

MEI's Introduction to Instruments

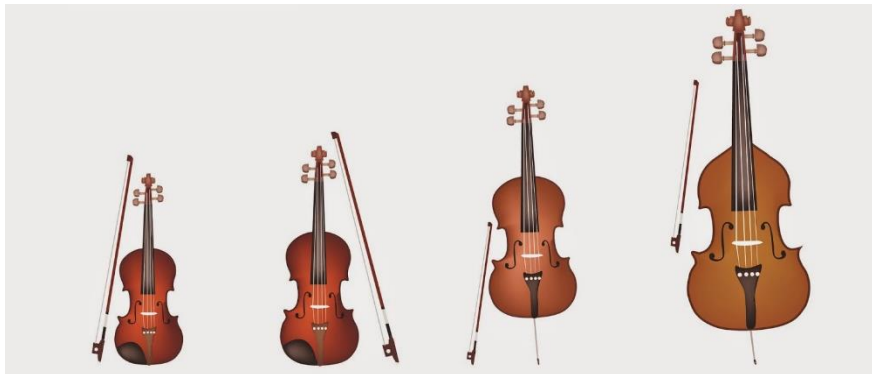
Once you have completed the "Introduction to Music" Course, or are in year 4 or above, it's time to pick an instrument!

Here you can read a little bit about how each instrument is played and listen to what each one sounds like.

The String Family

Bowed strings

The violin, viola, cello and double bass are all built in the same way, out of different pieces of wood that are glued together. The 4 strings (sometimes 5 on a double bass) can be plucked or played using a bow to create a sound.



Violin

The violin is the smallest and highest instrument in the string family. It is held under the chin, resting on the shoulder.

[Violin Solo](#)
[Violin Twinkle](#)
[Twinkle Little Star](#)

Viola

The viola bigger than the violin and sounds lower. It is played in the same way as the violin

[Viola Solo](#)
[Viola Twinkle by Dallas Symphony](#)

Cello

The cello is bigger than the violin and viola and sounds much lower. It is played sitting down and help between the player's knees.

[Cello Solo](#)
[Cello Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)

Double Bass

The double bass is the largest and lowest instrument in the string family. It is played standing up or with the musician sat on a high stool

[Double Bass Solo](#)
[Double Bass Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)

Plucked Strings

Ukulele

The ukulele has four strings that are plucked and strummed.

[Ukulele Solo](#)



Guitar

The guitar is played like the ukulele but has 6 strings. There are lots of different styles of guitar music!

The bass guitar has 4 strings and plays the bass line.

[Classical Guitar](#)

[Electric Guitar](#)

[Bass Guitar](#)



The Woodwind Family

Instruments in the woodwind family used to be made of wood, which gives them their name. The player blows across or into the instrument to create a sound and uses their fingers to move the keys to change the notes.

Flute

The player blows air across a small hole to make a sound and moves their fingers to change the notes.

[Flute Solo](#)

[Flute Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Oboe

The oboe is the smaller and higher of the “double reed” instruments. Two reeds are tied together and the player blows into them to make a sound.

[Oboe Solo](#)

[Oboe Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Bassoon

The bassoon is the lowest and biggest woodwind instrument. Like the oboe, it is a “double reed” instrument.

[Bassoon Solo](#)

[Bassoon Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Clarinet

The player blows into a single reed attached to a mouthpiece to make a sound on the clarinet.

[Clarinet Solo](#)

[Clarinet Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Saxophone

The saxophone is played in the same way as the clarinet, by blowing into a mouthpiece and a single reed.

[Saxophone Solo](#)

The Brass Family

Brass instruments are made out of long tubes of metal. Players blow into the instrument to make a sound, and the notes can be changed by changing the shape of the player’s lips, moving the valves or by using a slide.

Trumpet

The trumpet is the highest brass instrument. The player moves their lips and presses the three valves in different combinations to change the notes.

[Trumpet Solo](#)

[Trumpet Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



French Horn

The French horn is held in the left hand and the right hand fits inside the bell. Like the trumpet, the player moves their lips and presses the three valves in different combinations to change the notes.

[French Horn Solo](#)

[French Horn Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Trombone

Unlike the trumpet and French horn, the notes on a trombone are changed by moving the slide up and down.

[Trombone Solo](#)

[Trombone Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Euphonium

The euphonium is lower than the trumpet but played in a similar way. It is held upright.

[Euphonium Solo](#)



Tuba

The tuba is the biggest and lowest instrument in the brass family. It is played sitting down and rests in the player's lap.

[Tuba Solo](#)

[Tuba Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



What else?

There are a number of instruments that don't fit into any of the families introduced here.

Piano

The piano is a large instrument made up of 88 keys. When the player presses a key a small hammer inside the instrument strikes a string to make a sound

[Piano Solo](#)

[Piano Twinkle Twinkle Little Star](#)



Keyboard

The keyboard is played in the same way as the piano but it is electronic and often smaller.

Drums

A drum kit is made up of drums, cymbals and sometimes other percussion instruments which are hit with drum sticks.



The Voice

Everyone can sing and you always have your voice with you! There are lots of different styles of singing and everyone's voice can be trained.