



ELEMENTARY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC!



Trombone

Weekly Focus: Articulation: separating pitches

Articulation is the word we use to describe if a group of notes is played separated or smooth. How do we play notes that sound crisp and clear or smooth and connected? When we understand how our breath, combined with the placement and rhythmic movement of our tongue creates either separated or smooth sounding pitches.

Explanation of Lesson Focus:

We are going to focus on how to play notes with articulation that is separated. This is a very important skill for any brass player. Notes that sound crisp, clear and separated are what we should hear. We are going to use exercises and songs that have the following rhythmic units in the picture below:



The first pitch you know is a quarter note. The other two pitches connected by the horizontal beam are two eighth notes. There are many ways to think about these rhythms, but I like to use the syllables “du” and “du-deh” because 1) they help you think about what the rhythm sounds like *before you play*; 2) they put your lips and tongue in the correct shape for playing notes that sound separated. Remember: a “du” = one sound on a beat; a “du-deh” is two sounds on one beat.

Warm Up

A great warm-up for getting ready to play separated notes is buzzing on your mouthpiece. Buzz some long sounds; buzz some high sounds; buzz some low sounds. Then we will *sing, buzz and play* the following exercise:

SING, BUZZ, PLAY



Sing it: use the DU, DU-DEH syllables and pay attention to how your tongue moves inside your mouth as you say each syllable. **This is important.** You should notice that each syllable is **separated** when the tip of your tongue quickly taps the top of your mouth right behind your two front teeth.

Buzz it: take your mouthpiece and buzz the exercise. Your tongue should be moving the same way to separate the syllables, **but you will need more air to buzz your lips.** Remember: **your tongue stops and starts the air to create notes that are separated and clear.** Don't stop and start the air. This will create an unfocused buzz. Blow one breath and use your tongue to DU, DU-DEH the exercise not HUFF PUFF the rhythm.

Play it: put your mouthpiece on your trombone and play the exercise. Notes should sound crisp and clear and **separated if your tongue is doing the right movement.**

Musical excerpts

We will begin by playing #46 **Jim Along Josie** on p. 13 (see below). *Before you play, sing it and buzz it **first** like you did with the warm-up exercise.*

#46 Jim Along Josie



Standard of Excellence, Book 1 for Trombone by Bruce Pearson, c. 2006 Neil A. Kjos.

Next play #48 **Go Tell Bill** on p. 13 (see below). Follow the same steps of *sing, buzz then play.*

#48 Go Tell Bill



Standard of Excellence, Book 1 for Trombone by Bruce Pearson, c. 2006 Neil A. Kjos.

As you play **really listen for separated notes**. If your notes don't sound separated or the rhythm seems unclear or fuzzy, make sure your tongue is separating the air on the way to your lips.

Practice Strategies:

I like to think about practicing by using the word **BRASS**. Each letter represents a concept you should try to do every time you practice:

B- buzz and breath. Warm-up by buzzing on your mouthpiece only and always blow with warm, fast, air.

R- repetition and rest. Always play exercises, warm-ups and small sections of bigger songs many times and make sure you rest your lips.

A- articulation and agility. Tongue notes; slur notes and do lip slurs to keep your lip muscles in shape.

S- sing it! Try and sing your music before you play it. If you can sing it, you can play it.

S- share it! After you learn a song, share it with family and friend

MUSIC VIDEO LESSONS

For Trombone Lessons, go to Seattle Public Schools YouTube site.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SeattlePublicSchoolsTV>

Trombone lesson developed by Ken Pendergrass at, Fairmount Park Elementary