

# Specific Instrument Considerations

## 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 players should have a slight “frown” to the upper lip with NO teardrop shape in the middle. 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. Students with extreme overbites (receded jaw) should avoid choosing flute as this makes it difficult to produce quality sounds.

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



## Clarinet

Unlike the oboe, the clarinet uses a “single reed” and a mouthpiece to produce the sound. Willingness to purchase or rent a good quality clarinet is a MUST! Unfortunately, there are some clarinets on the market whose poor design and craftsmanship will make it next to impossible for your student to succeed.

**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 ability to produce a good sound is limited at best.

**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. Students who have difficulty remembering a series of instructions should avoid playing clarinet. Clarinet players are also responsible for maintaining a working stock of 4-6 quality reeds. A box of 10 reeds costs \$20.00 and can last (with proper care) up to 4 months.



## Alto 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 students with the best potential at the fitting night 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 \$25.00 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 with alto saxophone class).



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## 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 troublesome to a cornet / trumpet player, it is not impossible to make good sounds with braces. A slight overbite is okay, but an underbite can severely hinder progress on cornet / trumpet. Cornet / trumpet players come in all shapes and sizes.

**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.



## Trombone

Like the French horn, 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.

**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. A slight overbite is acceptable, while an extreme underbite would hinder success. Trombone players should have slightly fuller lips than average.

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



## Euphonium (Baritone)

The euphonium is sometimes known as the baritone. It is a member of the brass family and looks like a small version of a tuba. It’s sound is similar to that of a trombone, but it uses valves like a trumpet instead of a slide (like trombone).

**Physical Characteristics:** Euphonium players should have moderately full lips, but not too full. A slight overbite is okay, but an underbite would hinder a good sound. The euphonium requires a medium-sized hand span to reach the valves and students should have an above average lung capacity.

**Other Considerations:** Students with a lot of orthodontia will find the mouthpiece of the euphonium a bit more comfortable than trumpet or French horn. Rental euphoniums are available at our music vendor. Discovery may be able to provide a euphonium to some students at a cost of \$50 rental for an entire school year.



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After the first year, each student will be evaluated to make sure they are on the best instrument for him or her.

Also, for a few outstanding students, there will be an opportunity to switch to select instruments for the second semester or next year. These instruments are:

- Oboe
- Bassoon
- French Horn
- Bass Clarinet
- Percussion

Remember, have **three** instruments in mind that you would like to try! (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice)

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