the main focus is on note length and phrasing. The piece is called a march, so students should consider how they will need to play in order to achieve the appropriate feel.

In a large group it may be a good idea to limit each student to just 2 or 4 bars for their individual improvisation, before moving on to the next person. This is an exercise which can be repeated regularly, rather than done as a one-off. **Book page 26.**

TIME SIGNATURE - FAR AWAY

This tune introduces the concept of playing with the feel of 2 beats in a bar. It also provides the challenge of treble and bass sections playing independent parts. **Book page 27.**

A 5 NOTE MINOR SCALE

This exercise introduces the concept of a 5 note minor scale. **Book page 28.**

PERFORMANCE (POCO WALTZ)

All the levels finish with a performance piece which showcases what has just been learned. In this instance, the french horn has the tune. **Book page 29.**

LEVEL 4

FINDING THE NOTES

Notation, fingering and slide positions are shown for every instrument. Each student should look for the correct staff for their instrument, listen to the phrase and join in on the repeat.

Start with the Bb backing track. The highlighted instruments should play first, attempting to match the pitch they are hearing. Then all the other instruments can join in, attempting the same pitch using the fingering shown on the staff. Scroll down to repeat the exercise with the other backing tracks if you have those instruments in your class.

Students with treble clef instruments will be learning Bb, Eb and F, Eb tubas will learn Db, Gb and Ab, while the new notes for bass clef will be Ab, Db and Eb.

Watch out for the key signatures and accidentals. **Book page 30.**

SWAYING

Students play this tune in their own keys first, and then play it together in parts. The importance of looking at the key signature each time should be emphasised. **Book page 31.**

IMPROVISING

For the first time on this course, students will be improvising over a chord, so inaccurate pitching is likely to be an issue. As before we suggest that each student should play for just 2 or 4 bars before the next person takes their turn. **Book page 32.**

THERE AND BACK

In this tune, students encounter quavers for the first time. **Book pages 33 & 34.**

A 5 NOTE MAJOR SCALE

The differences between these major scales and the minor scales from Level 3 should be explored. Also note the inclusion of the arpeggio at the end of each scale. **Book page 35.**

MISS MARY MACK

As usual, everyone plays this tune in their own key to begin with - watch out for the key signatures and accidentals in the tutti version. **Book pages 36 & 37.**

There are many versions of this traditional tune on YouTube.

SIGHT READING

The first exercise focuses the students on the rhythm, without the distraction of having to consider pitch at the same time. Then they look at the pitch, and finally play the whole piece together. **Book page 38.**

THE LONG NOTE CHALLENGE

This exercise is exactly the same as before, and is **not in the books.**

PERFORMANCE (PEASE PUDDING HOT)

All the levels finish with a performance piece which showcases what has just been learned. Watch out for the change of feel on the second time through. **Book pages 39 - 42.**