



MEET THE ORCHESTRA

Story Synopsis

On the first spread of *Meet the Orchestra*, the conductor of a symphony orchestra introduces himself and then sets off with the reader on a guided tour of an orchestra's four sections — string, woodwind, brass, and percussion. One musician from each section then tells the reader about her or his special instrument. Illustrations and photos show what each instrument in the section looks like and how it is played. Throughout the tour, the conductor and musicians provide interesting facts about different instruments. At the end of this nonfiction book, there are quizzes about the orchestra as well as an index to help the reader find the answers.

LITERACY ELEMENTS

speech bubbles

similes: like water flowing in a stream; as loud as a parade

nonfiction features: headings, index

CONNECTIONS

DRAMA/DANCE

interpret meaning using basic drama techniques

VISUAL ARTS

manipulate a range of materials

WORDS TO DISCOVER

nouns: orchestra, conductor, baton, musicians, instruments, performance, valves, rhythm, alphabetical order

verbs: perform, play, vibrate, sing, thump

compound words: horsehair, woodwind, mouthpiece

ESL CONSIDERATIONS

Discuss comparisons such as big/bigger/biggest, and opposites such as cover/uncover.

Overall Learning Opportunities

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 - demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of music specified for this grade level
 - use correctly the vocabulary and musical terminology associated with the specific expectations for this grade level
 - analyse the relationship between artistic intent and the expressive work
- A/B

Students will:

 - use some conventions of written materials to help them understand and use the materials
 - read independently, using reading strategies appropriate for this grade level
 - respond personally to a range of texts

ACTIVITY MENU

Exploration: Listening to the Orchestra, page 106

Guided Reading, pages 107–109

As a Group, pages 110–111

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 - *AB Sing-Along*: identifying a verse-chorus song structure
 - *Louder, Faster!*: identifying and describing dynamics and tempo in orchestral music
- A/B
 - *Concentration*: matching words and sentences in a concentration-style game
 - *I Haven't Got a Clue*: creating word clues for a guessing game

Independent Work, pages 112–115

- *BLM 35*: instrument cards (strings and woodwinds)
- *BLM 36*: instrument cards (brass and percussion)
- *BLM 37*: matching words in two lists
- *BLM 38*: recalling information from the text



Listening to the Orchestra

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- identify the four families of orchestral instruments
- accompany songs in an expressive way
- explore instruments from a variety of cultures

YOU WILL NEED

- chart paper and marker
- a musical introduction to the orchestra (see Grade 2 Audio CD Track 31)
- orchestral music that prominently features different sections

OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- identify the different sections of an orchestra?
- mime the playing of a particular instrument?
- recognize the characteristic sounds of each section?

TEACHING tip

While it is not realistic to expect children of this age to identify every instrument by sound, they should be able to recognize the instrument's family. They should also be able to identify definitive instruments, such as the trumpet, violin, flute, and drum.

Reading the Story

Make a chart with headings for the four sections of the orchestra.

Ask the children to turn to page 24 of *Meet the Orchestra*. Say:

- We need to find out which instruments belong in each section. Can you see something on this page that would help us? (the index)
- To find out which instruments are in the string section, which pages should we turn to? (pages 4–7)

Turn to those pages and have the children name the different string instruments. Write each one on the chart. Repeat this procedure for the other three sections.

Starting the Exploration

Use **BLMs 35** and **36** to create a set of instrument cards so that each child has one card. (Create doubles of some of the instrument cards as necessary until each child has one.) Place the cards in a container and invite the children to draw a card.



Pages 112–113

Tell the children that they are going to learn to “play” the instrument that they drew. Divide the room into a string section, woodwind section, brass section, and percussion section. Based on the cards the children draw, they should physically place themselves in the correct section of the “orchestra.”

Working on the Listening

To explore orchestral instruments, play music created by solo instruments from the four sections of the orchestra (see Grade 2 Audio CD Track 31). You might also play excerpts from a piece designed to teach children about orchestral music, such as *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* by Benjamin Britten. Say:

- Listen carefully to the sound your instrument makes so that you know how to describe it.

After the listening is complete, say:

- Use the information in the book to find out how to hold and play your instrument. Learn one fact about your instrument that you can share.

Provide a model of how the children should mime playing their instrument. Choose an easily recognizable instrument, such as a piano, guitar, or drums. Say:

- I'm going to pretend to play an instrument. You try to guess what it is.

Give the children time to do their research and practise their mime. Encourage them to help one another.

Sharing

In turn, each child should mime how her or his instrument is held and played. The other children should try to guess which instrument is being demonstrated. (Children with instruments in the same section are exempt from guessing.) Have the child conclude her or his presentation by giving one fact about the instrument.

