

Norman Public Schools

MUSIC ASSESSMENT
GUIDE

FOR
GRADE 8

2013-2014

NPS ARTS ASSESSMENT GUIDE
Grade 8
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: 8th 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) Phrasing Terms
- 3) Articulation Terms
- 4) Notational Terms and Symbols
- 5) Instrument Families
- 6) Vocal Classifications
- 7) Time Signatures
- 8) Form

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 which 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 which 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.

***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) Phrasing Terms

***Phrase**-a musical sentence.

***Phrasing**-dividing musical sentences into melodic and/or rhythmic sections, similar to the effect of punctuation in language. There are two main aspects of phrasing-length and contour. Length is how long a musician sings or plays without leaving a slight break (like a period on a sentence.) Contour is covered below.

***Contour**-is the direction of the musical line. There are usually small dynamic changes (changes in volume) within a phrase. Different musicians may play the same phrase with different contours. An individual's treatment of contour gives their own signature to a performance.

3) Articulation Terms

***Articulation**-the degree to which notes are separated or connected.

***Staccato**-playing notes in a distinct, detached, separated manner. Staccato notes are represented by notes with a dot placed directly above or below the note head. This is

very different from the dot placed to the right of a note adding value (see Section 4: “Function of a Dot.”)

***Legato**-playing notes in a smooth, even manner without a noticeable space between the notes.

***Accent**  -playing notes with a noticeable emphasis on the beginnings of the notes.

*Note: For each of these (**Staccato, Legato and Accent**) an example may help. If possible, have your band or orchestra director illustrate this. Think of shapes to represent notes. Legato notes are like connected rectangles. They are totally even and connected. Staccato notes are like rectangles with space between them. Accented notes are more pennant-shaped (bigger at the beginning).*

4) Notational Terms and Symbols

***Note**-a symbol which 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.**

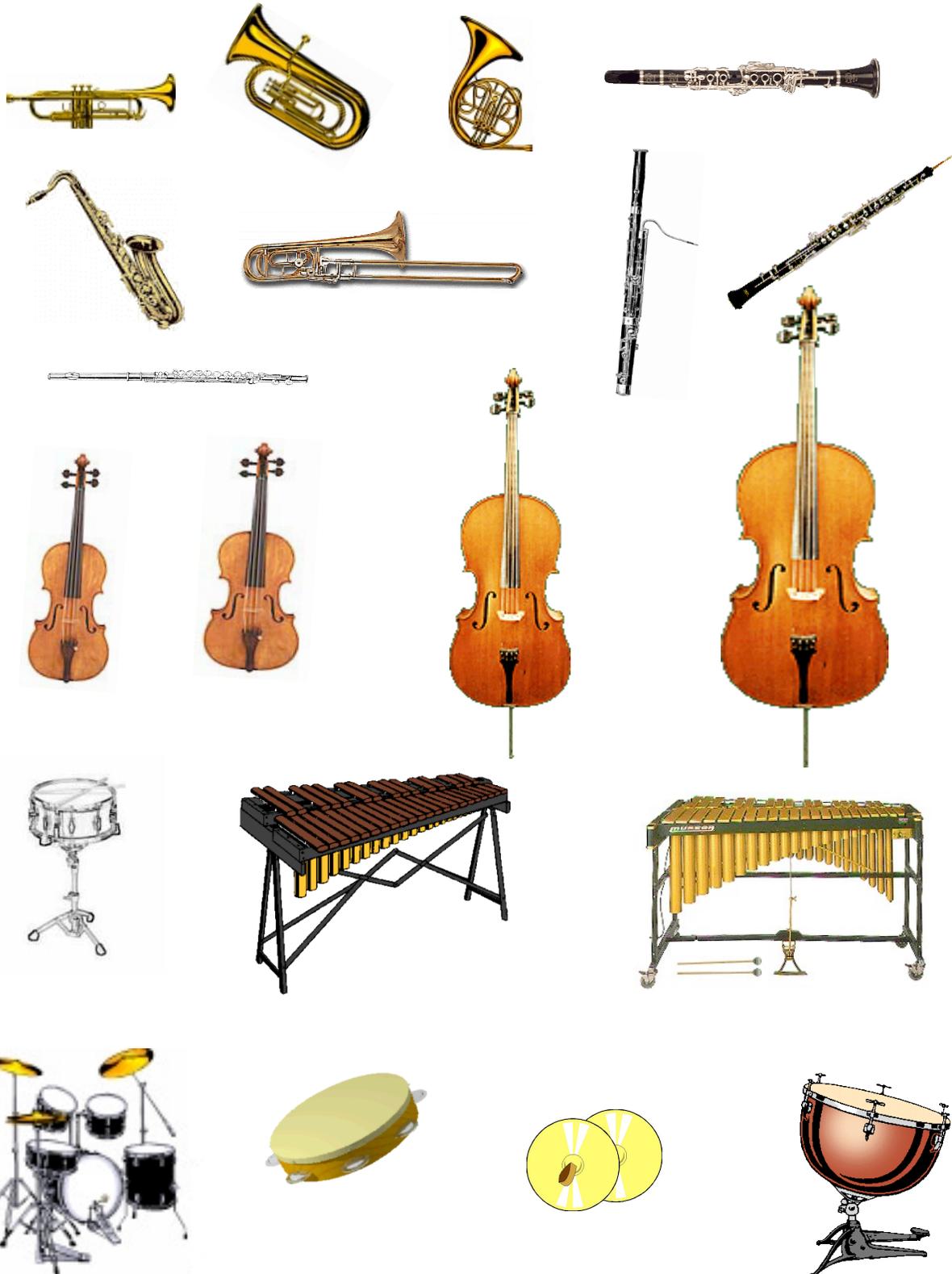
Woodwinds-are instruments which were originally made of wood (although not necessarily now), in which sound is produced by the vibration of air. Instruments that have reeds are in this family. Woodwinds include **flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and saxophone.** Yes, even though it looks like a brass,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

