



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
Convention/Clinic July 26-28, 2018**

**Solid Start: Setting Up Beginning  
Band Brass Students for Success in the  
First Semester**

**CLINICIANS:  
Asa Burk, Chris Meredith**

**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

# Solid Start: Brass

## Setting up Beginning Band Brass Students for Success in the First Semester

Asa Burk (aburk@argyleisd.com) & Chris Meredith (meredithc@lisd.net), Clinicians

### Before the first day

- Communication
- Paperwork sent home before first day of school
- Day one: kids are ready to get rolling
- Use every possible moment of class to establish the solid fundamentals that they will build on for the rest of their musical career

### Very first days of class

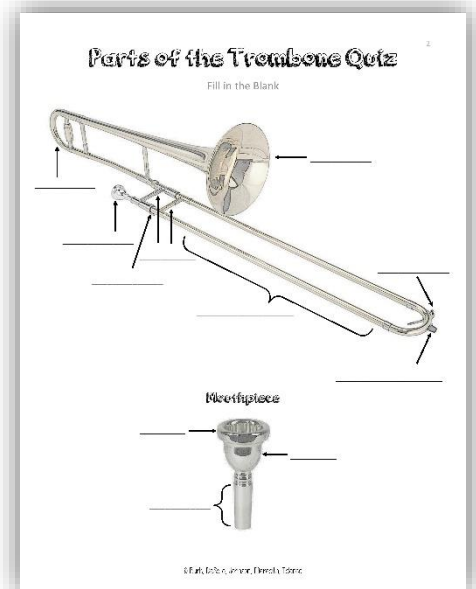
- Lean more toward information and activities that promote environment, routine and culture for the next 7 years.
- Get organized – entry/exit, procedures, paperwork, instruments, kits
- Musical Alphabet “Games”
  - Pass offs at the beginning of class as students enter
  - Post certificates as students complete
  - Different ways of practicing and performing musical alphabet
- Music Theory
- Instrument pictures – parts, assembly
- Give them something to practice at home starting on the very first day

### Next couple of weeks - Move with purpose VERY slowly.

- Posture awareness and control
- Air control
  - Breathing Chant
  - Use metronome
  - 2-count breath
  - Say, Do while teacher says, Do without instruction
- Introduce the instrument - parts, assembly, etc.
- Memorize positions
- Rhythm Rockers

### Introduce the instrument

- Embouchure
- Mouthpiece “vibration”
- Hand position/instrument angle
- Continue Music Theory, Rhythm Rockers
- Review parts, assembly
- First tones
  - Whatever note comes out is great. Teacher models everything.
  - Overlay with breathing chant
  - Aim for:



- Trumpet – 1st line E
- French horn – 2nd line G
- Trombone/Euphonium - 4th line F
- Tuba – bottom space F
- Have a pitch reference playing
- Demonstrate – echo play
- When do instruments go home?

### Play First Notes

- Overlay the breathing chant
- Don't mention anything about articulation - model and use a syllable
- Focus on tone production and consistency
- Play without notation first
- Individual assessment EVERYDAY

### Air speed, air shape, air direction

- Focused air stream
- Angle of mouthpiece shank/full instrument

### Add notes down/up so that the range is a 5th

- Most instruments - Low concert B<sup>b</sup> up to F
- French horn - Middle C up to 2<sup>nd</sup> line G
- Stay on one note in a line exercise - changing notes comes later

### Changing notes

- Diatonically and chromatically
- Blow through notes - change positions quickly and efficiently
- 2 notes at a time, add more until you play all 5 notes
- Extend the time of playing from 4 counts to 6, then 8, etc.

### Introduce Articulation

- Model/demonstrate - say/play
- Use a syllable - tU
  - Light but clear note-start with the tongue
  - Emphasis is on the tone quality and resonance of the note
- Reinforce with instructions/reminders written on the music
- Use a single repeated note
- Move from quarter notes to 8th notes to 8th note triplets to 16th notes

### Fall Semester Goals

- Solid and consistent tone quality
- Sense of pulse and steady beat
- Understand the expectations of procedures, routines and culture
- As you teach the fundamental skills - apply them with musical lines in the book
- Complete Musical Alphabet Pass-offs
- Pass off Rhythm Rockers
- Know lines and spaces

**Trombone First Notes**  
F, E<sup>b</sup>, D, C, B<sup>b</sup>

1. F 1<sup>st</sup> Position

2. E<sup>b</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Position

3. D 4<sup>th</sup> Position

4. C 6<sup>th</sup> Position

5. B<sup>b</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Position

11. B<sup>b</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Position

© Mark DeVos, www.MusicTheory.com

**Trombone Basics #1**  
Exercise in the key of B<sup>b</sup>

1. 1 2 3 4

2. 1 2 3 4

3. 1 2 3 4

4. 1 2 3 4

5. 1 2 3 4

6. 1 2 3 4

7. 1 2 3 4

8. 1 2 3 4

© Mark DeVos, www.MusicTheory.com

- Fall Semester Performance(s)
  - Demonstration performance - feature each section, fundamentals, book lines
  - Winter concert - 1 or 2 easy tunes - minimal range, rewrites if needed

### After the fall performance

- Expand range - up and down
- Introduce lip slurs for strength and flexibility
  - Start with 2 note downward slur
  - Continue with same 2 notes upward slur (it's ok to tongue the 2<sup>nd</sup> note at first if they can't make the slur happen)
  - Focus on air direction - go slow - reinforce
- Introduce Tetrachord Titans
  - Foundations of scales
  - Four note patterns are easy to learn and memorize
- Introduce Chromatic Scale
  - Small chunks
  - Goes in position order
  - Say names, positions, say and position on instrument, play
- Increase dexterity moving between notes
  - Wiggle fingers/slide between two notes
  - Start with half steps, then whole steps, etc.

**Trombone Bugles #1**  
Stars Level 1

1. Keep your collar in the same position as you work the...

2. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

3. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

4. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

5. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

6. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

7. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

8. Slur the first two notes of each slur.

© Bob Schirmer, Series: First Steps

### Rinse and repeat

- Address multiple aspects of playing every day
- Some are very basic while some are more advanced
- Focus activity to start class
- Count rhythms
- Address music theory
- Always focus on tone production
- Push forward to expand the horizon but continue to review and reinforce previous material
- Skip around in the book
- Do exercises in different rhythms

### Assessments

- Musical Alphabet
- Rhythm Rockers
- Instrument Part Quizzes
- Music Theory Quizzes
- Note Name ID Quizzes
- Tetrachord Titans
- One Octave Scales
- Two Octave Scales
- Scales in Thirds
- Arpeggios

**Trombone Chromatic #1**  
B $\flat$  Chromatic Scale

1. Ascending

2. Descending

3. Ascending

4. Descending

5. Ascending

6. Descending

7. One Octave B $\flat$  Chromatic Scale

© Bob Schirmer, Series: First Steps

For more information on any of the exercises and excerpts go to [www.musicalmastery.org](http://www.musicalmastery.org)