

Instruments Of The Orchestra



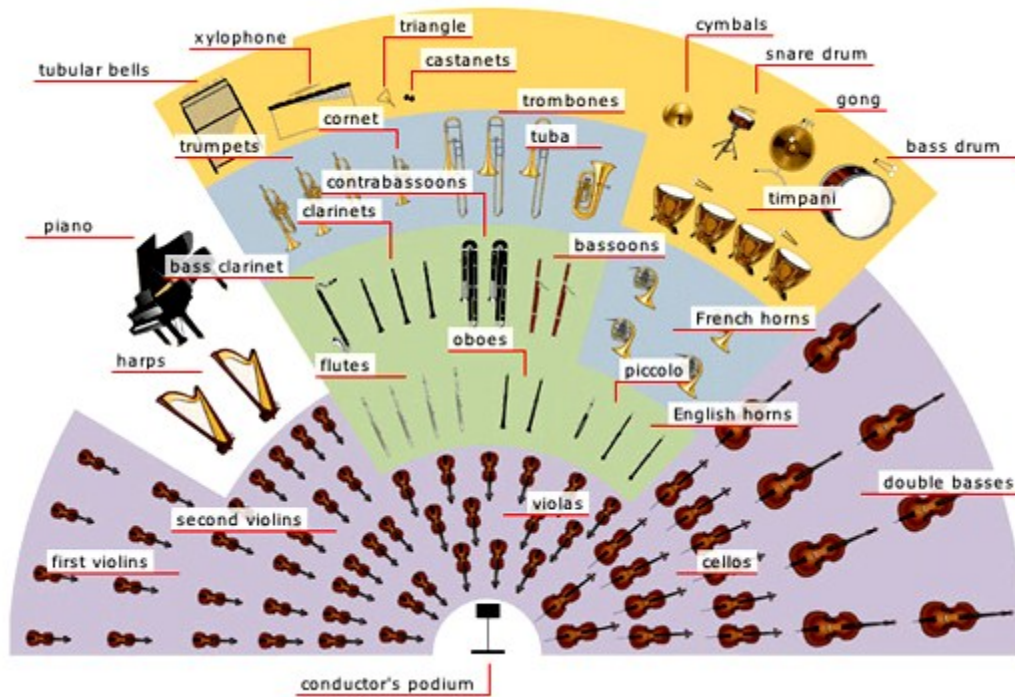
The Orchestra

The **orchestra** is a large group of instruments that play together. They have a **conductor** who directs them and helps them keep the beat. The instruments of the orchestra sit together in “**families**”.

The four instrument “families” are:

- The String Family (purple)
- The Brass Family (blue)
- The Percussion Family (yellow)
- The Woodwind Family (green)

This is their seating plan on stage!



Try visiting the Music website, Classics for Kids! You can listen to different instrument families!

<https://www.classicsforkids.com/games.html>

The String Family

The String family is the largest family in the orchestra. They are mostly made out of **wood**, and can either be played with a **bow** (wooden stick with horsehair from end to end) or the strings can be **plucked**.

The 4 main String instruments are:

1. **Violin** - the smallest of the string instruments. Held on your shoulder and under your chin. It has 4 strings. There are more violins in the orchestra than any other instrument. Watch Hilary Hahn play a violin solo by Bach.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEBX_ouEw1I



2. **Viola** - it looks exactly like the violin, except that it is bigger and a little bit lower sounding. It is still played under the chin. It has 4 strings. Watch Jeremy Green play the song "Havana" on the Viola.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yf5fCdLmv1E>



3. **Cello** - the cello looks like the violin and viola, but is much larger. The player is seated in a chair and holds the cello between their legs, with it balancing on a peg on the floor.

Yo-Yo Ma is one of the most famous Cellist to ever live. Watch him play "The Swan" from Carnival of the Animals.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qrKjywo7Q>



4. **Double Bass** - the largest and lowest instrument in the string family. The musician either stands to play or sits on a high stool. Watch this group of Double Bass players perform "The Pink Panther".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRiIO408ats>



*Other interesting string instruments are the ukulele, guitar, harp, banjo, etc.

