

Instrument ID Lesson Plan

Teaching Objectives

Students will demonstrate an understanding that orchestral instruments are grouped into families based on their similarities and differences.

Resources

- Pictures of orchestral instruments
- Small pieces of paper or cards with instrument names and/or pictures on them.

Pre-Assessment

Show students a picture or a seating chart of an orchestra (there is one included on this CD). Be sure that the chart shows pictures of the instruments of the orchestra. Ask students to look at the chart and tell you what they know about the orchestra. Answer the following questions:

- What are some of the instruments?
- Who leads the orchestra?
- Is the orchestra divided in any way?

Teaching Sequence

1. Tell or remind students that orchestral instruments are divided into four groups or families based on how their sounds are generated. Brass instruments are played by 'buzzing', or vibrating one's lips into a mouthpiece; woodwind instruments are played by blowing into a mouthpiece with a reed or across a hole; percussion instruments by shaking, scraping or striking the instrument; and string instruments by plucking or pulling a bow across a string.
2. Tell students that even though each instrument has distinct characteristics, it also resembles the other instruments in its family- much like you resemble the other members of your family. Have students take turns describing similarities and differences between themselves and the other members of their families.
3. Show students pictures of the families of the orchestra. As pictures of each family are displayed, have students take turns describing similarities and differences they see in the instruments in that family.
4. Give each student or team of students, a picture of an orchestral instrument. Ask the students or teams to identify their instrument and determine the family to which their instrument belongs.

Culminating Activity

Play short excerpt of symphonic music as the students move into instrumental family groups. If appropriate for your students, designate a place in the room for each family to stand, otherwise allow students to work that out on their own. This game can be played several times until students become proficient with all instruments.

Evaluation

Did students demonstrate an understanding that orchestral instruments are grouped into families based on their similarities and differences?

Extension Activities

1. Instrument "Who Am I" game - Tell students that they are to pretend that they are the instrument pictured on the piece of paper. Have students take turns giving clues to the other students or teams in the class. Remind students that they are pretending to be that instrument. Some examples of clues could be, "My family has very long necks. Although my family gets played two different ways, they are mostly very similar in appearance. I am the smallest member of my family. I have the highest voice in my whole family, etc." Answer: violin. Allow students to play until everyone has shared their clues.
2. Have students bring pictures of their own family and discuss in class how they are similar in appearance to other family members as well as the characteristics that make them individuals.