

The Orchestra

Level: Grade 4

Materials:

Laptop

LCD Projector

Grade 4 Share the Music(pages 98,247)

Class set of straws

A violin

A clarinet

A trombone

Guitar

A trumpet

Scissors

Videos

Instruments of the orchestra posters

During this unit the students will learn about the instruments of the orchestra, how they sound, what they look like and what an orchestra is. They will also be exposed to a number of different orchestral pieces.

Day 1

Opener: As students enter the room play "Die Walkure" by Wagner as they head to their seats. Have them seat and listen to the song using their musicians ears without talking. (have it written on the board)

Ask: What kind of music is this? Take all possible answers.

What kind of musical group is playing this?

We are going to be learning about the orchestra over the next couple of weeks.

Part 2: Have students get out their books and turn to page 98. Ask: How many instrument names do you see?

Violin

Clarinet

Trumpet

French Horn (horn)

Timpani (drum)

- If time, show the video “Yanni – Live in Las Vegas”
- Listen to “Orchestra Song” from Share the Music grade 4.
 - When playing, stop after violin part.
 - Explain: this song showcases only a few of the instruments in the orchestra and we are going to pretend we are big time orchestra musicians.
- Sing through it one more time while the students pretend they are playing a violin.
- Show the students the violin that the school has.

Day 2

As they come in, play the Star Wars theme music video. (have it written on the board)

- Ask, do you know this peice? It is from the movie Star Wars.

Explain: today we are going to learn about the clarinet in the orchestra.

- Start with showing them the clarinet that the school has.
 - Explain how it is similar to the recorder but uses a wooden reed to make a sound.
 - Show the reed if there isn't one in the case
- Show the video: “Flight of the Bumblebee – Bb Clarinet”
- Listen to the clarinet part in the orchestra song and try to add it to the violin part.
- Have them sing it while pretending to play a real clarinet
- Split into “sections” and try the round

Day 3

Part 1

Today we are going to learn about a special instrument in the orchestra called the oboe. It is similar to the clarinet but is thinner and uses a double reed instead of a single reed.

I have a bassoon double reed here to show you. Show them how it might be played. Pass around double reed.

As the reed is being passed around explain that everyone tunes to the oboe in an orchestra which makes it a really important instrument of the orchestra.

- Play song: “orchestra tune-up”
 - Explain: notice how the oboe plays first and then the rest of the orchestra, first the strings, then the woodwinds and then the brass.
 - Explain the history behind the oboe and why everyone tunes to the oboe.

Play video: “Carlo Ramano with Gabriel’s Oboe”

Part 2

- Have straws ready to cut as oboes. (See page 247 of Share the Music Grade 4)
 - Explain: These straws are going to be used as mini-oboes. The straw will mimic how a double reed instrument works by vibrating together. Experiment with the length by cutting a little bit off each time.
 - How does cutting it affect the pitch of your mini-oboe?
 - Once they answer ask: so do you think a bigger instrument would sound lower than a smaller one?

If time, Practice the orchestra song with violin and clarinet.

Day 4

As they walk in play something from the Canadian Brass have it written on the board

Today we are going to learn about the trumpet and the brass section

- Play video : “Shikansen played by Jens Lindemann”
- Show the trumpet that the school has.
- Bring in trombone and ask how they are similar and explain how it is part of the orchestra as well.
- Listen to “Orchestra Song” up until just after the trumpet part.
 - Try singing the trumpet part alone and pretend you are playing a trumpet
- Try to add that to the other two instruments you have been practicing.
 - Get into your sections but first you need to review each part.

Day 5 – Computer Lab if possible.

Nyphilkids.org – play instrument frenzy first then you can play any one of the games that are there

Day 6 – The French Horn

As they come in play “Overture: The Marriage of Figaro” have it written on the board

Play video: “Vienna Horns – Back to the Future”

- Play through “orchestra song” and stop after the horn part.
- Practice the horn part alone then add it to the rest of our orchestra
 - They should pretend they are playing it by miming how to it’s held.
May need to review other parts before going through this.

Day 7 – Timpani

As they come in play “1812 overture” Have it written on the board

Tell them that we are going to learn about the timpani today

- Explain: Timpani is considered the orchestral drum set because the timpani section is made of multiple large drums that can be tuned to different pitches with a pedal.
- School does not have a timpani. Show them a roto-tom and how it changes pitch while still showing them a picture of timpani.
- Play video: “Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra (pt 1)” Explain that they timpani are usually at the back of the orchestra but for this piece they are supposed to be up front and have them see if they can name some of the instruments that are shown in the video as a review.

Play all of “Orchestra Song” and practice the timpani part then have them split into sections and try the entire thing pretending to be a big orchestra.

After it is learned well, have them switch sections and rotate through every section of the orchestra.

All of the videos mentioned in this unit are available on the “Videos” page under “The Orchestra.” All of the music is available on the “Music” page.

I play trombone so I am able to bring mine in to show them. You may play another orchestral instrument.

Supplement the unit with:

- “Concerto for Group and Orchestra by Deep Purple” Available on the “Videos” page under “The Orchestra” and “Miscellaneous.”
- You can have “Name that Piece” Trivia once you are done by seeing if they can name each song that you played at the beginning of each class. Feel free to use your own music.