An Explanation of the Curriculum for Beginning Band

This curriculum outline is intended for the use of band directors in any setting when teaching beginning band. It is not to be taken strictly week-by-week, but is to be utilized at the director’s own pace and prerogative, subject to the level of the student’s individual and/or collective comprehension and concurrent application, measured through various forms of assessment. Due to the student culture, collective energy or synergy of the group, parental involvement in the student’s musical education, percent of students with prior musical training, size of the group, and other possible over-looked factors, the lessons may take more or less time, and thus one class of the same grade may not achieve the same as another.

However, this curriculum is designed so that many of the objectives listed can be utilized to strengthen individual players who may be ahead of their class average. Students who fit into this category will have the opportunity to play solos that challenge them on higher levels. The curriculum is designed so that advanced students will always have an objective to further their skills, and never be left feeling complacent or bored. The ideal system also helps those who are behind the curve. The students who may fall behind will have the help of an advanced student partner to bring them to where they need to be. As these principles are properly executed, the class learning curve should remain constant.

Listed lessons are not the entirety of the class. In fact, the lesson itself should be taught concisely and then reinforced during the rehearsal of the music (this applies to most of the musical concept and skill lessons, not so much to the first few days when students are learning the guidelines, learning how to hold their instruments, setting their embouchures, and making their first sounds). Teaching the principles in the context of musical performance is the most effective way to solidify musical concepts and life skills. Thus, time spent talking should never exceed time spent playing. By doing it this way, students learn by discovery and are motivated to become autonomous.

In the context of a musical program consisting of between 35-50 40-minute class sessions per year at the elementary or middle school level (as is the case for the author), absolute beginning students should be expected to make it through most if not all of Unit 2. However, because of the summer break when many lessons are forgotten, second year students should be expected to make it through a review of Unit 2 and all of Unit 3 (with some exceptions based on uncontrollable variables, examples of which listed in paragraph 1). Unit 4 can be used either for an entire class that has complete Unit 3, for individuals who are excelling, or certain parts of the Unit can be used for classes which complete the material in Unit 3 and are left with more time to advance onward. Unit 4 principles, as well as any other principles, concepts, lessons, skills or objectives can be incorporated at any point in any unit, as needed. This is simply a basic outline of skills and concepts that can be taught to elementary instrumental music students by the time they advance to the intermediate level.

I hope you find this helpful in the education of our young aspiring instrumentalists.

~Jeremy C Johnson
**UNIT 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Musical Concepts:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interdisciplinary Concepts:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Musical Skills:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Life Skills:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythms whole to eighth notes; Staff and notes on the staff; The relationship between breath control, (or stick grip) embouchure (or stick height) and posture, and producing a good tone; Critical listening.</td>
<td>Addition, subtraction, and basic algebra in rhythmic studies; Physiology of the lungs in breath control; Science of Sound Waves and Biology of the ear. Historical connections with composers of melodies.</td>
<td>Instrument Assembly, holding and posture; Pitch-matching with voice; Pitch-matching with instrument; Fingering; Playing in sync with group and teacher; Correct Tonguing.</td>
<td>Problem Solving; Personal Expression; Collaborating and interpersonal communication; Improving; Presenting (a daily occurrence); Developing vocabulary (English, Latin, and occasional Italian); Improving study skills (practicing); Autonomy.</td>
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</table>

**STANDARDS:**

Standard 1, Objective 1: Sing in tune on an assigned part with expression, accuracy and free from strain.

Standard 2, Both Objectives: 1. Discover and demonstrate sounds on instruments of the classroom and various cultures; knowledge, use and care of instruments. 2. Perform with others simple melodies and accompaniments with good rehearsal habits, beautiful tone, and technical performing skills.

Standard 3, Objectives 1 & 2: 1. Add expression to existing music; 2. Express ideas, thoughts, and emotions aesthetically through playing.

