

YourClassical Class Notes

The Paper Clips

Supporting Materials Packet



The Paper Clips (Ben Bussey, Lauren Husting, Brooklynne Audette, Chris Allen)
Photo Credit: Travis Anderson

About the Performers:

The Paper Clips are a trombone quartet dedicated to connecting the threads of classical and contemporary music in fun, engaging, and informative performances for audiences of all ages. In their Class Notes Residency, The Paper Clips will perform for students. Additional residency activities will be determined by a goal-setting session between the ensemble and site teacher.

Learning Goals May Include:

1. Performance and Q & A for students
2. Healthy brass tone production & effective practice habits
3. Workshop or individual coaching on arranging/orchestration
4. Demonstration of effective chamber group rehearsal strategy
5. Chamber group coaching
6. Capstone collaborative performance with students

Preparing for your Class Notes Residency

Thank you for signing up for a Class Notes Residency, brought to you by YourClassical MPR!

The Class Notes team has created two resources to help prepare for and extend the Class Notes Residencies experience:

1. **Meet the Artist PowerPoint.** Build excitement for the residency by introducing the ensemble in advance. Students will learn key information like instrumentation and style of music.
2. **Supporting Materials Packet.** The lessons in this packet come from the [Class Notes Lesson Library](#). All lessons align with learning objectives for this artist. Use these before the residency to introduce an important musical concept or after the experience to reinforce learning. Every classroom is different. Teachers should customize all content to fit student needs.

After your Class Notes Residency, please fill out our teacher survey and have your students complete our student survey. Class Notes staff will send a link with instructions after your residency.

PACKET CONTENTS

- 1) Instrument Exploration: The Brass Family
- 2) Instrument Exploration: Trombone
- 3) What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?



INSTRUMENT EXPLORATION: The Brass Family

Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will learn how to make a sound on a brass instrument and hear recordings of various brass instruments.
Total Video Time:	17:29

INTRODUCE the brass family

“The brass family is one of the four main instrument families in the orchestra. The main instruments in the brass family are the trumpet, the trombone, the French horn, the euphonium, and the tuba.”

LISTEN to the brass family

1. Let's start with the trumpet, which is shown in [this picture](#). Let's [listen to the trumpet](#), playing together with a harp.
2. Now we'll look at the [trombone](#). Here is [a trombone solo, featured in a jazz piece](#).
3. Next is the [French horn](#). Listen to the [French horn play this solo](#) from *Star Wars*.
4. Now it's time for a much bigger instrument, the [euphonium](#)! [Listen to the sound of the euphonium here](#).
5. And finally, the biggest member of the brass family, the [tuba](#). Hear the Minnesota Orchestra's Steve Campbell [play the tuba here](#).

PRACTICE skills for playing a brass instrument

1. “Do you know how to make a sound on a brass instrument? You need to blow on it, but you need to do something else, too. You need to buzz your lips inside the mouthpiece!”
2. Only a trained brass teacher can teach students how to properly buzz their lips. The following fun activities help give students an idea about how to start buzzing.
3. Start with kazoos! If you don't have kazoos on hand, make them by covering one end of a toilet paper tube with wax paper and securing it in place with a rubber band. Playing a tune on a kazoo gives students an idea of what buzzing feels like on the mouth and lips. But there is a key difference between making a sound on a kazoo versus a brass instrument. To play a kazoo, the player must hum/sing into the instrument. Brass players do not do this – they use their wind, or breathing.
4. Move from kazoos to zerberts (or raspberries, or whatever term you like to use for creating a seal between your mouth and forearm and blowing.) After the first zerbert, try to do the same thing with just your mouth – in other words, with no arm.
5. Try buzzing lips into various tube-shaped objects, including an actual brass mouthpiece, if you have access to one.
6. Once students have a little experience with buzzing, ask them to try experimenting with different speeds. Notice the difference in sound between fast and slow buzzing.
7. [Watch this tutorial](#) about buzzing to get an idea of what brass players need to do to get some really good buzzing going.



Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will identify the trombone by sight and sound.
Total Video Time:	10:39

INTRODUCE the trombone

“What do you know about the trombone? What does it look like? What does it sound like? To which instrument family does it belong?”

WATCH & LEARN about the trombone

1. Learn a little about the trombone by watching [this video](#) featuring Minnesota Orchestra trombone player, R. Douglas Wright.
2. The trombone is part of the brass family. It is used in many *genres*, or styles of music, including jazz! A famous trombone player called Trombone Shorty started playing when he was 4! [See a picture](#) of him playing early on!
3. [Watch a video](#) of Trombone Shorty playing at the White House. He plays a song that includes call and response. Try to echo his singing when that part comes up!
4. The trombone is also part of the orchestra. Composer Gustav Mahler featured trombones in this short section of his second symphony. As you watch, see how many other instruments you can name. You might also pretend to play your air trombone along with the players in the video!
5. [Watch](#) the New York Philharmonic play part of Mahler’s 2nd Symphony.

REVIEW learning about the trombone

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. Check students’ comprehension by discussing or journaling the following questions:
 - To which instrument family does the trombone belong?
 - How do trombone players make a sound on their instrument?
 - How do trombone players change the pitch, or notes, that they play?
 - How would you describe the sound of the trombone?
2. Continue learning using the Class Notes lesson all about the [Brass Family](#).



What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?

Age Range: Elementary, Grades K-5

Learning Objective: Students will demonstrate ensemble skills through performance. Students will utilize multiple rehearsal strategies to refine performance.

Total Video Time: 18:37

DISCUSS ensemble skills

1. “When musicians play together, how do they start at the same time? How can they be sure to play at the same speed, or *tempo*, so that they can stay together?”
2. Listen to students’ responses. If they answer that this is the job of the conductor, acknowledge that this is correct, but then ask further.
3. “What if it’s a small group that doesn’t have a conductor?”

PRACTICE ensemble skills

1. Remind students that when musicians play together but don’t have a conductor to lead them, they must give signals, or *cues*, so that they start together and stay together through a performance. It’s a way of communication and working together.
2. “Here are four ways musicians give cues so that they play well together.” (Briefly explain and demonstrate each technique for students.)
 - A. Eye Contact
 - B. Head nod and/or body movement
 - C. Sharp in-breath, or inhale
 - D. Constant listening.
3. Instruct students to watch for eye contact and body movement in [this video](#) featuring a string quartet. (3:30 min.)
4. Place students into small groups and ask them to choose a favorite classroom piece to perform. They may choose to sing, play on classroom instruments, or both.
5. Remind them that they must be able to start together on their own.
6. Circulate among the groups during rehearsal time and help each group refine their cueing technique.
7. Ask each group to perform for the class. Give feedback regarding cueing.

OBSERVE ensemble skills

Choose one or more performances to watch. Notice and discuss ensemble skills.

- [Lux String Quartet](#) performing music by Gyorgy Ligeti (5 min.)
- [Mill City String Quartet](#) performing music by Samuel Coleridge Taylor (4 min.)
- [Imani Winds](#) performing music by Valerie Coleman (3 min.)
- [Mill City String Quartet](#) performing music by DBR (3:30 min.)