



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 21-23, 2022**

**Beginning Trumpet: Try This Try That,
Good Luck!**

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Beginning Trumpet: Try This Try That, Good Luck!

Foreword: The trumpet is one the most challenging beginning brass instruments to teach. We all struggle with that universal “err” sound they tend to make. We all struggle with the fact our low brass and horn sounds mature at a faster rate than our trumpets. But the fact is it’s not all our fault. I believe there are two factors that will help us understand why it’s difficult to produce a good tone initially. First of all, the mouthpiece is small and there is zero forgiveness for the student. Compare that to the large mouthpiece instruments where a student has plenty of room to manipulate the aperture or the cone shaped horn mouthpiece that instantly helps the lips vibrate. Secondly, the straight tube of the leadpipe does not create enough initial back pressure for the lips to come together naturally, so the student reacts by pressing the lips. These factors can be frustrating for you and the students. Be patient, their tones will improve over time.

Our hope is that you will receive some information that will assist you to overcome these challenges and make teaching the trumpet more fun for you and your students.

- Before you begin!

- Screening

- Don’t assume big lips can’t play trumpet.
- Can they vibrate on the front of their lips?
- Can they make their lips small?
- Listen to the note they naturally get.
- 2nd line G? 3rd space C sign them up!!! Some of the best trumpet players in history have fuller lips.
- Kids should not skip trying trumpet just because of lip size.

- Personality

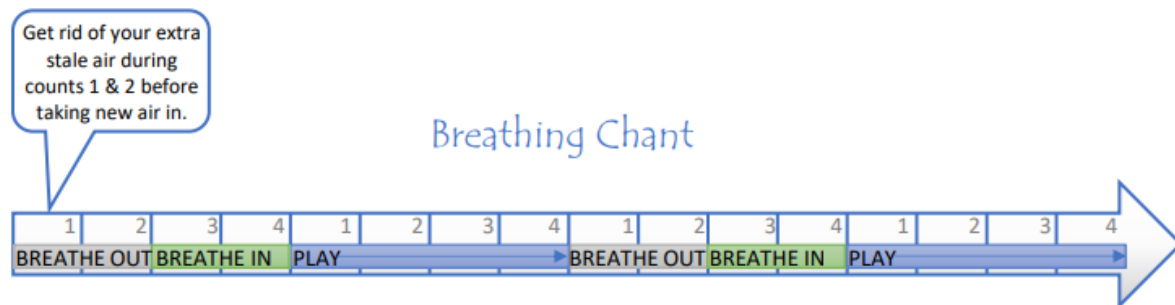
- Do they like being the center of attention?
- Are they shy?or are they outgoing?
- How do trumpet players greet one another? “Hi, i’m better than you”
- Have to be willing to go for it
- Playing trumpet can help a shy kid be more outgoing.

- Mouthpiece placement

Richard	Benjamin	Steve
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<p>Use straws for centering the mouthpiece and correct ratio top to bottom lip, angle and embouchure formation.</p>	<p>Mirrors are a great teaching tool for showing kids where to place their mouthpiece. Also just going up to each individual student and helping them place it the first time! Monitor, monitor, monitor! "Anything going on in your class that you don't like, you have somehow given permission for it happen"</p>	<p>Use the shank of the mouthpiece Place shank between teeth and put your lips together. Be careful not to let them pucker up. Simply tell them to gently bring the lips together as they touch the shank.</p>
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- Breathing exercises.
 - Ex. - Breathe in for two counts and exhale for two etc...
 - Musical Mastery Book has an excellent page on breathing that goes over step by step on breathing and teaching them a chant. [Trumpet Breathing](#)



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- First Sounds - How it happens

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<p>"To buzz or not to buzz" What happens when the student pulls the straw out as they are blowing air? Some students may produce a buzz others will only produce air. Emphasize that air only is acceptable. Refrain from making your first test a buzz playing test, this will only lead to a "fight or flee" situation for the students unable to produce a buzz. That</p>	<p>What do you want it to sound like? Don't go on until every kid can get as close to what you want it to sound like. Take a week or two, go slow! Get it right now! I use a pinwheel to show the kids what their air should be doing (Amazon pinwheels). I have them use a mirror and blow air through their lips without a mouthpiece yet(using the chant from before).</p>	<p>Once the student is familiar with how the air works through the shank, have them flip it and set the mouthpiece on their lips. Let them set it up on their own, it will happen instinctively. For those that are way off on their set position, gently and kindly place it in the correct position. They will eventually develop their set position. Begin breathing</p>

