

The orchestral instruments

Do you like classical music? Do you know the relevant vocabulary to have a conversation about it?

ANNA HOCHSIEDER presents useful words and expressions.

easy plus



Bernhard Forth

A conductor's job

I'm a music teacher, and I **conduct the orchestra** at my school. It's a medium-sized orchestra, with **strings**, a **woodwind section** and a few **brass instruments**, but currently no **percussion section**. For our Christmas **concert**, we're **rehearsing** Haydn's Surprise **Symphony** — the one with the famous **kettledrum stroke** in the second **movement** — so we've borrowed a **timpanist** from another school.

I **play the piano**, of course, as well as several **string instruments**. I think all children should learn to **read music** and to play a **musical instrument**. **Practising** regularly teaches them discipline, and **performing** in front of an **audience** builds their confidence.

I enjoy **rehearsals**, but there's nothing better than **giving a concert**. I love the cacophony of 30 **musicians** all **tuning** their instruments at the same time, while I stand on the podium and take a last quick look at the **score**. My favourite moment is when I raise my **baton** and 30 young faces look up at me, all with only one thing in mind: to **play in tune** and **in time** in order to produce beautiful music.

1. violin [ˌvaɪəˈlɪn]

2. bow [bəʊ]

3. string

4. viola [viˈəʊlə]

5. cello [ˈtʃeləʊ]

6. double bass
[ˌdʌbəl ˈbeɪs]

7. flute [fluːt]

8. oboe [ˈəʊbəʊ]

9. clarinet
[ˌklærəˈnet]

10. bassoon
[bəˈsuːn]

11. trumpet

12. (French) horn

13. trombone
[trɒmˈbəʊn]

14. cymbals
[ˈsɪmbəlz]

15. tuba [ˈtʃʊbə]

16. music stand

17. timpani [ˈtɪmpəni],
kettledrums

18. drumstick
[ˈdrʌmstɪk]

19. triangle
[ˈtraɪæŋɡl]

Practice

Now try some exercises to practise your music vocabulary.

1. To which sections of the orchestra do the musical instruments on the opposite page belong? Complete the table below.

woodwind	brass	percussion	strings

2. In each line below, cross out one noun that cannot be used with the verb on the left, leaving two correct answers.

- a) **play** the flute / an orchestra / in tune
- b) **conduct** an audience / a symphony / an orchestra
- c) **tune** a violin / a piano / music
- d) **read** music / a concert / a score
- e) **rehearse** a piece of music / an instrument / a symphony

3. Which words are defined here (a–f)? Match them to their definitions.

- a) the people who watch and listen to others performing in public
- b) a person who plays a musical instrument
- c) a long, thin object that you need to play a violin or a cello
- d) a short, thin stick that a conductor uses to direct the music
- e) a time when people practise together to prepare for a concert
- f) one of the main parts into which a symphony is divided

- 1. a rehearsal [ri'hɜ:sɔ:l]
- 2. a baton ['bætɒn]
- 3. a musician [mju'zɪʃən]
- 4. a bow
- 5. a movement
- 6. the audience ['ɔ:diəns]

- a) ☐
- b) ☐
- c) ☐
- d) ☐
- e) ☐
- f) ☐

Answers on page 67

Language tip

Here are a few rules to remember when talking about music.

- Don't say "a music". "Music" is an uncountable noun.
- Don't say "I play piano". You play **the** piano (the violin, the flute, etc.).
- Don't say "classie music". Music by composers such as Haydn or Mozart is called "classical music".