Extension

Have the children move back into their sections. Play orchestral works that clearly feature particular instruments or sections (see Grade 2 Audio CD Tracks 32–35). Ask the children to help you (the conductor) identify which sections/instruments are playing. Play the piece again, with the children miming an energetic performance.

This Exploration works well with Stand-Alone Activity 11: “Make Music Part of Your Day” on page 139 and with Stand-Alone Activity 20: “Musicians Welcome” on page 148.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Children will:

- restate information in a nonfiction text in their own words
- use and interpret some conventions of formal texts
- use a range of strategies to construct meaning

YOU WILL NEED

- chart paper and marker

OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- demonstrate an apparent skill to read and solve any reading struggles?
- search for and locate answers to your questions?
- recognize and use the different elements of a nonfiction text?
- show an ability to stick to the task until complete?

TEACHING TIP

Because there is an abundance of information contained in this book, you will probably need to divide Reading the Text into sections. Five natural divisions would be the following: Introduction; The String Section; The Woodwind Section and The Brass Section; The Percussion Section and A Special Performance; Name the Instrument and Index.

Setting the Scene

Say:

- Listen to these words. When you hear a word that makes a picture of something in your mind, raise your hand: cello; violin; flute; trumpet; drum; musicians; conductor.

Continue to say words that conjure up the idea of an orchestra until several hands are raised. Then ask for a series of volunteers who would like to talk about their mind pictures. Say:

- When you put all those mind pictures together, you can make a picture of an orchestra.

Ask:

- Is there anything missing from my list? Are there other words I should add?

Encourage the children to suggest additions to the word collection. Then say:

- Let's try it again.

Repeat the list while the children make mind pictures, and then ask:

- What is an orchestra? As I print the word on chart paper, let's spell it together: o-r-c-h-e-s-t-r-a — orchestra.
- Do you know another word for the orchestra leader? That's right, the conductor.
- Who has seen an orchestra playing on TV or in a concert hall? Tell us about that time.
- Who has heard an orchestra playing on a tape or CD? Tell us about that time.
- Do you have a favourite instrument? Which one is it? Why?
- Is there an instrument you don't like? Why not?

Show the cover of the book and say:

- The title of the book is *Meet the Orchestra*. What do you think we'll learn from reading it?

Encourage the children's responses and then give out copies of the book. Say:

- Look at the cover. Who are the authors? Who's the illustrator? Can you find the name of the company that published the book?

Explain that the publisher is the company that makes the actual (physical) book.

Then take the children on a book walk through some of the book's features: the front cover information; the title page; the fact that there are both photographs and pictures, the headings in boldface type; the use of speech bubbles; the quiz on page 22 (which they can try after reading the book); the index on page 24 (which helps readers to access information quickly).

Reading the Text

Have the children turn to page 2. Say:

- This section is titled *Introduction*. Put your finger on the word. What's an introduction? Why do you think this book has an introduction?
- Look at the photograph. Do you recognize any of the instruments? Which ones?
- Look for the conductor standing on the podium, holding a baton in his hand. Why do you think the conductor stands on a podium? Why does he use a baton to conduct?
- For this book, a conductor is our guide. Put your finger on him in his first appearance on page 3. As I read the introduction aloud and you follow along, listen to find out what the conductor tells us we'll be learning from reading this book.

Ask:

- Which section does the conductor tell us we'll be meeting first? That's right, the string section. Turn the page.

TEACHING tip

You can use an audio track with solo instrumental samples (see *Grade 2 Audio CD Track 31*) to augment the opening conversation about what an orchestra is. A musical piece such as the opening of Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* also provides an opportunity for children to hear the sounds of several instruments: oboe, French horn, violin, clarinet, trombone, bassoon, trumpet, and flute.

➤ Look at the sketches on these pages. What do these string instruments have in common?

As you make a point-form list on chart paper, encourage a variety of responses, including:

- have strings
- are played with a bow
- are made of wood
- have a similar shape

Then, make a second list. Ask:

➤ What are some differences?

Encourage a variety of responses, including:

- different sizes
- some played while the musician is standing up and some played while the musician is sitting down

Read page 4 aloud as the children follow along, and then say:

- Read page 5 to find out how a cellist plays the cello and to discover something important about the size of the string section.
- Turn the page. Read page 6 and look for the answers to the questions in the photographs.
- The conductor is telling us the next section we're going to visit. What is it? Yes, that's right, it's the woodwind section. How do you think a musician would play a *woodwind* (emphasize the second syllable to give a clue) instrument? Would the player use a bow? Do you think a *woodwind* instrument has strings? Let's turn the page to find out.

