

Flute, Woodwind Instrument

The three branches of the **woodwind family** have different sources of sound. Vibrations begin when air is blown across the top of an instrument, across a single reed, or across two reeds. The flute's sound is produced by blowing air across the small hole in the mouthpiece, or headjoint.

The **flute** is one of the oldest of the instruments and was played all over the world. It originally had a wooden body with open holes, but the modern flute is made of a silver or gold tube with a series of keys that cover the holes along its side. These keys were added in the 1800s so that the notes would be in better tune with the other instruments in the orchestra. The instrument is about 2 feet in length. The sounds can be either soft and mellow or high and piercing.



Players can change the pitch of the notes by covering the holes with the keys, and by adjusting the tension of the lips. Flute players were once called flautists (flow-tists), but are usually called flutists today.