

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Activity 5

Instrument Timbre

Learning Objective

Students will learn to distinguish orchestral instruments by sight and sound.

Vocabulary

Timbre— quality of sound produced by a particular instrument or voice

Tone—a sound of definite pitch and duration as distinct from noise

Pitch—highness or lowness of a tone.

Glockenspiel—a percussion instrument made of steel bars arranged like a keyboard and played with mallets

Mallet—a drum stick with a large tip

Materials/Resources

- www.dsokids.com
- Accompanying Youth Concert Power Point

Pre-Assessment:

Using the following strategies, determine the level of students' familiarity with timbre.

- Select 4 students to stand before the class and say together the current day and date.
Example: Today is Monday, October 15th.
- Have their classmates close their eyes while they listen to determine what makes the voices sound different or similar.
- Ask students to rearrange themselves until similar voice timbers are together.
- Encourage the students to determine what may have been the reasons for differences in timbre; tone color.

Teaching Sequence Grades 3 and 4

1. Have the students go to www.dsokids.com.
2. Select the violin.
 - Look at and describe the picture of the violin.
 - Listen to the violin, with special attention to timbre or tone color.
 - Listen as the violin plays "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."
 - Follow the same procedure with the clarinet, trumpet and glockenspiel, in that order.
3. Encourage discussion and sharing of what the students saw and heard.

Teaching Sequence Grades 5 and 6, add the following:

4. Have the students go to www.dsokids.com.
5. Read the description of the violin.
6. Listen to the violin as it plays a melody with the orchestra.
7. Encourage discussion and sharing of what students learned from these experiences.

Culminating Activity

Divide the students into small groups equal in number. Ask the students to discuss among themselves, and prepare to share how the timbres differ. Why are instruments of different timbres included in the orchestra?

Evaluation

Are the students able to correctly identify a violin, clarinet, trumpet and glockenspiel by sight and timbre? Will they be able to identify the violin, clarinet, trumpet and glockenspiel in the Dallas Symphony Orchestra? Remind students to be prepared to locate the instruments in the orchestra during the concert they will attend at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.

TEKS Connections

Music: 117.112(1A-B); 117.115(1A-B); 117.118(1A-B); 117.208(1A-B)