

Norman Public Schools

MUSIC ASSESSMENT
GUIDE

FOR
GRADE 7

2013-2014

NPS ARTS ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Grade 7

MUSIC

This guide is to help teachers incorporate the Arts into their core curriculum. Students in grades 3-8 will take the NPS Arts Assessment test during the spring semester of the 2013-2014 school year. In order to give students the necessary skills to succeed, we have prepared a study guide for teachers. This should give teachers the necessary knowledge of the arts to pass on to their students.

The areas for testing in the 2013-2014 school year will come only from **Standard I** of the Priority Academic Student Skills for **Music**.

Standard I: 7th Grade

Language of Music-The student will read, notate, and interpret music.

The areas covered on the seventh grade test include:

- 1) Elements of Music
- 2) Pitch Terms
- 3) Dynamics Terms
- 4) Notational Terms and Symbols
- 5) Instrument Families
- 6) Vocal Classifications

1) Elements of Music-These are the basic building blocks of music. They are listed below with definitions and simple illustrations.

***Pitch**-the highness or lowness of a sound. A very small instrument like a flute will play generally high pitches. A large instrument such as a tuba will play very low pitches.

***Melody**-a succession or pattern of musical pitches. Arranging these pitches creates a specific tonal and rhythmic succession of sounds that makes each piece recognizable and expresses a musical idea or tune. Basically, arranging pitches in certain rhythms gives you a melody. If you ask a student to whistle "Boomer Sooner," the tune they whistle is a **melody**.

***Rhythm**-the term that denotes the organization of sound in time or the proportion or duration of notes. If you listen to a piece of music and clap every time a note starts, the pattern of your clapping is the **rhythm** of the piece. It is important to notice the difference between rhythm and tempo. Rhythm is the pattern of individual notes, while tempo is the speed of the music. To determine rhythm, you clap every time a note starts. To find the tempo, you find a constant beat, like clapping along at a rock concert.

***Tempo**-Is the speed or pace of the music. If you clap along to a band at a rock concert, the steady, constant beat you clap is the **tempo**. This is different from rhythm, which is the pattern of individual notes.

***Form**-the organization of its sections of repetition, contrast, variation or development. Form in music is like form in poetry. If you have a poem with two similar lines and then one very different line, you could call its form AAB. The same is true of music. Form organizes the piece into large sections according to similarity and difference.

***Tone Color**-is also referred to as timbre. This is the quality of sound of an instrument or voice. If James Brown and Josh Groban record the same song, they will sound very different. Part of this is because Groban has a very clear tone color, while Brown's is much raspier.

***Dynamics**-varying degrees of loud and soft. Basically, dynamics in music deal with volume and changes in volume. (There is more on this in the dynamics section-Section 3).

***Harmony**-refers to music where two or more tones sound together. Just as "living in harmony" involves multiple people co-existing, musical harmony deals with multiple pitches and the way they work together.

2) Pitch Terms

***High and Low Pitch**-Students need to understand the terms high and low. This seems like a self-explanatory concept, but some actually need some concrete examples. I would suggest having the band or orchestra director at your school have a couple of their students demonstrate high and low pitches.

***In Tune**-when pitches are accurately produced in performance. The sound is neither sharp (too high) nor flat (too low), it **exactly** matches the intended pitch.

***Out of Tune**-when pitches are slightly inaccurate in performance. Generally speaking, this occurs when musicians are a little sharp (higher) or flat (lower) than the exact pitch. This causes undue tension between the notes. Again, I would suggest your school's band or orchestra director have some of their students demonstrate in tune and out of tune sound.

3) Dynamics Terms

***Dynamics**-varying degrees of loud and soft. Basically, dynamics in music deal with volume and changes in volume.

***Piano**-Italian for "soft."

***Mezzo Piano**-Italian for “medium soft.”

***Mezzo Forte**-medium loud.

***Forte**-loud.

***Students also need to be able to put the four dynamic levels above in order from softest to loudest or loudest to softest. (See note below)**

Note: These are not difficult to remember or put in order from softest to loudest provided students learn three translations. Piano = soft, Forte = loud, Mezzo = medium

***Crescendo** < -gradually getting louder. Students actually enjoy practicing this. Have them make some simple sound, such as clapping or snapping, and practice gradual getting louder. Then connect that activity to the term.