The Brass Family

The Brass family of instruments get their name because of the metal they are made out of: **Brass**. They are **blown into** and have keys or slides to change notes. There are 4 main brass instruments.

1. Trumpet - the smallest and highest of the brass instruments. It has three keys on top.

Watch this man play "Star Wars" on the trumpet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YOSULBGYPk>

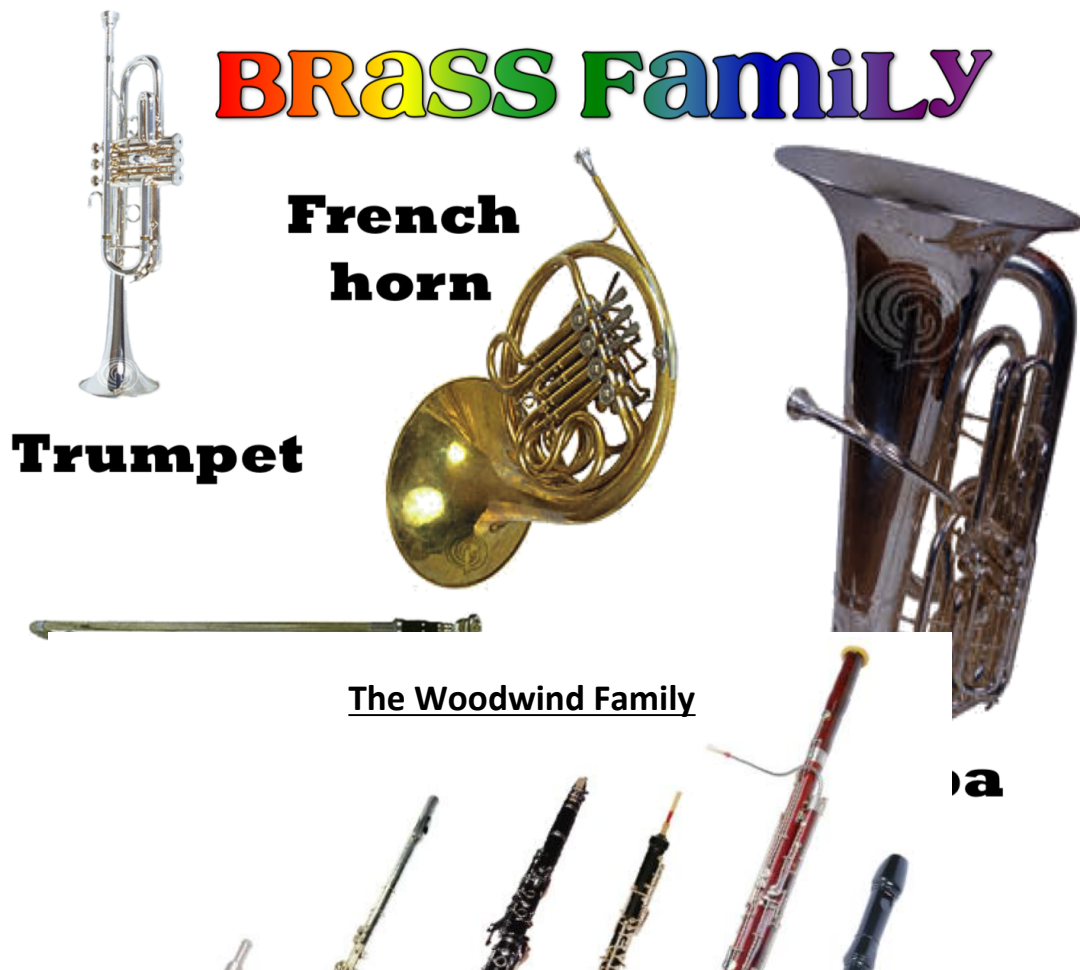
2. French Horn - this instrument has lots of twists and turns, and has a very warm sound. It has a big bell at the end that the player puts their hand in. This helps control the sound. Here's a cool example of a French Horn player layering his own sound for "Viva La Vida".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW3Ay9FRyeM>

3. Tuba - the largest and lowest of the brass instruments. It has over 6 meters of tubing! You need great breath control to be a tuba player because it is so huge. Its deep sound is used to support the other orchestra instruments. Here is a tuba and trombone duet to "Dance Monkey"!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jL6LtmLr9M>

4. Trombone - much deeper than the trumpet with a very different shape. The trombone has a long piece called a slide. A player can pull it in and out to change notes.