Read page 8 to the children. Then invite them to read page 9 to find out about the woodwinds. Say:

- Turn to page 10. Look at the various woodwind instruments: the piccolo, the flute, the bassoon, the clarinet, the oboe.

Which instrument do you think plays the lowest sound? the highest sound? Why?

Read page 10 to the children. Then invite them to talk about where the player blows the air to make the music, and to answer the question that's asked. Say:

- The conductor is inviting us to visit the brass section. What do you think the instruments are made of? Do you know the names of any instruments you think would be in the brass section?

Encourage the children's responses and then invite them to turn to page 12. Say:

- Read this page to learn about the trumpet.

Ask:

- How are these brass instruments different from each other? How are they all the same?

Read page 13 to the children. Focus their attention on the conductor's speech bubble. Have the children turn to pages 14 and 15. Say:

- Read page 15 to find out what a valve is and how it works.
- Read the conductor's message to find out what the last section of the orchestra is called. That's right, it's the percussion section. Here's a clue to the instruments in the percussion section. "A percussionist either strikes, shakes, or scrapes the instrument to cause a vibration. Percussion instruments thump and tap and rap and ring." Can you think of a percussion instrument?

Encourage the children's responses, which might include: piano, organ, keyboard, triangle, drum, cymbals, and castanets. Before they themselves read pages 16–19 of the text, have them look at and talk about the various instruments represented on these pages. Guide the children through the section by reading aloud page 16.

Then say:

- Turn the page and raise your hand if you recognize the show that's being performed.

If any children recognize *The Nutcracker Suite*, invite them to tell a bit about the story and the performance. Then invite the children to read pages 20 and 21 to learn about the orchestra pit.

Say:

- Turn to the quiz on page 22 and read the instructions. What are the two things you have to do?
- Let's start with #1. What's its name? What section would you find it in? #2?
- Let's check our thinking with the answers on page 23.

Turn to page 24. Read the paragraph at the top of the page aloud to the children. Ask:

- To which section do you think the harp belongs? Why? What about the saxophone? The gong? The baritone? Why? Let's check our thinking with the answers at the bottom of this page.

Say:

- Look at the Index in the boxed-in section. On what pages would I look to find out about the conductor? The brass section? The string section?

Independent Reading

Invite the children to reread the book on their own with as little assistance as possible. Because of the density of the content, you may want to split the independent reading into two separate chunks of time. The end of page 15 forms a natural break.

After Reading

Ask questions such as:

- What kind of person do you think might enjoy playing an instrument in an orchestra? Why do you think that?
- Would you enjoy playing in an orchestra? Why or why not?

Revisit the Story

Engage the children in a conversation about the text by using open-ended prompts, such as:

- Of all the instruments we met in this book, which one do you think looks most difficult to play? Why? Which looks easiest? Why?

Have the children search for specific information in the text by asking such questions as:

- What are the names of two percussion instruments? Two brass instruments?
- How are a trumpet and a pair of cymbals the same? How are they different?
- How do you play a string instrument? a percussion instrument? a woodwind instrument? a brass instrument?
- Which section do you think could play the loudest? the softest? Why?

Reinforce the Story

Have the children complete **BLM 37** to reinforce information they have acquired.



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As a Group

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- demonstrate an awareness of form in music
- perform simple melodic patterns

YOU WILL NEED

- children's songs with a verse/chorus form (see Grade 2 Audio CD Tracks 2 and 6)
- orchestral music with clear parts/themes (see Tracks 12 and 14)

OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- identify different parts in a piece of music?
- participate in a sing-along?

Activity: AB Sing-Along

This activity is built around two specific children's songs, but you can substitute others. Start by listening to "The More We Get Together" (see Grade 2 Audio CD Track 2). Say:

- Raise your hand when you hear a change in the song.

Play the song. If necessary, help the children hear the change at the line "For your friends are my friends." Listen to the song again, inviting the children to sing along.

Next, write the lyrics to "My Dog Rags" (see Grade 2 Audio CD Track 6) on the chalkboard, leaving space between verses and the chorus. Tell the children that the first part of the song is called the verse, then play the first verse and pause. Tell them the next part is called the chorus, then play it and pause. Say:

- We're going to hear singing again. Put up your right hand when you hear the verse, and your left hand when you hear the chorus.

Play the rest of the song (verse chorus chorus). Say:

- If we call the verse Part A, what could we call the chorus? (Part B)

Divide the class in half. Explain that one half will sing along with Part A, the other with Part B. Play the song several times, with the class singing along.

Extension

Challenge the children to identify the different parts of other familiar children's songs.

