

Woodsfield Elementary Band
BEGINNER CLARINET NOTES

Practice going over these steps for a while as a beginner. Memorize how it feels. While it is good to go over these things, do not put too much thought toward them while you are playing music. It can get in the way! If you are having difficulty while playing, refer to this list to figure out where the problem may be. Have fun getting to know your new instrument!

LEFT HAND:

1. LEFT HAND ON TOP!
2. Fingers – Curve the fingers into a “C”
3. Wrist and thumb – Keep them straight!

RIGHT HAND:

1. RIGHT HAND ON BOTTOM!
2. Thumb and Wrist
 - Place beneath thumb rest. -THIS IS ONE OF YOUR ANCHOR POINTS
 - Must be between tip of the thumb and the first joint.
 - Keep the wrist and thumb straight!
3. Fingers
 - Curve the fingers into a “C”
 - Slant fingers slightly downward

PLAYING POSITION:

1. Sit with proper posture! STRAIGHT/RELAXED SPINE from back of head down to tailbone.
2. Clarinet Angle
 - Hold the clarinet away from the body – at a 35-40 degree angle!
 - Instrument can rest on the knees.
3. Hold fingers right above holes/keys. They need to be ready to move very quickly!
4. Elbows (IMPORTANT!) - Keep elbows from touching your sides.
5. STAY RELAXED!

EMBOUCHURE: YOU MUST HAVE GOOD REEDS!!! AND THEY MUST BE WET!

- Remember to leave just a hairline of black above the reed when assembling the mouthpiece.
1. Bottom Lip
 - Roll JUST A “SMALL RIBBON” of your bottom lip over the bottom teeth.
 - Some of the “pink” part of the lip needs to still be showing.
 2. Chin - Draw chin muscles downward as in saying an exaggerated “YES.”
 3. Mouthpiece
 - Place approximately 3/8 inch of the mouthpiece in your mouth and bite down gently with the top teeth. (Hint: 3/8 in. is a little under 1/2 in.)
 - Check that your teeth are approximately aligned from top to bottom.
 4. Full breath of air through the mouth. Then, seal your lips with a “firm inward pucker” around the mouthpiece before playing. REMEMBER! FAST AIR!

THE TWO CLARINET "ANCHOR POINTS":

- The weight of the instrument should be balanced or "anchored" in these 2 places:
 - RIGHT THUMB REST
 - Embouchure
- (Also: Place the bell against your knees if you need to do so as a beginner.)

MAKING CORRECTIONS:

If you are having trouble making a sound:

- You may be biting the mouthpiece too hard.
 - Your mouthpiece may be in too far or not far enough.
 - Your cheeks should not be puffed out. The corners of your mouth should feel “firm and anchored.” Remember: they should feel pulled down into an exaggerated YES!
- STAY RELAXED!!!***