WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

This Curriculum Guide is designed to prepare, reinforce, and extend learning concepts and ideas from the MPR Class Notes video Finding the Right Instrument for You: The Woodwind Family.

The information and activities in the Guide are intended to make music come alive and to align with Minnesota Standards in Music Education. We hope you will personalize, modify, or adjust content to meet the needs of your unique classroom.

This is one of four Class Notes videos covering the instrument families of the orchestra. The other three can be found here: http://www.classicalmpr.org/topic/class-notes-videos

PREPARING TO WATCH THE VIDEO

Just as literacy teachers use pre-reading strategies, music teachers can use pre-listening and pre-watching strategies. This helps students create a mental framework in which to organize new ideas, relate new content to prior knowledge, and make connections. What you bring to a listening experience will affect what you hear and take away from that experience.
1. Check to ensure student understanding of the idea of adjectives. Preview a couple of key vocabulary words that will be included in the woodwinds video, such as bird-like, pure, piercing, and consoling.

2. If these are new vocabulary for the students, spend a little time on definitions and usage.

3. Use adjectives to describe the sound of individual instruments. Connect with language arts teachers to incorporate and reinforce content from literacy units. Create a chart to structure and organize this activity. Use this as an opportunity to introduce unfamiliar instruments. Select instruments for the chart to suit your own needs. Feel free to customize and create one for each instrument family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CELLO</th>
<th>OBOE</th>
<th>HORN</th>
<th>GLOCKENSPIEL</th>
<th>CYMBALS</th>
<th>FLUTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>resonant</td>
<td>piercing</td>
<td>buttery</td>
<td>glistening</td>
<td>splashy</td>
<td>airy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Make a second chart specific to woodwind instruments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLARINET</th>
<th>FLUTE</th>
<th>BASSOON</th>
<th>OBOE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reedy</td>
<td>airy</td>
<td>nasal</td>
<td>piercing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Or create a chart with the bottom box blank. Listen to examples of each instrument and ask students to supply their own adjectives and descriptions.

4. Listen to a wide variety of woodwind music. In addition to the woodwind instruments most commonly included in the orchestra, such as flute and clarinet, include woodwind instruments not always associated with the orchestra, like saxophone. Comparing and contrasting a wide variety of instruments helps build sound differentiation skills. Continue to use adjectives in classroom discussions before, after, and during viewing/listening:
a. Flute

*Syrinx* by Claude Debussy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEyKM13yf_4

And the flute paired with Baroque instruments:
“Minuet and Badinerie” from *Suite BWV 1067* by J.S. Bach:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sAh02JRtpk

This clip pairs well with two other Classical MPR videos: *Class Notes: What’s in a Title?* and *Class Notes: Freeing Music Improvisation*

http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2014/09/19/class-notes-whats-in-a-title

http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2014/09/19/class-notes-freeing-music-improvisation

And here are two examples of a more recent trend in flute playing-flute performance integrated with beat boxing, otherwise known as beatbox flute:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crfrKqFp0Zg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6SHsF1n9Qw

b. Piccolo

A few choices:
*Superscriptio*, Brian Ferneyhough (solo piccolo)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2wBFWwJBNA

*Zungenspitzentanz*, Karl Stockhausen (solo piccolo)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4x2IN5gBj4

TWEET, by Daniel Dorff
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kc8WZbAWE1w
c. Clarinet

Start with the iconic clarinet that begins George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJs6xaBHGiI

Then a little bit of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YYc-S2UDZA

Or a few minutes of this, if you want to hear a contemporary sound and some unconventional techniques:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IXPdLFslJo

And here’s Steve Reich’s *New York Counterpoint*, written for eleven clarinetists!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbjYdWSXLKM

d. Bass Clarinet

Here’s a nice introduction to the instrument:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSZtX3WHF_E

The Reich example above includes both clarinet and bass clarinet.
e. Oboe

Here’s “Gabriel’s Oboe” by Ennio Morricone:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WJhax7Jmxs

Or the haunting melody from Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDhq70yrtI

f. Bassoon

Here’s a bassoon quartet playing some Dave Brubeck:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKBrnjxIKgU

This is the beginning of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, which features the bassoon playing much higher than its usual range:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xfg9lIXhcPk
g. Contrabassoon

Here’s an overview (and some good camera shots) of the instrument.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVAe7YBUc6c

This clip of Kalevi Aho’s contrabassoon concerto is too long to watch in its entirety and it doesn’t include a musician playing the instrument. However, the music is unique and haunting and perfectly captures the instrument’s almost otherworldly timbre and sound.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVAe7YBUc6c

h. Saxophone

Listen to each kind of saxophone, and point out the alignment with voice types.