means that students will manipulate their lips to keep up with the rest of the class. Use back pressure to create an instant buzz, plug the end of the mouthpiece with the right hand fore finger, blow air against that finger then remove the finger quickly. The student should produce a buzz.	Add the mouthpiece and repeat. Nothing changes from just air. I check each kid to make sure that it is correct. Do it again and vibrate (I don't care what note comes out as long as it looks good and the pinwheel still moves). If the pinwheel is moving still, they are using the correct air, embouchure, and vibration. If not I have them go back to just air until they can do all steps correctly.	exercises without creating a sound/buzz. When they slowly start creating a sound/buzz, ask them to sustain it as long as they can. After they become accustomed to creating a sound/buzz, alternate between creating sound/buzz and air. Try not to give your students too much information. The simpler, the better. use of flipping the mouthpiece and producing the buzz, breathing patterns etc.and keeping things simple
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● Mouthpiece routines

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After long tones have been established, organize the sounds with "sound and silence", whole note, whole rest pattern. The correct buzz sound: set a standard for the buzz tone, it should not sound like a mosquito flying around your head, that is too tight. It should be a percentage of air and vibration, I like 70% air, 30% vibration which keeps the center of the lips slightly relaxed, it should be "noisy" sounding. Sirens: I keep it very simple at first, start with a descending pattern, "hee-aah" high to low, wait on ascending until the embouchures are more developed.	Once they make an "airy buzz" we're done with just the mouthpiece, I skip to holding the trumpet and the leadpipe!	When they have established a buzz, I work on centering the F concert on the buzz. Once we have established a solid, consistent F concert, we work on lip bending, manipulating the buzz to sound lower, then higher. Hence the two vocabulary words that I introduce them to which are contracting and relaxing. They quickly learn that relaxing lowers the pitch and contracting raises the pitch.

● Leadpipe playing:

- Air to sound whatever pitch comes out to start is great. Focus on smooth takeoff and no forced buzz. If it sounds like they're pinching have them go through all the steps again
 - breathing/pinwheel/air through MP/airy buzz and then back to leadpipe
- Once they can make a good start and a smooth start, they need to vibrate a Concert D (trumpet E) then we do that for a few days. Once we can all match on a concert D we then get to the trumpet!

- I do a lot of I play you play and down the row on the leadpipe. We might be on the leadpipe for a whole week until we play on the full trumpet.

- **First sounds on the trumpet**

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<p>I prefer to start on low C, this note is attainable by most students without any excessive manipulation of the lips. Remind the students not to change their face when they attempt the first sound. Reinforce the concept of keeping the air calm but fast and blow the air straight down the middle of their tongue. Be sure to check for correct hand positions and horn angles as they play their first long tone. Remind them to bring the trumpet toward their mouth and not reach for the trumpet with their necks, shoulders or lips. Play the pitch for them and have them match just as they did on their mouthpieces. The start of these long tones are breath attacks no tonguing yet. When the pitch becomes more stable add the same sequence used in the mouthpiece routine, "sound and silence".</p>	<p>Once they are able to play a clear sounding concert D on their leadpipe, the first note we learn on the full trumpet is their E. I like this note because it's right in the middle of G and C and a lot of students can find success on this note. If they have been doing leadpipe constantly right, this note should come out right away. Then once we are good at this we will work our way up to G and then down to C. Lots of I play you play and down the row on all of the first notes. I usually spend about two weeks on the first few notes.</p>	<p>The first sound we produce is the F concert. We then proceed to learn the Remington exercise slowly introducing them to the sound and finger combinations. What they don't realize is that since they have learned how to create a siren on their buzz, they have literally produced all the notes on the Remington descending and ascending exercises. I just don't tell them that. That is a bit of self-discovery on their part.</p>

