**Brass Instrument FAQS**

**What is a Brass Instrument?**

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A brass instrument is essentially a piece of pipe which amplifies a noise made by buzzing of the lips. Most (but not all!) are made of brass, hence the name. Trumpet, Trombone, Horn and Tuba are the commonest instruments, although there are many more! An example of an instrument made of brass, but which is not a brass instrument is a saxophone, which produces its sound using a reed. This makes it a woodwind instrument. Brass instruments can only produce one note at a time so sound better when played with piano or in an ensemble.

**Why Learn a Brass Instrument?**

* **Develops confidence –** Building the courage to start playing a new instrument is great way to build your confidence. This confidence is especially built when you decide to choose an instrument that isn’t as popular as many other instruments like that of guitars or drums. Choosing a brass instrument will show you a world of making music that creates sound waves in a less-than-conventional manner. Making this beautiful yet unheard sound for all to hear will help bring you out of your shell and build your confidence, which is always a healthy attribute to develop.
* **Breath control –** The most used part of your body when playing a brass instrument is your diaphragm. As your lips vibrate to make the music, you need to measure your breath!
* **Strengthen core muscles –** Because your diaphragm is just under your lungs, using your diaphragm requires constant use of your abdominal muscles. These aid in helping you controlling your breathing. The more you practice, the more you strengthen your core.
* **Boosts your adrenaline –** You may have to perform in front of a large audience. This takes lots of guts and you may even find butterflies in your stomach. But the adrenaline rush you get from presenting in front of an audience may turn that unease into a form of confidence and excitement. It is up to you have a good time and not be scared! It’s important to remember, an adrenaline rush, to an extent is a healthy because it burns calories, gives you quick energy and makes you feel great! So go out there and have fun!
* **Increases hand-eye coordination –** Keeping rhythm is harder from some people than you might think. Blowing air into your instrument while pressing knobs here, or putting your fingers there, or pushing a brass arm that way to produce such a beautiful sound, takes skill and practice. The more you practice playing your brass instrument the more your neural pathways strengthen and the more new ones can form. You will learn to use hands in a new way, building dexterity and fine motor skills.
* **Develops you emotionally –** While learning something new may be fun, it can also cause some bumps in the road. Sometimes you may find yourself frustrated with the learning process, whether that is learning a new tune or a new technique. Your emotional development depends on overcoming these struggles because how you handle them will define your character. Once you overcome your goal, nothing feels better. You will find yourself in a happier and better emotional state.
* **Promotes sociability –** If you are playing a brass instrument you will find yourself surrounded by people who play similar instruments or even instruments in general. Being a part of a group helps build confidence and your social skills, and you will find yourself relating with those who are like you and even those who are unlike you. This will diversify your thinking, your skills, and social compatibility leading you to live a healthy happy life.
* **Relieves stress –** Any means of an outlet for stress, struggles and unhappiness will always be a method to relieve your stress levels. If playing a brass instrument is for you, then it will act as a great stress reliever. Do something that you love and makes your happy to help to get rid of your stress and forget your worries.
* **Reach goals –** Whether it’s learning how to play a brass instrument, or learning a new song, playing a brass instrument is a great way to set the foundation to help set and achieve your goals. If you can complete one thing, no matter how difficult it is, what is in your way from completing the next? This will have a ripple effect in your health and your lifestyle! Having a set of goals will provide give you tons of motivation and achieving those goals will make you feel accomplished and happy. While the physical body is only half the equation of your health, your mind is the other half, so feeling great about your accomplishments will put you on the right track for your healthy goals.
* **Get rid of that couch potato! –** By being a part of the brass instrument community will open the door up for a change in scenery, providing you with a new skill you can spend plenty of time honing. As you spend time with your newfound hobby, you get rid of mindless habits, such as endless scrolling on your smartphone, gaming, watching T.V., and even careless eating. (Health Revolution 2015)

**Aren’t they noisy and disturb the neighbours?**

Brass instruments are noisy, but there are various ways in which this can be reduced, including practice mutes and Silent Brass, but also by more simple measures such as practicising in a room away from others and without an adjoining wall to neighbours, drawing curtains and closing doors and windows. Chose a friendly time to practice, such as before mealtimes, after 10am and before 9pm.

**My child already learns the piano!**

All music teachers support students to learn the piano as it forms the root of musical knowledge and understanding and is important if the child wishes to pursue music further. However it does not carry the same physical benefits of playing a brass instrument, nor the ability to play with other musicians in an ensemble. Furthermore, unlike piano, there are national shortages of brass instruments, making learning one a smart career move! Learning both is the best solution!

**How old does my child need to be to play brass?**

Children need to have their adult front teeth before learning a brass instrument. Therefore most children begin learning in year three.

**What does it cost?**

For the first year of learning brass students require shorter lessons and this can be done in pairs, or even threes, therefore it is very cheap to learn compared to other instruments such as piano which need to be one to one from the outset. As the student progresses past the initial stage, closer tutor attention is required to provide good progress, therefore individual and longer lessons are more beneficial. Below is a breakdown of the tuition costs per term (3 terms p.a.):-

**Year 1 of study**

Single student 10x20mins= £100 per term

Pair of Students 10x20mins=£70 (each) per term

Three Students 10x20mins=£60 (each) per term

Practice book and Tutor book = £13.50 (used up to about grade 2)

Instrument = Trumpet £120, Trombone £175 (prices approx.)

(note: there are some instruments which the school has purchased to encourage brass playing which may be used for the first term FREE! Talk to Mrs Petch, Also it may be possible to buy second-hand for less, but please talk to Mr Beer first as there are risks involved in this)

**Year 2 of study**

Preparatory test book=£6.95 (depends on student progress)

Prep test fee= £35

Single student 10x20mins=£100 per term

**Year 3+ of study**

Single student 10x30mins=£150 per term

Grade 1/2/3 exam book (one-off purchase):£12.50

Grade exam fees (usually one per year, depending on progress):

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| Grade 1 | £39.00 |
| Grade 2 | £44.00 |
| Grade 3 | £50.00 |
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Students will need to replace their practice book if it runs out. These are £3.50 each via parent pay. Tuition Payments are made in advance of each term to Mr Beer directly by BACS.

\*Please note all prices correct at time of press and subject to change.

**How much practice does my child need to do?**

Playing brass instruments is quite tiring for beginners, as it uses facial muscles, tongue and diaphragm. Therefore initial practising is short at round ten minutes maximum per session, rising to 25 minutes for an experienced student. The frequency of practice matters most with brass instruments, as the student needs to develop muscles and motor memory to play effectively.

**Can my child try it first?**

Children can make an appointment to try an instrument either by approaching Mr Beer directly, or via Mrs Petch.

**I don’t want my child to miss lessons at school!**

Private lessons after school are available at Mr Beer’s house at the same cost, subject to availability.

**I have more questions!**

Contact Nigel Beer via email**:** [nigelbeermusic@outlook.com](mailto:nigelbeermusic@outlook.com)