

The WOODWIND FAMILY

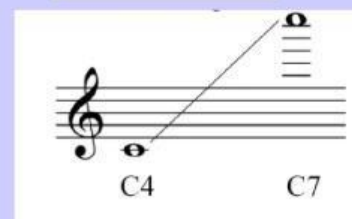
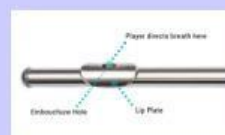


The woodwind family is typically seated in the centre of the orchestra, directly behind the string section. The flutes and oboes are usually placed in the first row, with the clarinets and bassoons behind them

Flute

Flutes make a beautiful, clear sound when you blow air across a hole called the embouchure hole (*like blowing across the top of a bottle*). This stream of air is then split by the sharp edge of the embouchure hole. This causes the air inside the flute to vibrate rapidly, creating sound waves.

Changing notes means covering or uncovering holes along the flute's body using keys. This changes the length of the vibrating air inside, making the notes higher or lower. The flute can play notes from middle C up about three octaves.



- Example 1

- Example 2

Flutes and piccolos are usually made of silver or nickel these days but originally they were made of wood, and sometimes they still are today.

A technique that the flute can do is FLUTTER TONGUING, where the performer rapidly vibrates or rolls their tongue (like rolling the letter "r") while blowing into the instrument. This creates a distinctive trilling effect.

Piccolo



The piccolo is approx half the size of a standard flute and produces a sound an octave higher. This makes it the highest-pitched instrument in an orchestra.

The piccolo's bright sound can be likened to a bird's call, often used in music to represent nature and is used to add brilliance to the orchestra's sound

- Example 1

- Example 2

Oboe



The sound is produced by blowing through a **DOUBLE REED** - two strips of cane bound tightly together. Unlike a single reed instrument (like a clarinet) where the reed vibrates against a mouthpiece, the two pieces of cane on a double reed vibrate against each other when you blow through them.

The oboist plays the keys and holes to produce different pitches.

The oboe plays the tuning note (an A) for the entire orchestra to tune their instruments before a performance. This is because the oboe's pitch is very stable and has a penetrating sound that's easy to hear.

The oboe's rich and versatile tone makes it a key instrument for expressing a wide range of emotions, from melancholy to joy.

- Example 1

- Example 2

Cor anglais



This is a double reed instrument very similar to an oboe, but as it is longer than an oboe it plays lower notes.

Because it is longer and wider than the oboe, the cor anglais plays lower notes and has a darker, more mellow and plaintive tone than the oboe. Its pear-shaped bell also contributes to its distinct sound.



- Example 1

- Example 2

Related listening – Oboe and cor anglais

Listen to the oboe in the ballet '*Swan lake*' & answer the questions below:

- Is the melody played staccato or legato?
- Is the music major or minor?
- How many beats are in the bar?

Listen to the cor anglais in the '*New World Symphony*' & answer the questions below:

- Is the melody staccato or legato?
- Is the music major or minor?
- How many beats are in the bar?

Bassoon

The word "bassoon" comes from the French word "basson" which means "bass," referring to its low sound range. It is the lowest of the woodwind instruments. It's also called "fagotto" in Italian, meaning "bundle of sticks" because of its assembled shape. Like the oboe, the bassoon has a DOUBLE reed which is attached to a crook.

Bassoons often play lower harmonies in the orchestra, but they can also play expressive and humorous melodies. The bassoon's rich sound blends well with other instruments, especially the lower strings, adding a warm and resonant quality to the overall sound of the orchestra

- Example 1

- Example 2

☐ Listen to the bassoon as the grandfather in '*Peter and the Wolf*'

The image shows a musical score for a bassoon part in the film 'Peter and the Wolf'. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 96. The first line of music starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a 'pesante' marking. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets. The second line of music continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns. The score is numbered 6 at the beginning of the second line.

- How do you think the music represents the grandfather? Give 2 reasons:
 - 1.
 - 2.



Clarinet

The clarinet uses a **single reed**, a small, thin piece of cane, to produce sound. When you blow air through the mouthpiece, the reed vibrates and creates the sound you hear.

The clarinet has a nearly cylindrical bore (the inside of the instrument) and a flared bell.



• Example 1

• Example 2

The low range of the clarinet is known as the chalumeau register and is has a very mellow, rich sound. Listen this representing the cat in '*Peter & the Wolf*' and answer the questions below:

What is the dynamic?

How are these notes played?

What does this symbol mean?

The clarinet is a transposing instrument, meaning the note written on the music isn't the same as the actual sound produced. This was designed to make the fingering easier for players

B-flat Clarinet

Written	Sounding

The clarinet is a very versatile woodwind instrument, with the biggest range of notes. As well as classical music, the clarinet is also used in jazz and swing.

Listen to the following piece and write down any musical features that you hear.

Rhythm / Tempo	Instruments	Pitch / melody

Bass clarinet

This is much larger than a standard clarinet, with a curved neck at the top and a curved metal bell at the bottom. This unique shape makes it easier to hold and helps its sound project into the room. Like the clarinet, it has a SINGLE reed.

The bass clarinet is more than a meter tall and is too heavy to hold in your hands for a long time. You either use the spike or a special carrying construction usually fixed around shoulders and chest.

The bass clarinet is known for its warm, dark, and rich sound. It can sound quite serious and even a little gloomy, which composers sometimes use to create a feeling of sadness or foreboding.

- Example 1
- Example 2



Saxophone

Although the saxophone is made of brass; it is a member of the woodwind family because it has a single reed. Like the clarinet, the player blows into a reed fitted into the mouthpiece of the instrument.

There are several different kinds of saxophone, the most common of which are the alto and tenor saxophones. The soprano saxophone has a straight shape and looks like a metal clarinet.

The saxophone is the only instrument in widespread use today that was invented by a single person: Adolphe Sax. He was a talented instrument maker and musician from Belgium who wanted to create an instrument that combined the power of brass with the flexibility of woodwinds. He patented his invention, the saxophone, in Paris in 1846.

Like the clarinet, saxophones are transposing instruments, meaning the note written on the music isn't the same as the actual sound produced. This was designed to make the fingering easier for players

- Example 1
- Example 2

From listening to the 2nd clip, what instruments make up a SWING BAND?



☐ Now try the WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS QUIZ 1 and QUIZ 2