Soprano: Song for a Form Carved by Water, Christopher Adler (soprano sax, contrabass)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksO3F07KZAc

Alto:  
Wings, Joan Tower (solo alto saxophone)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rujr6cD3E_s

Fuzzy Bird Sonata, I. Run, Bird. Takashi Yoshimatsu (solo alto saxophone, piano)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QImHOYHUuu4

Tenor:  
Tenor Madness, Sonny Rollins (tenor saxophone, jazz ensemble)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S46dhVcYWpY

Baritone:  
Czardas, Vittorio Monti (baritone saxophone, piano)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDTwWacoXd4

And be sure to include at least one ensemble piece, like this one.

Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra, Mvt. I, Philip Glass (soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, orchestra)
i. English horn, also known as the cor anglais:
   Featured here as a soloist with the orchestra in the slow movement of Dvořák’s Symphony #9.
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HhrxVx1Ztc

   And a good overview of the instrument: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpSwkoR0Dlo

REINFORCE IDEAS AND CONCEPTS FROM THE VIDEO THROUGH ACTIVE LEARNING

1. Play “Pin-the-Instrument-on-the-Orchestra.”

   Start by posting an orchestra chart, like this one from Wikimedia Commons. Find pictures of individual instruments that students can literally cut and post onto the correct place on the diagram. Focus on woodwind instruments to align with video content.

(See following page.)
2. Explore the mechanism and science of woodwind instruments.


This experiment will help students understand how the vibration of a mouthpiece creates and influences sound.

b. Continue the exploration by using actual reeds to make your own version of a woodwind instrument. You will need:

- A double reed
- Masking tape
- A large box of straws- preferably the non-bendable kind
- Scissors

Activities:

- Wet the reed to make it moist for playing.
- Attach the bottom part of the reed (cork) to a straw with masking tape. Be sure the seal is complete. Though single reeds are traditionally easier to play, the size of an oboe mouthpiece/reed makes it more suitable for this activity.
- Once the mouthpiece is attached to the straw, blow in it to produce a sound. Experiment a little bit to work on getting a consistent sound.
- Play your “straw oboe” for students. Ask a volunteer to come up and start snipping off small sections of straw as you continue to blow. Students will hear the pitch go up as the length of the straw gets shorter. Take this opportunity to
explain that on a real woodwind instrument, the player is constantly lengthening and shortening the tube (and thus changing the pitch) by pressing different combinations of keys.

- To repeat the exercise, re-construct your instrument after the straw has been snipped short. Since reeds are difficult to disinfect, it is recommended that teachers play the straw oboe and that students perform the snipping duties.

3. Play “Woodwind Charades.” Students think of a wood instrument and “act it out.” This might be challenging do the similarities in physical posture required to play several of these woodwind instruments, such as the English horn and the oboe.

Another variation would be to do a listening game in which students have to distinguish between sound clips of various woodwind instruments. Start easy-flute vs. contrabassoon. Get progressively more challenging by asking students to distinguish between clarinet and bass clarinet (good reinforcement for high/low pitch recognition) or flute and piccolo.

EXTEND LEARNING WITH PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Explore the role of size in relation to pitch. Comparing the similar shape but different size of several woodwinds is a great illustration of how size affects pitch. Looking at, listening to, and comparing the flute and piccolo is an easy example of this. Extend by comparing and contrasting the size, shape, and sound of all four types of saxophones.

2. Learn about the evolution of woodwind instrument throughout history. Begin with explaining the premise that all woodwinds basically derived from the simple idea that you can create a sound by blowing across an open tube (flutes) or by cupping and blowing on a blade of grass (reed instruments). Here are a few good websites that expand on the history and evolution of wind instruments:
http://mkwhistles.com/mkshop/history-of-wind-instruments


And this one includes history of both woodwinds and brass:
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/645041/wind-instrument/53806/Early-history

3. Interview a woodwind player. Find someone in your community who plays a woodwind instrument—a teacher, a student, a parent, a friend. Ask how he or she got started playing an instrument. How often does he/she practice? What’s fun about playing the instrument? What’s challenging? What’s a favorite piece to play and why?

STANDARDS

The content of Finding the Right Instrument for You: The Woodwind Family deals most directly with identifying tone color/timbre, which aligns with the following Minnesota Standard in Music Education.

1. Grades 4 – 5. 1. Artistic Foundations. 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 4.1.1.3.1. Describe the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, for and their related concepts.

The comparison of sounds and pieces of music aligns most closely with the following Minnesota Standard in Music Education.
1. Grades 4 – 5. 4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique. 1. Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using the artistic foundations. Music. 4.4.1.3.1. Justify personal interpretations and reactions to a variety of musical works or performances.