

PERCUSSION

Students who have an interest in the drums must also learn to play bells. The reason for this is that students who already read music are easily bored by the simple drum parts of elementary band music and students who do not already read music have difficulty learning to read music from drum parts. By starting out with bells, students learn to read musical notation and get accustomed to using mallets. These skills adapt readily to playing the drums later on in the school year.



Now that you've read about each instrument, it's time to choose which one you'd like to learn in the fall! Complete the enrolment form found in the band handbook and return it to your classroom teacher.



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Which
Instrument is
Right for Me?

Choosing the right instrument

Now's your chance to join the school band and the biggest question on your mind is "which instrument should I play?" Here is a brief overview of the instruments available and the pros and cons of each:

FLUTE

The flute can be a straightforward instrument to learn, but some children have difficulty getting the flute to produce a sound. This can be very discouraging for a beginner. In order to make a good clear sound on the flute it is essential to be able to form the lips so that there is a small oval opening centered between the two lips. Some people have a small dip in the center of the upper lip which makes it difficult to form a good flute *embouchure*. The fingerings for flute in beginning band are also a bit tricky and flute players are advised to spend a fair bit of time at the beginning practicing moving the fingers from one note to another until it becomes easy.



CLARINET

The clarinet is an easy instrument to start on. The fingerings are very similar to the recorder and producing a sound on the instrument is usually not too difficult. The clarinet becomes more challenging as the year progresses. Clarinet players learn more notes than any other of the band instruments during the first year meaning that they have more fingerings to remember. They also have to place their fingers carefully on the instrument to cover the holes or the instrument will produce a shrill squeak!



SAXOPHONE

The saxophone is one of the easiest beginning instruments to learn. The fingerings are almost identical to the recorder and the instrument has pads to cover the holes so they don't squeak the way a clarinet can. Occasionally students with small hands have trouble reaching the keys, but rarely on the smaller alto sax.



TRUMPET

The trumpet is a fairly straight forward brass instrument. In order to produce a sound on a brass instrument, students must be able to pro-

duce a buzzing sound with their lips. Some children have difficulty doing this and as a result their trumpet playing is restricted to only a few low notes. With hard work this can be overcome, but it can be very discouraging for the young musician. All brass players need to have a musical ear as the same fingerings will produce different pitches and they must rely on their ear to let them know if they are playing the correct note.



TROMBONE

The trombone is similar to a trumpet in difficulty. The slide has seven positions. Trombone players need to have a good musical ear in order to know if they are on the correct note and if they are playing it in tune.



Did you know...

Research shows when the arts are included in a student's curriculum, reading, writing and math scores improve.