***Decrescendo** > -gradually getting softer. Again, you can use the reverse of the activity above. Make sure they start loudly so that they can hear the sound get softer.

Note: When teaching the symbols, it is helpful to point out that the smaller end of the symbol is the smaller sound and the bigger end is the bigger sound. This is much like teaching “greater than” and “less than” symbols.

4) Notational Terms and Symbols

***Note**-a symbol that notates a pitch and duration

***Rest**-a symbol used to represent silence in music.

***Treble Clef**  -symbol placed on the staff to locate notes; used for voices and instruments mostly sounding above middle C.

***Bass Clef**  -symbol placed on the staff to locate notes; used for voices and instruments mostly sounding below middle C.

***Eighth Note**  -symbol for a note lasting one-half of a quarter beat.

***Eighth Rest**  -symbol for a silence lasting one-half of a quarter beat

***Quarter Note**  -symbol for a note lasting one quarter beat

***Quarter Rest**  -symbol for a silence lasting one quarter beat

***Half Note**  -symbol for a note lasting two quarter beats

***Half Rest**  -symbol for a silence lasting two quarter beats

***Whole Note** -symbol for a note lasting four quarter beats

***Whole Rest** -symbol for a silence lasting four quarter beats

For note and rest values, it is helpful to understand the relationship between values. We are using the quarter beat as a reference here, but here is another way of looking at this: two eighth = one quarter; two quarter = one half; two half = one whole

***Function of a dot**-When a dot is added to a note or rest value, it adds half the value of the note or rest (makes it 1 ½ times as long as it would be without the dot.) For example, let's look at a dotted half note. A half note is two quarter beats. The dot adds ½ of that (one quarter beat). Therefore, a dotted half note is (two quarter beats + one quarter beat = three quarter beats.)

***Dotted Quarter Note**  -symbol for a note lasting 1 ½ quarter beats.

***Dotted Half Note**  -symbol for a note lasting three quarter beats.

***Bar Lines**-are shown below. These separate measures (groups or beats.) A measure is signified by the distance between two bar lines.

The vertical lines here are bar lines



5) Instrument Families

All orchestral instruments can be placed into one of the following instrument families: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

Strings-are instruments with strings that produce sound when they are plucked, bowed, or struck. They include **violin, viola, cello, and bass.**

