

Mr. Lackey's Guide To Picking An Instrument

Thank you again for joining band! If you're reading this, you're either a student trying to decide what instrument to play, or a parent trying to help your student make that decision, and figure out where the heck to get everything. This handout will cover a few suggestions on how to pick an instrument, where to rent or buy an instrument, and **required** supplies and materials for each instrument.

How To Pick An Instrument

Band class (this year at least) is a **concert band**, which is like an orchestra without stringed instruments (such as violin or cello) and with saxophones and a few additional brass instruments. The following instruments are acceptable choices in band this year:

Woodwinds	Brass
piccolo	trumpet
flute	french horn
clarinet	trombone
bass clarinet	baritone horn
oboe	tuba
bassoon	
alto saxophone	
tenor saxophone	
baritone saxophone	

In addition, there will be a **very limited** number of percussion positions available.

In general, you should pick the instrument that appeals most to you. I will do my best to give you your first choice, although if too many people play a certain instrument I may ask you to switch. There is no “easy” or “hard” instrument; all of them carry their own unique challenges...and all of them are very rewarding and enjoyable to play, with practice. Don't feel limited by your size, whether you're a boy or a girl, or any previous musical experience. Do, however, at least consider *french horn, tuba, bassoon, oboe, trombone, baritone horn*, and the larger saxophones. All of these instruments are especially valuable to the band, and the ones in italics are “scholarship instruments”, ie in very high demand in college and professional music, which could lead to performance scholarships down the road.

Where And How To Get An Instrument

Where To Get An Instrument

If at all possible, I would prefer that you acquire an instrument on your own, either by renting an instrument from one of the local retailers, buying an instrument, or acquiring one from family members. I recommend Valley Music Of Hemet as your best local source for instruments and accessories:

Valley Music Of Hemet
809 E Florida Ave
Hemet, CA 92543
<http://www.valleymusicofhemet.com/>

From Cottonwood School: Take Sage Rd. north all the way into Hemet, where it becomes State Street. Make a right on Florida, and it will be on your right hand side.

Valley Music Of Hemet offers a 10% discount to all students.

What about pawn shops, swap meets, and the internet?

I would recommend against pawn shops, garage sales, swap meets, and internet retailers for right now. While it's true that there are deals to be found, the quality is so variable that it's very difficult for beginners to recognize if they're getting a good instrument or not. Stick to established brand names and outlets for now.

What about Toys R Us, Walmart, Costco, etc.?

PLEASE avoid these places for instruments. The instruments they sell are very cheap, but they're of incredibly poor quality and they will bring you nothing but frustration as a beginning player.

Should I rent or buy?

It is one of my fondest wishes for you as my student that you play forever, however, it may not happen. Furthermore, the instruments you will be dealing with are designed for students, and eventually (if you keep playing, which I hope you do), you will outgrow your instrument and be ready for a professional quality model. As such, **it's best to rent**, at least for now. And to make matters easy, both retailers I listed offer rental plans that are completely rent to own, that is every dollar you pay in rent counts directly towards the purchase of your instrument.

What about getting an instrument from the school?

As stated, I'd really prefer it if you acquired an instrument from somewhere other than the school. We're fortunate enough to have a decent number of school instruments, but very little money to fix them. Consequently, I will only rent school instruments (at no charge) in two circumstances-#1, financial necessity, and #2 if you choose to play one of the instruments that is more difficult to rent (such as tuba or bassoon).

There is one exception to this: **ALL percussionists MUST rent a bell kit and practice pad, which is available with sticks from both listed music retailers.** There are no exceptions to this policy, due to a shortage of mallet percussion instruments (bells, xylophones, marimbas, etc.) at our school and an overabundance of people who want to play drums and percussion.

Anyone who rents an instrument from the school will be held liable for all damage and wear and tear on the instrument, and will still be responsible for buying any necessary supplies for the instrument. If you rent an instrument from me, you will need to show me the appropriate supplies first, and have your parent/guardian sign a rental contract.

What Book Do I Need?

We will be using **Essential Elements 2000**. Books cost approximately \$8 each and are available at Valley Music Of Hemet. **Students are responsible for purchasing their own books this year.** Please make sure you get the proper book for *your* instrument.

What Accessories Do I Need To Get For Each Instrument?

Each instrument requires certain accessories for proper care, maintenance, and function. These accessories are REQUIRED and you will be given a grade on having them from time to time, at my discretion.

Flute/piccolo

- polishing cloth
- cleaning rod

Clarinet

- 4 good condition reeds (these will need to be replaced from time to time), Van Doren, Mitchell Lurie, or Fred Meyer brand, 1½-2 thickness with cases
- shammy or cleaning swab
- cork grease

Saxophones (all)

- 4 good condition reeds (these will need to be replaced from time to time), Van Doren, Mitchell Lurie, or Fred Meyer brand, 1½-2 thickness with cases
- shammy or cleaning swab
- neck strap
- instrument cap
- cork grease

Oboe & Bassoon

- 3 good condition reeds (these will need to be replaced from time to time)
- shammy or cleaning swab
- neck strap or seat strap (bassoon only)

Trumpet, Baritone, & Tuba

- valve oil (Al Cass brand, please avoid colored valve oil)
- mouthpiece brush
- snake
- tuning slide grease or Vaseline

Trombone

- mouthpiece brush
- snake
- cleaning wand
- small spray bottle filled with distilled water
- slide lubricant-ether Slide-O-Mix or Trombotine brand (NO slide oil, NO valve oil)
- tuning slide grease or Vaseline

French Horn

- mouthpiece brush
- snake
- valve oil
- french horn key oil OR 3 in 1 oil
- tuning slide grease or Vaseline

Percussion

- bell kit
- practice pad
- bell mallets (1 pair)
- drumsticks (size 5A, 5B, or 2B only)