

## BRASS BASICS (cont.)



## Articulation Styles:

For crisper styles of articulation, a “t” start should precede the vowel shape for the range

ex. Low C on trumpet (“tah”)

For legato styles of articulation, a “d” should precede the vowel shape for the range

ex. High G on trumpet (“dee”)

## Articulation:

The tongue moves in an *up, then down* motion to start the note, *acting as a valve*, releasing the air.

*Vowel sounds* accompany the articulations depending on the range:

## Common problems relating to articulation:

- 1 – Tension in tongue
- 2 – Not tonguing on roof of mouth
- 3 – Excessive jaw movement

1 – “ah” (“oh”) - low range

2 – “ooh” (“eh”) - mid range

3 – “ee” - high range

## Solutions:

- 1 – relax tension in mouth, and practice articulations slowly in repetition, gradually speeding up
- 2 – Students may be tonguing on or in-between teeth, or “k” tonguing – enforce that the tip of the tongue moves up/down, not in out
- 3 – Firm the corners of the mouth while holding holding jaw down and flat

\*Note that these are generalities... each brass instrument has their own specific vowels that pertain to the different ranges

The **tuning slide** of any brass instrument is the the **first movable slide** connected to the leadpipe (macro tuning)

Each valve has their own slide for micro tuning.  
**Note that adjusting a valve's slide will affect the intonation for a note whose valve combination utilizes that slide.**

## TRUMPET BASICS

- Bb trumpet is primarily used for band/jazz band/brass quintet
  - ☒ Some students may come in as beginners with an older cornet that was a “hand me down” - it is more conical in nature than the trumpet, and gives it a more mellow sound... but as a starting instrument should work in lieu of trumpet as it is pitched in Bb
  - ☒ Bb trumpet/cornet are “transposing instruments” - their “concert Bb” is a “C” on the trumpet, meaning that it transposes up (written) a major second from where it sounds in concert pitch

If you hear an interruption of the sound with a “bubbling/popping” noise, **an excessive amount of water has condensed** somewhere in the brass instrument.

Depress the water keys, while blowing air (not buzzing) through the mouthpiece to remove the instrument of its condensation. In extreme circumstances (such as on the horn), it is necessary to empty the slides individually, or allow the water to expel from the bell.

## TRUMPET BASICS (cont.)

- C trumpet is shorter in length, and used primarily for orchestral playing (at a more advanced level)
  - ☒ It is a non-transposing instrument, as a flute
- Piccolo (high Bb), F, and G trumpets are smaller trumpets used for high orchestral and solo playing (advanced)

## Basic Equipment

### 1 – mouthpieces (see handout)

### 2 – mutes (Bailey, p. 19)

used primarily to change timbre of instrument, but also lowers the volume – mutes will sharpen the pitch slightly

### 3 – valve oil/slide grease

light valve oil applied to valves regularly – more viscous slide grease should be applied to slides to keep them from freezing

### 4 – snake/MP brush

not to be used in or near moving parts such as valves

## TRUMPET BASICS (cont.)

- Mouthpiece placement can vary on trumpet, but generally, should be centered on the lips (50/50) – make sure not too low; may be natural for it to be off to on side more than other (L/R)
- Jaw should drop slightly when descending into lower register
- Jaw should close slightly trumpet should pivot slightly downward when ascending into higher register
- For both, refer to as “space between the teeth”

## **BRACES**

- A challenge to students and band director's alike
- If a student has braces and you're switching them to a brass instrument, it may not be an ideal fit
- Better to start without braces, and learn to deal with them later on when confronted with them
- Morgan Bumpers and Braceguards protect inner lips from being torn up from braces, but may make lip vibration more challenging

## **TROUBLESHOOTING BEGINNERS**

- If having difficulty playing higher, encourage faster air with a smaller aperture
- If playing too high, lips may be curled in too much... relax lips and air speed... do the opposite as another strategy to play higher
- Wherever their comfort zone is for starting a starting note, have them start there and work there way up/or down one note at a time
- Firm corners are always necessary, high or low, at varying degrees of tension/relaxation