- **Articulation:**

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<p>"Say it, blow it, play it" have the students say "too too too too", have them blow air against their palm as they blow, listen for any student that may be using the center of their tongue. That sound will be more like "tee-oo", if this persists have them scratch the tip of their tongue, this will help them zero in on the correct part of the tongue they should use. Try using a small piece of paper instead of</p>	<p>"The top of the tip of the tongue, touches the top of the tip of the teeth" I have them say too a lot as well. I also like giving them imagery. I will take them to the sink and demonstrate the water turning off and on as well as just me running my finger through the water. Then I do a lot of demonstrating for them. I try to give them as little information as I can, but have them make it sound like me. This is a great thing to practice on the leadpipe once you</p>	<p>For articulation, I introduce them to a touch exercise. We simply say <u>doh</u> (1st part of <u>door</u>) and will work on whole, half, & quarter notes. They will echo me as I play F concert for me. Metronome is set to 76 beats per minute. I don't talk much about any other type of articulation until 7th grade.</p>

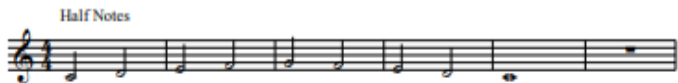
<p>their palms, the air column should not stop in between each “too” , the paper should not come to a complete stop as the blow four quarter notes. The paper should flutter as the blow and tongue for times. Now try the same exercise on the mouthpiece, no paper, air only, listen for the correct sound and for students stopping their air between the notes. When the kids get this going well add the vibration, going through the process, say it, blow it and then play it.</p>	<p>get going, as you can hear all the things they are doing incorrectly and can help them fix it! You want the sound to have a definite start, but not like they are hitting a wall. Start with air and then articulate. Once they get that going then go back and add the first attack at the start.</p>	
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- Daily Trumpet routines

Richard	Benjamin	Steve
<p>It is important to implement a set of routines that students will hopefully repeat on their own. A good trumpet warm-up should include breathing exercises, mouthpiece buzzing, longtones (middle and low range), articulation patterns,lip slurs and technique development. For beginners you should strive to have a simple version of these elements. For long tones and articulation patterns, use the sound and silence pattern from low C up to G,(illustrated below). Balance that with playing down to low F sharp, using the 7 position chart. Use a low high low pattern tongued in place of lip slurs, start on 4th position and work up to C-G-C. Develop technique with a simple 5 note pattern C to G (illustrated below), add the “challenge” and perform the eighth note pattern three times in one breath!</p>	<p>Routines!! I used to be one of those that would make the kids do something different everyday to keep it “interesting” but then discovered they weren’t practicing. Once I started a set routine, funny enough more practice happened at home! Long tones are your best friend. I used to write out my own routine and then discovered Musical Mastery and that is my go to trumpet routine! Their Trumpet First notes page and basics pages are incredibly detailed and go in a great sequential order. I start doing it as an I play you play routine before they start reading the music. Before tonguing we do a lot of long tones and slurring as we move notes. Once we can tongue we add the repeated quarter notes and tonguing on the note changes.</p>	<p>Our daily routine begins with breathing exercises, shank exercises, then air/buzz exercises. We then proceed with buzzing the Remington descending exercise beginning with F concert. I do this for 180 days. I introduce them to lip slurs during the 2nd semester with simple half note & quarter note exercises. For example: Trpt pitches G to C, F# to B, etc.</p>

Sound & Silence

R. Gonzalez/D. Aicher



- Developing range

Richard	Benjamin	Steve
<p>When the class has reached a point when most can play to the second space A I will introduce more range through mouthpiece buzzing. I have the students match the A and do descending glissandos, do this at least 4 times. Go up by half steps slowly, over time they should be able to gliss down from third space C. I also use lines from the oboe book that have higher versions of familiar lines that they have played i.e. "Rolling Along" starting on A instead of E.</p>	<p>GO SLOW!!! Range is like building muscles. You don't try to lift 200 pounds if you've never bench pressed before. I go at the pace of the class, if most of the class can get an A we start building range by lip slurs/bugles/scales. Then we go as high as we can. If I finish the year and my kids can play to 4th space E with a few kids playing higher I'm happy. But if no student can play "high" give it time and don't push it. Range comes with time and muscle flexibility. I think people try to push range too much and too early because "region auditions" If you push range too high and too early, students develop lots of bad habits that take way longer to fix! Sound is the most important thing, range will come with time!!</p>	<p>Range is developing as we progress throughout the year even though we don't discuss it. I build a lot of strength with the buzzing and lip slur exercises we play. By the end of the year, 90% of my students will be able to play the F concert scale two octaves, some are able to play the Bb concert scale two octaves. This is due to being consistent with our exercises throughout the year.</p>