8) Time Signatures

A time signature is a symbol found at the beginning of a piece of music, which designates the meter of a piece of music. It consists of two numbers, one directly above the other.

The meter tells two things: how many beats are in a measure and which note represents one beat.

The number of beats in one measure (between two bar lines) is shown by the top number of the time signature. For example, if the time signature is $5/4$, there are five beats in each measure.

Which note represents one beat is shown by the bottom number of the time signature. Use the following translation guide:

1 = whole note, 2 = half note, 4 = quarter note, 8 = eighth note

For example, if the time signature is $6/8$ (eight is the bottom number), the eighth note represents one beat.

Here are some standard time signatures and their meanings:

$2/4$ = two beats per measure; quarter note represents one beat

$4/4$ = four beats per measure; quarter note represents one beat

$2/2$ = two beats per measure; half note represents one beat

6/8 = six beats per measure; eighth note represents one beat

*Note: While this is much like fractions in math class, you **can not** reduce to lowest common denominator. (6/8 and 3/4 are not the same thing.)*

* **Common Time**-is another name for the time signature 4/4.

* **Cut Time**-is another name for the time signature 2/2.

9) **Form**-the organization of a piece of music. This is done according to sections of repetition and contrast.

***Section**-a significant group of measures used to label the form of a piece of music.

***Introduction**-sometimes a part of a piece's form. It occurs at the beginning of the piece and is shorter than a section.

***Coda**-sometimes a part of a piece's form. It occurs at the end of the piece and is shorter than a section.

When sections are labeled, letters of the alphabet are used in order. If a section occurs more than once, it gets the same letter the second time it happens. For example, if a piece had a first section, a different second section, and then the first section again, we would have: **A B A**. Some common forms which students need to know are listed below.

AB Form-is just like it appears. It is a two-section form with two contrasting sections.

ABA Form-is just as it appears. It is a three-section form with the first section, a contrasting second section, and then the first section again.

Verse and Refrain-is like most church hymns and many popular music songs. There is a verse, a refrain (often called a chorus). These two sections alternate giving us **AB or ABAB or ABABAB, etc.**

Rondo Form-has a principal section that occurs several times. Between each occurrence of the principal section are other contrasting sections. So...you will have several **A** sections with other letters. One rondo could be **ABACADA**. The sections other than **A** may or may not occur more than once. Another rondo could be **ABACABA**.

Note: It may be helpful to have students find real-life examples of these outside of music. How many ways can the kids show ABA form? (boy-girl-boy, blue-red-blue, student-teacher-student)