Standard 4, Objective 1: Recognize quality while giving musical performance, Objective 2: Perceive and respond to messages in music and the use of musical elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Beginning Band Content Objectives</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vocabulary Students Should Use</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lessons (some lessons may take 2 days)</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can:</td>
<td>- Music Staff</td>
<td>1. Classroom guidelines and procedures, pitch matching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Match a pitch on the piano with my voice, and then match the pitch I'm singing with my instrument with breath control and good tone.</td>
<td>- Measures</td>
<td>3. Breath Control &amp; First Sounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identify the visual differences between whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and understand how they fit into a 4/4 or 2/4 measure</td>
<td>- Bar Lines</td>
<td>4. Partner Assignments and Individual Help Day for sound making instrument holding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify the note names on the staff for bass or treble clef.</td>
<td>- Long tone</td>
<td>5. Essential Elements, Page 3&amp;4: The staff, the first note, the beat, notes, and rests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Play up and down the first 6 notes of the Bb Major Scale in succession.</td>
<td>- The Beat or pulse</td>
<td>6. Reinforce lesson 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Play notes and rhythms to simple songs in sync with a group following a conductor; (if I am percussionist, I can play sixteenths)</td>
<td>- Notes</td>
<td>7. Page 5 and Vocabulary through Natural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify the time period Mozart composed in and one significant event from that time period.</td>
<td>- Rests</td>
<td>8. Rolling Along, Hot Cross Buns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Describe each song I play with a one-word emotion.</td>
<td>- Tonguing</td>
<td>9. Flood them with songs: Straight through pages 6 &amp; 7, Jingle Bells and My Dreydl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provide evidence of good practicing habits.</td>
<td>- Double bar line</td>
<td>10. Mozart History, Mozart Melody.</td>
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<th><strong>Beginning Band Language objectives</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>- Describe in a concise fashion how a certain song makes me feel.</td>
<td>11. Listening example and emotional writing assignment; Dynamics and Christmas Rehearsals.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Use musical vocabulary to define something observed aurally</td>
<td>12. Concert Rehearsal Rhythm.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understand all of the musical vocabulary contained in the first 10 pages of Essential Elements 2000 for band, book 1 in context to the music they play (contained in the “Vocabulary Students Should Use” section.</td>
<td>13. Concert Rehearsal Notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Read a piece of music and perform it while observing musical techniques described in the music I am playing.</td>
<td>14. Concert Rehearsal Notes &amp; Rhythms.</td>
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Assessment: Practice records; Teacher observations (daily); class discussions; Partner discussions; performance followed by positive and constructive teacher-, peer-, and self- evaluations.
### Unit 2

#### Intermediate Fifth Grade or Beginning Sixth Grade

#### Approximate Time Frame: 17-22 Class Periods

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<td>Rhythms eighth notes to triplets and dotted notes and ties; Extended notes on the staff; Building Embouchures and practice techniques; Unison and Harmony; Duets and Rounds; Crescendos and Decrescendos, Multimeasure rests; 3/4; Sight reading; TUNING!</td>
<td>Addition, subtraction, and basic algebra in rhythmic studies; Physiology of the lungs in breath control; Historical connections with composers of melodies.</td>
<td>Play a Bb Major Scale up and down; Play the first 6 notes in the Eb Major Scale up and down; Clar. introduced to crossing the break; Brass extending range to include the top of the Bb Major Scale with ease; Play with good tone in soft and loud dynamics; Blend and Balance; Playing in tune; composing simple melodies.</td>
<td>Problem Solving; Personal Expression; Collaborating and interpersonal communication; Improving; Presenting (a daily occurrence); Developing vocabulary (English, Latin, and occasional Italian; Improving study skills (practicing); Autonomy.</td>
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#### Standards:

| Standard 1, Objective 1: Sing in tune on an assigned part with expression, accuracy and free from strain. |
| Standard 2, Both Objectives: 1. Discover and demonstrate sounds on instruments of the classroom and various cultures; knowledge, use and care of instruments. 2. Perform with others simple melodies and accompaniments with good rehearsal habits, beautiful tone, and technical performing skills. |
| Standard 3, Objectives 1 & 2: 1. Add expression to existing music; 2. Express ideas, thoughts, and emotions aesthetically through playing and creating. |

#### Beginning Band Content Objectives

**I can:**
- Do everything included on the 1st Unit Beginning Band Content Obj.
- Play with beautiful tone in forte and piano dynamics w/cresc and decresc.
- Sight-read simple quarter/eighth note melodies.
- Understand and play dotted, tied, and triplet rhythms.
- Count and play in a 3/4 time signature and count multimeasure rests.
- Build my embouchure through practice techniques.
- Play up and down the Bb major scale comfortably.
- Play up and down the first 6 notes of the Eb Major scale.
- Practice crossing the break, if I am a clarinet player or improve on my range if I am a brass player.
- Play in tune and blend with with my partner, section, and the band.
- Recognize the difference between and play in unison, duet, harmony, or round.
- Compose a simple melody.
- Demonstrate through improvements in my playing that I have good practice habits and an effective practice schedule.
- Identify the Musical Period of Bach and one world event that occurred during his lifetime.

**Beginning Band Language Objectives**
- Create a simple melody using correct musical terminology
- Use musical vocabulary to define something observed aurally
- Understand all of the music vocabulary in the book up to page 23 in the book (all found in the next section over)
- Read a piece of music and perform it while observing new musical techniques described in the music I am playing.

