

QUICK START GUIDE
TO

Teaching About The Orchestra



BY JUS' CLASSICAL

Quick Start Guide to Teaching About the Orchestra

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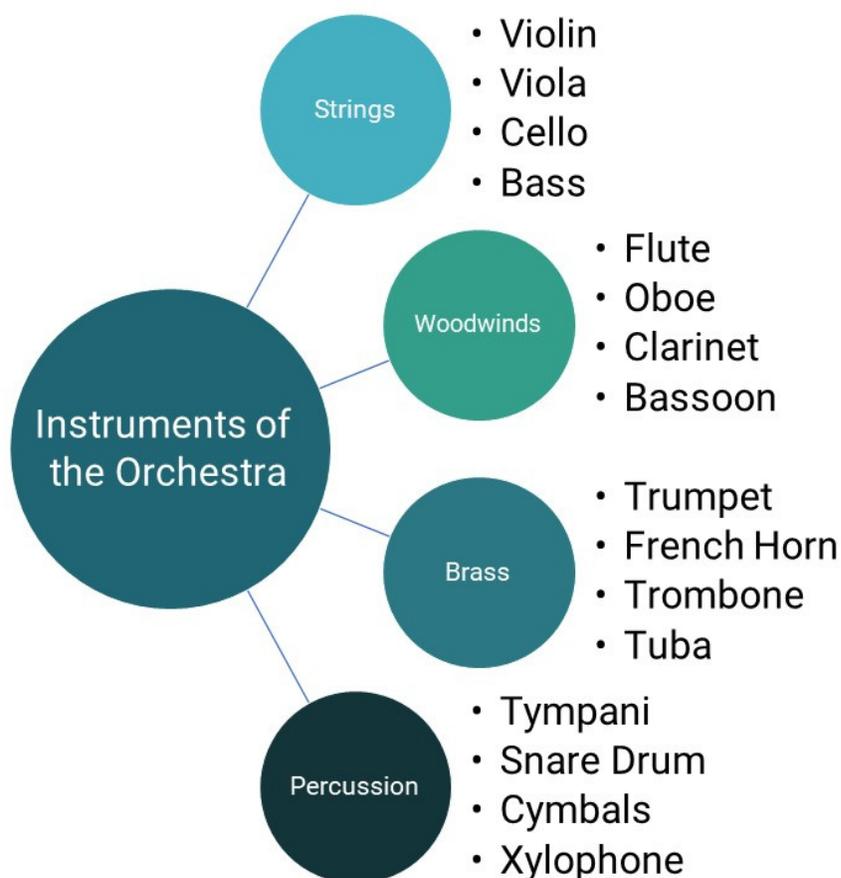
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The Orchestra in Four Easy Steps

1. Investigate the instruments of the orchestra.

Musical instruments are fun and interesting, so kids will get excited about the instruments and the music they make. These are the basic instrument families and the instruments in each family in the orchestra:



Here is our free video on YouTube to help you and your child begin to investigate the instruments of the orchestra:

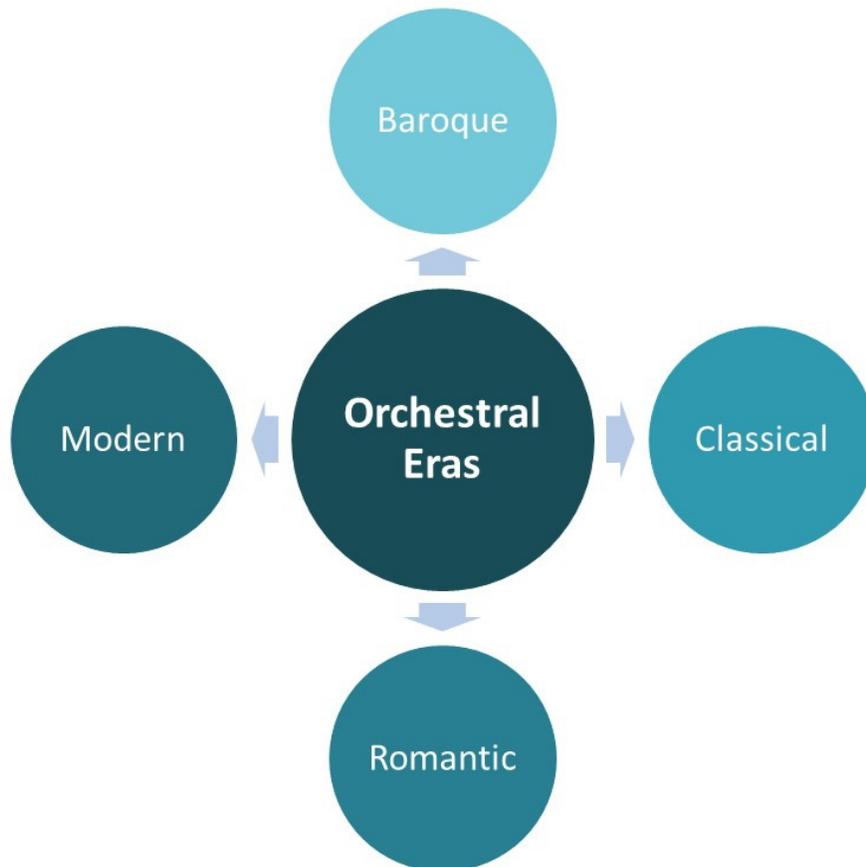
[Introduction to the Orchestra](#)

