

Course Content - Brass Instruments

Introduction to Brass Instruments

- Instruments are considered to belong in the Brass family if they make their sounds because of vibrations from the mouth and a mouthpiece.
- Brass instruments are not necessarily made of brass. For example, the Digeridoo is a brass instrument made of wood.
- The shape of the tube in a brass instrument is called a bore. The size and shape of the bore creates the sound of the instrument.
- There are two shapes of bores: Cylindrical and Conical.
- A Cylindrical bore stays the same width from beginning to end. A Conical bore gets wider as it progresses.
- The very end of a brass instrument is called the Bell.
- The two brass families are the Valved and Slide families. The only instrument in the slide family is the Trombone.
- Valves on brass instruments are used to change the note by changing the size or length of the tube.

Large and Medium Sized Brass Instruments

- The largest instrument in the brass family is the Tuba. It plays the lowest notes.
- The Sousaphone was invented to replace the Tuba in a marching band. It is designed to be carried.
- Sousaphones are often made of lightweight fiberglass.
- One of the oldest brass instruments is the Trombone. The slide of the trombone controls the notes instead of valves.
- The French horn is the only brass instrument that is played left-handed.

Music in Life Lesson:

The Music in Life lesson is a moment to engage in active listening. The Music in Life lesson song for this course is "Flight of the Bumblebee" by Canadian Brass. Students are invited to think about how the music makes them feel, think, and move. Music is an individual experience; active listening encourages students to choose their own musical path.

Small Brass Instruments

- The Coronet was commonly used in military bands during the Civil War.
- One of the most popular brass instruments is the Trumpet.
- The bell on the Tenor Horn is different from other instruments, it points up rather than out, giving it a softer, smoother sound.
- The smallest brass instrument is the Piccolo Trumpet. It plays the highest notes.
- A Mute is a plunger that goes in the bell of brass instruments to make interesting sounds.
- The sound of the teacher in the "Peanuts" Cartoons is a muted Trombone.

Brass Instruments in Contemporary Music

- The Brevis Brass Band is a band from Russia that plays brass arrangements of contemporary music.
- The Wynton Marsalis Group is a jazz band that uses mutes in their music.
- The All-American College Band is a marching band made up of college students from all over the country that gather to play at Disneyland.
- Tina Ting Helsing was 7 years old when she started playing the Trumpet, she is one of the best trumpet players in the world.
- The Dirty Catfish Brass Band is a super fun band from Canada. We saw them in our course playing a version of "Shake it Off" by Taylor Swift.