

The Orchestra

An orchestra is a group of musicians playing instruments together. They usually play classical music. A large orchestra is sometimes called a "symphony orchestra" and a small orchestra is called a "chamber orchestra". A symphony orchestra may have about 100 players, while a chamber orchestra may have 30 or 40 players.

The Conductor

The orchestra is directed by a conductor. He/she helps the players to play together, to get the right balance so that everything can be heard clearly, and to encourage the orchestra to play with the same kind of feeling.



The Four Sections of an Orchestra

- The string section are the biggest section, although there are only five kinds of instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass, and harp.
- The woodwind section sits in one or two rows (depending on the size of the orchestra) behind the strings. There are five main woodwind instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, and bassoon.
- The brass section has four sections: trumpet, trombone, French horn, and tuba. Some of these come in several sizes.
- The percussion section has the largest variety of instruments. The timpani (or "kettle drums") can be tuned to particular notes. They are the most common percussion instrument.



The Orchestra

Questions

1. What type of music does an orchestra usually play?

2. Who directs the orchestra? _____

3. List the four sections that are part of the orchestra

4. What section of the orchestra does a saxophone belong in?

5. A “symphony orchestra” is smaller than a “chamber orchestra”.

True / False

6. Choose an orchestra instrument and draw it below