Once upon a time, all members of the woodwind family were made of wood. That's where the name comes from. Air, or wind is blown through these tubes. When a hole is open, the air only travels a short distance before it comes out (high sound). When the player closes the holes, the air travels further down the tube (low sound).

Flute & Piccolo - some of the oldest instruments, they were first made of wood or hollow reeds. Today they are made of silver... sometimes even gold! They are held to the side, and air is blown over the tone hole. The flute has a bright silvery sound. The piccolo is even higher and often shrill. Watch this girl play "Hedwig's Theme" from Harry Potter on the flute and piccolo!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-3tN-c6UwE>

Clarinet - it has a single bamboo reed on the back of the mouthpiece. It makes a round and mellow sound. Remember "Ivan the Cat" from "Peter and the Wolf" He is represented by the clarinet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUYuuvZ0A68>

Oboe - the oboe has a very interesting sound. Almost like you are singing with your nose plugged! It has two bamboo reeds that are joined together. The player blows air in-between them. Listen to the oboe play the character of the duck from "Peter and the Wolf".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RvlnYYFpAw>

Bassoon - is the lowest sounding woodwind. It also has a double reed like the oboe. It is made of polished wood and folded in half because it's so big. Remember "Grandpapa" from "Peter and the Wolf"? The bassoon always plays for that character. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjOrubwEVxI>

The Percussion Family

1. What are the 2 different types of percussion instruments?

_____ and _____.

2. Name four different percussion instruments.

3. What is the biggest and lowest Brass instrument?

4. Which string instrument is played by sitting on a chair and putting the instrument between your knees?

5. What are the string instruments made of?

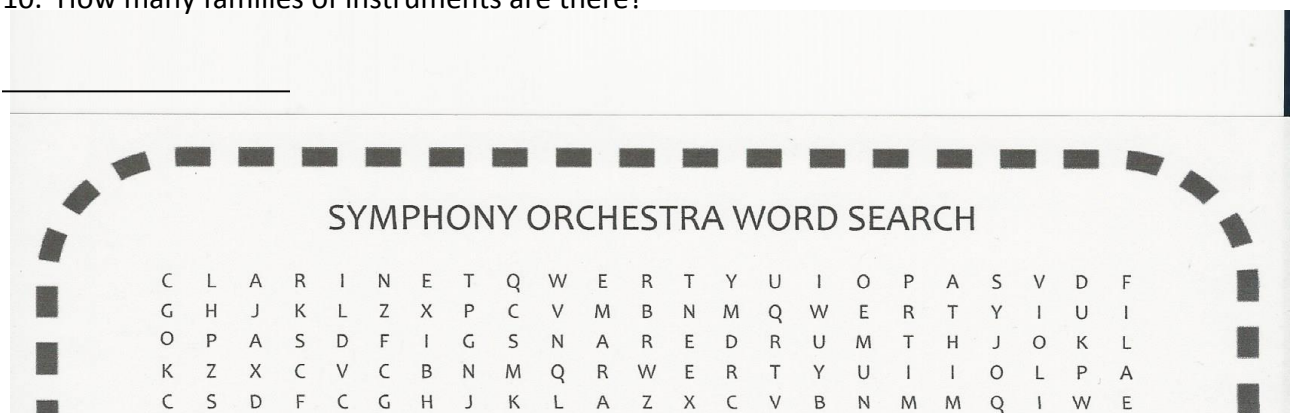
6. Which Brass instrument has a bell at the bottom that the player stick their hand in?

7. Which instrument is made out of silver, or even gold?

8. Which woodwind instrument is so big that it's folded over?

9. What do you call the person at the front of the orchestra that keeps everyone on the beat?

10. How many families of instruments are there?



Music Websites

<https://www.classicsforkids.com/games.html>

<http://sfskids.org/>

<http://www.sphinxkids.org/>

<https://www.nyphilkids.org/games/main.phtml>

<https://pbskids.org/games/music/>