This Extension works well with Stand-Alone Activity 19: "Sing Out" on page 147.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- identify examples of dynamics in pieces of music
- identify the tempo of various pieces of music
- improvise simple rhythmic accompaniments

YOU WILL NEED

- a variety of orchestral music (see Grade 2 Audio CD Tracks 11, 12, and 14.)
- a variety of rhythm instruments (optional)
- art materials (optional)

Activity: Louder, Faster!

Review the terms *dynamics* (loud/soft) and *tempo* (fast/slow) with the children. Ask:

- How does soft music make you feel? loud music? fast music? slow music?

Note the children's responses on the chalkboard.

Listen to three different pieces of orchestral music. Select pieces that have different qualities, e.g., the 2nd movement of *Symphony 101* by Haydn (restrained, steady beat), "William Tell Overture" by Rossini (dramatic changes in dynamics), and "Can Can" from *Orpheus in the Underworld* by Offenbach (louder and faster!). (See Grade 2 Audio CD Tracks 12, 11, and 14.)

Discuss the qualities of each piece, focussing especially on dynamics and tempo. Ask questions such as:

- Was the music loud or soft? fast or slow?
- Did the music stay the same or change?
- If you heard this music, would you want to walk or run?
- At what time of day would you like to listen to this music? Why?

Conduct a poll of the class to see which of the three pieces is the favourite.

Extension

- Use simple instruments to create an accompaniment to one or more of the pieces. Focus on matching the dynamics with the tempo of the music.
- Discuss colours and shapes that might "match" each piece of music. Invite the children to create works of abstract art that capture the mood of one of the pieces.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- read a variety of simple written materials for different purposes
- recognize a wide variety of sight words

YOU WILL NEED

- word cards
- sentence strips
- marker

OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- match identical words and sentences?
- appear to concentrate on the placement of revealed sentences?

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- use appropriate gestures and tone of voice, as well as natural speech rhythms, when speaking
- give and follow instructions

YOU WILL NEED

- paper and pencils
- dictionaries and other reference works

OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- appear eager to participate?
- speak clearly?
- offer relevant clues?

Activity: Concentration

Arrange a large floor space on which to spread out the word cards and sentence strips. The children will need to be able to gather and see the cards and strips with ease.

On large pieces of white or cream-coloured construction paper or bristolboard, print a variety of words from *Meet the Orchestra* that are associated with an orchestra. Such words could include: conductor, trumpet, baton, strings, drum. Then create a second set of cards identical to the first.

Place all the cards randomly on the floor, face down, and have the children sit in a group so that they can clearly see all the cards.

To show the children how to play the game, turn over any card, read it aloud, and place it on the floor face up. Then choose another card at random, turn it over, read it aloud, and, if it's a match with the first card, take both cards out of the game, and then take another turn. If it's not a match, put both cards back, face down, in their original places and invite the child to your right to take the next turn.

Extension

Using strips of bristolboard or chart paper, print sentences that focus on information from *Meet the Orchestra*, and play the same game. For example, a sentence strip could read, 'The conductor holds the baton.'

Activity: I Haven't Got a Clue

Think of an "orchestra" word, then a corresponding clue for it so that the children can guess the word's identity. Invite one guess. If the child doesn't guess the word, add one more clue. Continue the pattern until the word is identified.

The object of the exercise is to have the children guess the word as soon as possible; therefore, it's important to give the very best clue first. For example, for the word *baton*, clue #1 might be, "I'm a stick." If the children don't guess the word *baton*, repeat the first clue and add another clue: "I'm a stick. The conductor holds me."

Have only one idea per clue so that the children aren't overloaded with concepts.

Therefore, avoid clues such as "I'm a white stick" or "The conductor holds me and waves me around."

Extension

• Individual children could take your place as quizmaster. Have them choose an orchestra word from the text. With the assistance of appropriate resources (e.g., other people and dictionaries), they can print their clues (to a maximum of 5) on paper to read aloud.

• Some children could complete **BLM 38** to demonstrate their ability to combine their recall of text information with their experiential knowledge.



Page 115



violin



viola



cello



double bass



piccolo



flute



bassoon



oboe



clarinet



trombone



trumpet



tuba



French horn



snare drum



tambourine



timpani



cymbals



xylophone

Meet the Orchestra

BLM 37

Name _____ Date _____

Match.

a white stick

bow

orchestra

baton

flute

a singing bird

conductor

musicians and instruments

brass section

cymbals

percussion section

orchestra leader

woodwind instrument

tube with holes

violin

mouthpiece

Name _____ Date _____

Print three things you know about . . .

an orchestra conductor

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

a cello

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

percussion instruments

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Print one sentence that tells something you learned from reading *Meet the Orchestra*. Remember to begin the sentence with a capital letter and to end it with a period.