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2. Investigate the history of the orchestra.

The orchestra came about in the early 1600s. Before that, instrumental music occurred in small ensembles or groups of instruments. From the 1600s to the present, orchestra music has been broken into four basic eras:

- Baroque Era ~ 1600 to 1750
- Classical Era ~ 1750 to 1800
- Romantic Era ~ 1800 to 1910
- Modern Era ~ 1910 to present



Each era shares certain characteristics, so if you understand what era the music is from, it will help you understand why the music sounds the way it does.

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2. Investigate the history of the orchestra (continued)

The **Baroque Era** is characterized by music that sounds grand, fancy and decorated with an almost frivolous use of frills, trills and extra notes. It was usually music for royalty, nobility and the church.

The **Classical Era** music is very structured and orderly and you could say it was sparer and more emotionally reserved than music of the Baroque and Romantic periods. It also became more available to the regular people in operas and showy solo pieces called concertos.

The **Romantic Era** is the period of music, art, and literature that is often characterized by the unabashed expression of emotion.

The **Modern Era** is characterized by musical innovation, breaking of the rules of musical composition, and new and different sounds.



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3. Investigate the composers of each era

When you and your child get to know the personalities of the composers and learn history, geography and culture right along with music, the composers and their music will come alive to you!

It is best to choose one composer at a time to focus on.

This timeline will give you an idea of which composers to study and what era they are from.



Investigates the Timeline of Orchestral Music

ERA:	Baroque	Classical	Romantic	Modern
COMPOSERS:	*George Frideric Handel *Johann Sebastian Bach Antonio Vivaldi Claudio Monteverdi Johann Pachelbel	*Ludwig van Beethoven Joseph Haydn *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Felix Mendelssohn Franz Schubert	Clara Schumann Robert Schumann *Johannes Brahms *Antonin Dvorak *Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Hector Berlioz Edgar Grieg Frederic Chopin Richard Wagner Edward Elgar	*Claude Debussy *Igor Stravinsky Scott Joplin Aaron Copland Leonard Bernstein Arnold Schoenberg George Gershwin Sergei Prokofiev Benjamin Britten Ralph Vaughan Williams John Williams

*Composers studied in The Composer Detective
List is not comprehensive

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4. Investigate the music of the composers

Start by choosing a composer and familiarizing yourself with his or her story and the era he or she lived in. Then find and listen to two to five short pieces from the composer you are investigating. You can type the name of the composer you want to listen to into YouTube or your favorite streaming service to find pieces from the composer.

If you and your child are not familiar with orchestral or **classical music***, starting with short pieces of the composers will get you used to the sounds of the instruments and style of the era, while giving you a chance to increase your attention span for longer works.

For more help on preparing your children for listening and teaching your children how to listen, read this article: [Teaching Children How to Listen](#)

*Note: Classical music is the genre of art music into which orchestral music falls. Don't mix this up with the Classical Era, which is one of four time periods and styles within the genre of classical / art music.



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More Tips



Children are usually open to learning about any kind of music when they are young, so jump into investigating with them.



Repetition is how children learn, so repeat the same piece often. Choose one short piece of a composer and listen to it a few times in one sitting and / or every day for a week.



The more we understand something, the more we appreciate it, so again repeat the same piece, learn about the composer and instruments being played, and find any interesting history that may go with the piece (like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin listened to ***New World Symphony*** by Antonin Dvorak as they prepared to land on the moon.)



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Do you want more help teaching your child the orchestra?

[Check out *The Composer Detective* on Teachable!](#)

[The Composer Detective](#) is an easy-to-use, all-in-one online course, designed to help you lead your children in investigating orchestra instruments, music and composers, so that you feel like a rock star (or is that an opera star?), and they fall in love with listening to music, a benefit for a lifetime.



Course Layout