**Vocabulary Students Should Use**
- All of the vocabulary from Unit 1
- Tempo
- Allegro
- Moderato
- Andante
- Crescendo
- Decrescendo/Diminuendo
- Tie
- Triplet
- Accent
- Scale
- 1st and 2nd Ending
- Unison
- Duet
- (Clarinet) Crossing the Break
- Range
- Harmony
- Round
- Slur
- Staccato
- Expression
- Baroque Period (Music History)
- Names of the Parts of your instrument.

**Lessons (some lessons may take 2 days)**
1. Classroom guidelines and procedures; Sight reading simple melodies; Review
2. Breathe control and anti-tension; 3/4 time; multimeasure rests.
3. The Dot and the Tie (utilize the songs in the book and a piece of sheet music for the concert to reinforce)
4. Dot and Tie, continued.
5. The complete Bb Major Scale
6. First 6 notes of the Eb Major Scale; Rounds.
7. Individual help and partner practice/introduction to crossing the break for clarinets
8. All play, no talk day.
9. Tuning & Unison; Balance and Blend & Harmony
10. Listening and emotional expression
11. Individual help and Partner Practice/emb. Building for brass
12. Bach History, Bach Melody
13. Composition
14. Concert Rehearsal, Notes
15. Concert Rehearsal, Expression
16. Concert Rehearsal Tuning, Balance and Blend
17. Concert Dress Rehearsal.

**Assessment:** Practice records; Teacher observations (daily); class discussions; Partner discussions; performance followed by positive and constructive teacher-, peer-, and self- evaluations.
### Musical Concepts:
- Rhythms sixteenth notes dotted eighths and ties; More extended notes on the staff; Continued Embouchure Building and enduring practice techniques; Basic harmonic dissonance tuning; Intervals; Extended Concepts—Instrument Specific; Intonation, blend, and balance in ff and pp; Musical Phrases.

### Interdisciplinary Concepts:
- Addition, subtraction, and basic algebra in rhythmic studies; Physiology of the lungs in breath control; Historical connections with composers of melodies. Sentence structure and musical phrasing.

### Musical Skills:
- Play Bb & Eb scales up and down at a brisk tempo; F and C scales up and down at a moderate tempo; Clar. Able to cross the break Brass extending range to include the top of the F Major Scale with ease; Play with good tone, blend, and balance and in tune at ff and pp. Phrasing.

### Life Skills:
- Problem Solving; Personal Expression; Collaborating and interpersonal communication; Improving: Presenting (a daily occurrence); Developing vocabulary (English, Latin, and occasional Italian); Improving study skills (practicing); Autonomy.

### Standards:
1. **Standard 1, Objective 1:** Sing in tune on an assigned part with expression, accuracy and free from strain.
2. **Standard 2, Both Objectives:** 1. Discover and demonstrate sounds on instruments of the classroom and various cultures; knowledge, use and care of instruments. 2. Perform with others simple melodies and accompaniments with good rehearsal habits, beautiful tone, and technical performing skills.
3. **Standard 3, Objectives 1 & 2:** 1. Add expression to existing music; 2. Express ideas, thoughts, and emotions aesthetically through playing.

### I can:
- Do everything included on the 1st and 2nd Unit Content Objectives [THIS UNIT IS PARTIALLY A REVIEW UNIT]
- Play with beautiful tone in ff and pp dynamics w/cresc. And decresc.
- Sight-read slightly less simple quarter/eighth note melodies
- Understand and play sixteenth notes mixed with other types of notes
- Continue to build my embouchure through productive practice techniques
- Play up and down the Bb, Eb, F, and C scales comfortably
- Identify a musical phrase and play with musical phrasing
- Be able to cross the break if I am a clarinet player
- Be able to comfortably play at the top of the F scale as a brass player
- Play in tune and blend with my partner, section, and the band in consonance and dissonance
- Demonstrate on my instrument the concepts of intervals, chords, and arpeggios
- Demonstrate through improvements in my playing that I have good practice habits and an effective practice schedule
- Identify the Musical period of Beethoven and one world event that occurred during his lifetime

### Beginning Band Language Objectives
- Use musical vocabulary to define something observed aurally
- Understand all of the music vocabulary in book 1 (found in the Vocabulary section)
- Read a piece of music and perform it while observing newly learned musical techniques describe in the music I am playing
- Make a connection between musical phrasing and sentence structure

### Assessment:
- Practice records; Teacher observations (daily); class discussions; Partner discussions; performance followed by positive and constructive teacher-, peer-, and self- evaluations.

