Weekly Focus: Articulation: Connecting 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 and lips 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 connected. This is a very important skill for any brass player and is tricky for trombone players. Notes that sound connected are achieved with something we call a slur and is notated in music with a curved line that connects two or more notes of different pitches. That really doesn’t give us enough information to play slurs due to our slide. We’ll start by doing lip slurs where we just use our lips to move between two pitches. Then we’ll do regular slurs making sure to lightly tongue as we move the slide between two different pitches.

Warm Up
Let’s begin by playing some lip slurs from p. 39, Standard of Excellence, Book 1 for Trombone by Bruce Pearson, c. 2006 Neil A. Kjos. Play 54A and B by staying in first position and moving your lips only to change pitches.

You can do more lips slurs by starting in 1st position with the attached sheet Trombone Lip Slurs.

Now to prepare for a regular slur, play exercises #54 C, D, E, F below by tonguing the first note marked with a Tu, and lightly tonguing the second pitch marked with a du. This light tongue is called legato tonguing. Be careful not to glissando the notes marked with a slur. You can avoid this by lightly tonguing as you move the slide to the second pitch. It takes careful practice not to glissando when you do a regular slur.
Musical excerpt

Now play Good King Wenceslas (from p. 9, Standard of Excellence, Book 1 for Trombone by Bruce Pearson, c. 2006 Neil A. Kjos.) two different ways:
First with no slurs as written.

Second, with the slurs written in. Do your legato tonguing on the pitches marked with a \textit{d}. Avoid making a glissando and sounding like a circus trombone.
Trombone Lip Slurs

\( \text{\textit{Trombone Lip Slurs}} \)

\( \text{\textit{1st position}} \)

\( \text{\textit{2nd position}} \)

\( \text{\textit{3rd position}} \)

\( \text{\textit{4th position}} \)

\( \text{\textit{5th position}} \)

\( \text{\textit{6th position}} \)

\( \text{\textit{7th position}} \)