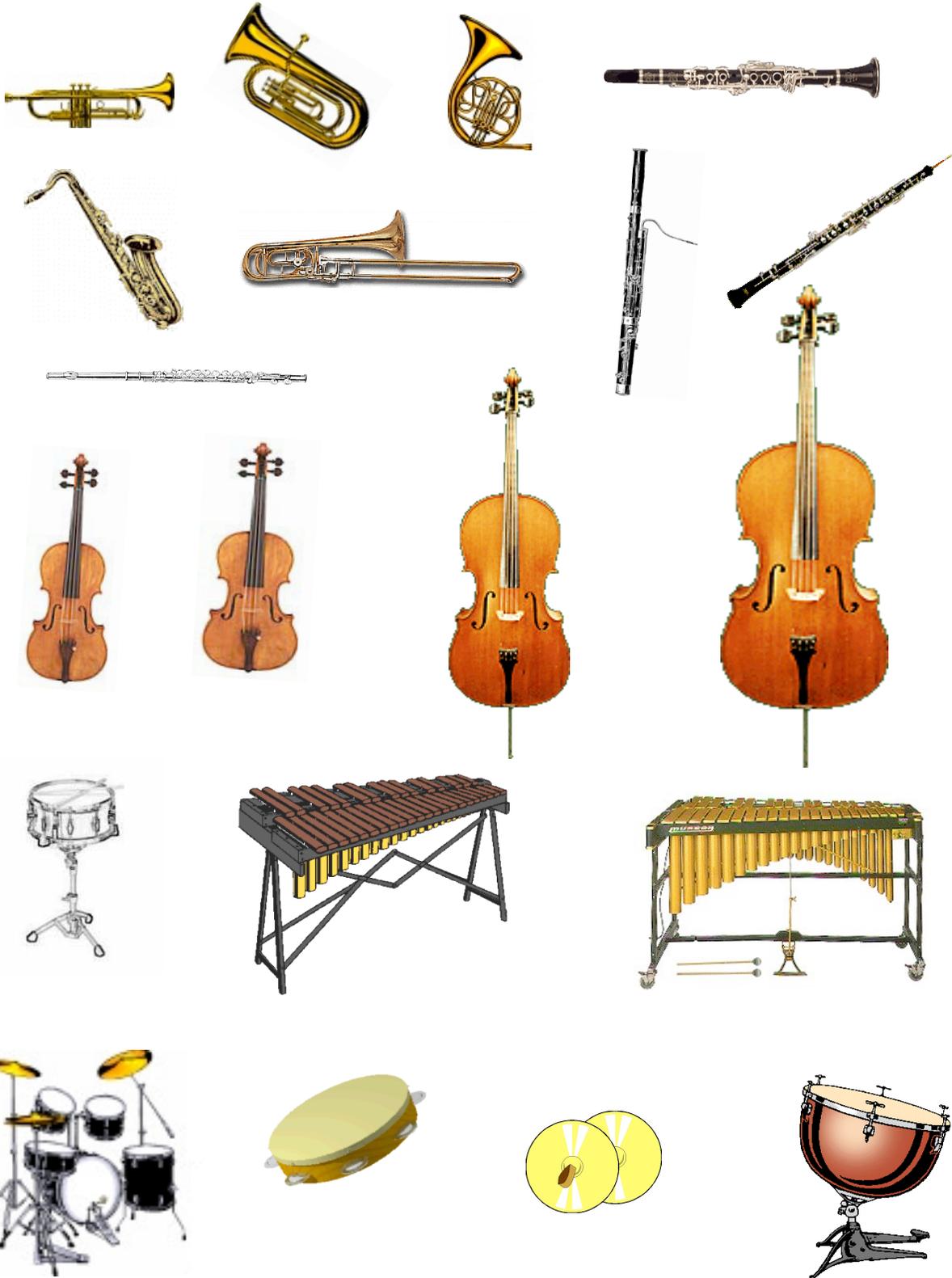
Woodwinds-are instruments that were originally made of wood (although not necessarily now), in which sound is produced by the vibration of air. Instruments that have reeds are in this family. Woodwinds include **flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and saxophone.** Yes, even though it looks like a brass, the saxophone (a reed instrument) is a woodwind!

Brass-are wind instruments made out of metal with a cup or funnel-shaped mouthpiece. Sound is produced when a “buzzing” of the lips is made. Brass instruments include **trumpet, horn, trombone and tuba.**

Percussion-are instruments which produce sound when shaken or struck. (As long as it is not striking strings. Striking strings constitutes a string instrument, not a percussion.) Some percussion instruments are: **any kind of drum, timpani (also known as “kettle drums”), drum set, xylophone and vibraphone (mallet instruments), cymbals, and tambourine.** Basically, if you don't blow into it, and it has no strings, it is percussion.

6) Visual Recognition of Instruments

Students should be able to recognize the instruments in the following pictures:



7) Vocal Classifications

In a choir, the voices of the singers can be split into four classifications. These are based on how high or low a person sings.

Soprano-The highest female singing voice

Alto-The lowest female singing voice

Tenor-The highest male singing voice

Bass-The lowest male singing voice

Notice that women are either soprano or alto; men are either tenor or bass. If a student is asked to name the four voices from lowest to highest, that would be: bass, tenor, alto, soprano. Highest to lowest is soprano, alto, tenor, bass.