### Vocabulary Students Should Use
- A review of the vocabulary from Unit 1 & 2
- Phrase
- Interval
- Chord
- Arpeggio
- Enharmonics
- Chromatics
- Romantic Period (Music History)

### Lessons (some lessons may take 2 days)
1. Classroom guidelines and procedures; sight reading melodies; Review
2. Review of Unit 1 Lesson 2, 3, and 5; Play several songs from Unit 1 and the beginning of Unit 2
3. Review of Unit 2 Lessons 2-6; Play several songs from Unit 2.
4. Rhythm Review: Quarters, Eighths; add 16ths (w/percussion helpers); Full Eb scale.
5. Individual help/partner practice; Review for percussion, CTB for Clarinets.
6. All play/no talk day.
7. Concert Music Reading day.
8. Phrases
9. Intervals, chords, and arpeggios.
10. ff, pp; chromatics; dissonance.
11. F scale, enharmonics.
12. C scale.
14. Concert Rehearsal, notes and rhythms
15. Concert Rehearsal, Dynamics, Balance, and Blend.
17. Concert Dress Rehearsal.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>UNIT 4</th>
<th>ADVANCED SIXTH GRADE</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE TIME FRAME: 17-22 CLASS PERIODS</th>
<th>BEGINNING BAND</th>
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<td>Compound meter; Fitting rhythms into compound meter and counting them; Circle of Fifth/Fourths; Basics of Conducting; types of minors; Basic solfege and dictation; Basic musical form in composition; relationship between air and phrasing; continuous phrases.</td>
<td>Addition, subtraction, and basic algebra in rhythmic studies; Physiology of the lungs in breath control; Historical connections with composers of melodies. Public speaking and breath control in musical phrasing. Writing an essay and form.</td>
<td>Play the following scales: Bb, Eb, C, F, Ab, G major &amp; G, C, and chromatic from Bb. Count and play in 6/8 time. Conduct in 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 6/8; Sing a major scale with solfege; breathing during phrases; stagger breathing.</td>
<td>Problem Solving: Personal Expression; Collaborating and interpersonal communication; Improving; Presenting (a daily occurrence); Developing vocabulary (English, Latin, and occasional Italian); Improving study skills (practicing); Autonomy.</td>
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Standard 4, Objective 1: Recognize quality while giving musical performance, Objective 2: Perceive and respond to messages in music and the use of musical elements.

### Beginning Band Content Objectives

**I can:**
- Do everything included on the 1st - 3rd Unit Content Objectives
- Demonstrate an understanding of compound meter by counting and playing in 6/8.
- Sight-read unfamiliar melodies with unconventional rhythms or notes (but not both)
- Identify and play on my instrument all of the notes on the circle of Fifths/Fourths in order.
- Continue to build my embouchure through productive practice techniques
- Play the Bb, Eb, C, F, Ab, and G major and the G and C minor, and chromatic scales at a comfortable tempo.
- Conduct in a 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 6/8 pattern.
- Sing a major scale in solfege.
- Dictate a very basic melody.
- Write a basic composition in ABA form.
- Identify a Composer from 20th Century Musical Period and one world event that influenced his music.
- Stagger-breath.

### Beginning Band Language objectives

- Use musical vocabulary to define something observed aurally
- Understand all of the music vocabulary in the list
- Read a piece of music and perform it while observing newly learned musical techniques describe in the music I am playing
- Make a connection between musical phrasing and public speaking
- Make a connection between form and writing an essay.

### Vocabulary Students Should Use

- A review of the vocabulary from Unit 1 & 2
- Major and Minor
- Harmonic Minor
- Natural Minor/Aeolian
- Melodic Minor
- Compound meter
- Circle of Fifths/fourths
- Conducting Pattern
- Solfege
- Musical form
- Continuous phrase
- Stagger breathing

### Lessons (some lessons may take 2 days)

1. Classroom guidelines and procedures; sight reading melodies; Review
2. Sight-reading; Form
3. Compound Meter; Scale Review
4. Sight reading; Bb, Eb, C, F, and Ab Scales
5. Solfege; Bb, Eb, C, F, Ab, and G scales.
6. Conducting simple meter
7. Conducting compound meter
9. All scales.
11. Form in music composition
12. Chromatic scale.
13. Continuous phrase and stagger breathing
14. 20th Century Composers presentations
15. Concert Rehearsal, notes and rhythms
16. Concert rehearsal, Dynamics, Balance and Blend
17. Concert Rehearsal, Phrasing, breathing, and tone
18. Concert Dress Rehearsal.

Assessment: Practice records; Teacher observations (daily); class discussions; Partner discussions; performance followed by positive and constructive teacher-, peer-, and self- evaluations.