

## *How to Choose an Instrument ...*

Choosing a musical instrument can be a big challenge, especially with the wide range of choices available. While there is no guarantee that a student will like an instrument when they first try it, here are some helpful things to consider when choosing:

- **Age** is one of the most important factors because students often need to be a certain size, or have adequate physical strength, dexterity and coordination, or breath support to play the instrument.
- A student's **personality** is also very important because some instruments, like the piano, tend to be more solitary, while others can include a more social element (such as participating in ensembles, bands, or orchestras).
- Another important element is the **sound** of the instrument. Students of all ages are often attracted to an instrument's unique sound, which is a good indication that they will be more motivated to want to learn how to play.

No matter which instrument you choose, you will be gaining valuable foundational skills which can be applied to any type of music study.

*Read descriptions and watch videos of the instruments in action:*

### **Bass (Ages 6+)**

The bass is the backbone of every ensemble. Whether it's upright (acoustic) or electric, playing classical, jazz or rock, the bass holds every group together, rhythmically and harmonically.

- ▶ [Jazz String Bass](#)
- ▶ [Classical String Bass](#)
- ▶ [Electric Bass](#)

### **Bassoon (Ages 9+)**

This distinctive double-reed instrument is the lowest-pitched member of the woodwind family and is always in demand for student and professional ensembles.

- ▶ [Bassoon](#)

### **Cello (Ages 6+)**

This beautiful bowed string instrument is played in a sitting position and shares the same family as the violin or viola but has thicker and longer strings. Cellos are available in different sizes to accommodate the student's size.

- ▶ [Cello](#)

## Clarinet (Ages 9+)

Cover the holes, blow through the reed, and you're off! A bit less physically demanding than its woodwind cousin, the saxophone, with a quieter and more focused sound. The clarinet is very versatile and can be played in concert and marching bands, orchestra, or jazz band.

- ▶ [Classical Clarinet](#)
- ▶ [Jazz Clarinet](#)

## Drums / Percussion (Ages 7+)

There's more to the drums than just banging away! Learn proper technique and how to keep a steady beat while adding color and texture, in every musical style. Other instruments in the percussion family offer a variety of sounds to explore from xylophone and marimba, to jazz vibes and timpani.

- ▶ [Jazz Drums](#)
- ▶ [Rock Drums](#)
- ▶ [Timpani](#)
- ▶ [Marimba & Vibraphone / Percussion Ensemble](#)

## Euphonium (Ages 9+)

Like a small tuba with valves (buttons), euphonium is an instrument in high demand in concert bands, brass ensembles, and orchestras.

- ▶ [Euphonium](#)

## Flute (Ages 9+)

Playing a note on this woodwind instrument is a little bit like making a sound blowing over the top of a glass bottle, with keys that change the pitch by shortening and lengthening the air column. Flutes are featured in concert and marching bands, orchestras, and even flute orchestras.

- ▶ [Flute](#)

## French Horn (Ages 9+)

With about 20 feet of narrow tubing wound into a circle, this brass instrument produces a warm, majestic sound. The horn is typically featured in concert bands and orchestras.

- ▶ [French Horn](#)

## Guitar (Ages 4+)

Guitar can be played in almost every musical style, in solo or group settings. Learn chords, melodies, improvisation, strumming, fingerpicking, and more.

- ▶ [Classical Guitar](#)
- ▶ [Jazz Guitar](#)
- ▶ [Rock Guitar](#)

## **Harp (Ages 7+)**

One of the most ancient of all instruments, the harp is considered a string instrument that is plucked with the fingers. Harps come in different sizes and types, and they are versatile instruments that can be played as a solo, or with many other instruments.

▶ [Harp](#)

## **Harpsichord (Ages 7+)**

This early cousin of the piano, the harpsichord's internal mechanism plucks one or more strings with a small quill, instead of using hammers to strike the strings.

▶ [Harpsichord](#)

## **Oboe / English Horn (Ages 9+)**

These two are similar double-reed instruments, roughly the size of the clarinet but with a brighter, more penetrating sound. Oboes and English horn players are often in demand, and participate in concert bands and orchestras.

▶ [Oboe](#)

## **Piano (Ages 5+)**

The foundational instrument of western music, piano study can last a lifetime and is often a gateway instrument to other musical experiences.

▶ [Classical Piano](#)

▶ [Jazz Piano](#)

## **Recorder (Ages 5+)**

An easy introduction to music making - and great for all ages and many styles of music.

▶ [Classical Recorder](#)

▶ [Recorder Ensemble](#)

▶ [Jazz Recorder](#)

## **Saxophone (Ages 9+)**

This woodwind instrument is most commonly played in jazz settings, but can play a leading role in classical, pop, and other styles of music as well.

▶ [Jazz Saxophone](#)

▶ [Classical Saxophone](#)

## **Trombone (Ages 9+)**

This low brass instrument has a telescoping mechanical slide, and different notes are played by changing the embouchure (lips), air pressure, and slide position.

- ▶ [Classical Trombone](#)
- ▶ [Jazz Trombone](#)

## **Trumpet (Ages 9+)**

Trumpets are the highest instrument in the brass family, and are commonly found in groups playing all different types of music. From solo to jazz band, to concert band or orchestra, this instrument is one of the most versatile in the brass family.

- ▶ [Classical Trumpet](#)
- ▶ [Jazz Trumpet](#)

## **Tuba (Ages 9+)**

The tuba is the largest and lowest-pitched instrument in the brass family. Great for everything from classical repertoire to “oom-pah”! A high demand instrument in ensembles across many musical styles.

- ▶ [Tuba](#)

## **Ukulele (Ages 5+)**

Ukulele is both a great starter instrument and one that you can truly master easily. Excellent for singing along, ukulele can be easier than guitar in learning chords to accompany yourself or others.

- ▶ [Ukulele](#)

## **Vibraphone / Marimba (Ages 7+)**

The vibraphone has tuned metal bars, and is usually played by holding two or four soft mallets and striking the bars, while the marimba’s bars are wooden. Both of these instruments are usually featured in orchestras but may also perform in jazz and concert bands.

- ▶ [Jazz Vibraphone](#)
- ▶ [Marimba Ensemble](#)

## **Viola (Ages 5+)**

This string instrument has a slightly larger frame and lower tone than a violin, and is in demand in orchestras and chamber ensembles everywhere. Like the violin, violas come in different sizes to accommodate the student.

- ▶ [Viola](#)

## **Violin (Ages 4+)**

Informally known as the fiddle, the violin is the smallest, highest-pitched, and most widely played bowed string instrument. A most adaptable instrument, the violin can play music of all styles and ensemble combinations.

- ▶ [Classical Violin](#)

- ▶ [Fiddle Duo](#)

## **Voice (Ages 13+)**

There's so much more to singing than belting out a tune or just singing on pitch! When studying voice professionally, students learn to truly master their instrument by building proper breath support, learning about diction, and mastering various languages and styles.

- ▶ [Classical Voice](#)

- ▶ [Musical Theater - Voice](#)