

# smartmusic lesson plans

## Using the Tuner



Grade Level: All Levels Class: Band, Strings, Choral

Author: Samuel Fritz and Phil Louden

**Teacher  
Instructions**

### Overview

Playing in tune is a learned skill. When students practice with SmartMusic they have easy access to a built-in tuner and, with a few basic instructions, students can easily incorporate this tool into their practice routine.

### Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand their instrument's pitch tendencies.
2. Use the tuner and its various features.
3. Match pitch with a reference tone.
4. Adjust their pitch to play notes in tune.
5. Use vocabulary specific to tuning in a discussion format.

National Music Content Standards addressed:

2. Performing on instruments alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, harmonies, and accompaniments.
6. Evaluating music and music performances.

### Assignment Suggestions

For this assignment students could be assigned a scale or note set as it relates to their ability level:

Beginner – Concert Bb scale, first 5 notes.

Intermediate – Concert Bb scale, one octave.

Intermediate/Advanced – Chromatic Scale, one octave starting on concert Bb.

Advanced – Chromatic Scale, two octaves.



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## Teacher Procedures

1. Introduce your students to SmartMusic's tuner.
2. Demonstrate the **Play Reference Pitch** feature of tuner.
3. Give the students practice examples and do the exercises in class.
4. To reinforce tuning skills, have students chart note tendencies outside of class.
5. Review student procedures prior to assignment.

## Assessment

A point value can be assigned to each column of the student assignment. This grade would be a summative assessment and focus on the process of completing the assignment rather than the finished product. Following completion of the homework, have the student play alone and assess their tuning skills.

## Teacher Suggestions

Teach students how beats can occur when two or more musicians play together. Explain that as notes become more in tune, beats diminish, and as notes become more out of tune, beats increase. You may want to modify the student assignment sheet for students at different levels. Students can write in the notes that they will play in "Note Name" column of the student assignment sheet. The foot pedal may be used to sustain the Reference Note even when you stop playing. This allows you to hear the correct pitch before replaying your note. While playing the tuning note, press and hold the foot pedal down. The Reference Note will play the "in-tune" version of the pitch until you release the foot pedal. Select the letter "D" to activate the "Play Drone" feature.

## Lesson Extensions

1. Point out spots to apply tuning concepts in a musical composition such as cadence points, unison passages, or shared melodic lines in unison and/or octaves.
2. Using the Play Reference Pitch feature, have students play a short melodic passage using the "in-tune" version of the pitch to provide auditory feedback on the horizontal melodic tuning.
3. Demonstrate that students can use the reference pitch feature on the SmartMusic tuner to practice eliminating beats.
4. Teach students effective ways to compensate for pitch tendencies, both with embouchure and alternate fingerings.
5. Assign tuning as part of a playing test, where students could be asked to play any note from the note set assignment and, after tuning the note, must be within 5 cents to receive full credit.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class/Hour: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Due: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student  
Assignment

## Directions

1. Open SmartMusic's tuner and tune your instrument with your usual tuning note, then adjust your instrument accordingly. Be sure to select your instrument in the instrument menu (bottom left corner).
2. Record the tuning of each note on the chart on page 2 and 3. The green arrow indicates the how sharp or flat your note was played in "cents." Write this number in the "Trial" column.



*Do not adjust your instrument after first tuning*

3. Play each note a second and third time and record the tuning on the chart also. Then, analyze the average of these three numbers using the key below.

**S#** = Slightly Sharp (+5-10)    **M#** = Moderately sharp (+10-15)    **V#** = Very Sharp (+20-50)  
**Sb** = Slightly Flat (-5-10)    **Mb** = Moderately Flat (-10-15)    **Vb** = Very Flat (-20-50)  
**IT** = In tune (must be at zero or within 5 cents for all three trials)

## Example

	Note Name	Trial #1	Trial #2	Trial #3	Analysis
EX	<i>Bb</i>	+20	+15	+20	<i>M#</i>

Remember, the goal of this lesson is to learn the pitch tendencies of your instrument.



Complete the 3-trial tuning chart

	Note Name	Trial #1	Trial #2	Trial #3	Analysis
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					



	Note Name	Trial #1	Trial #2	Trial #3	Analysis
<b>18</b>					
<b>19</b>					
<b>20</b>					
<b>21</b>					
<b>22</b>					
<b>23</b>					
<b>24</b>					

### Student Checklist

- Filled in the information at the top of page 1.
- Read the directions and completed tuning chart on pages 2 and 3.
- Turned in assignment (Or submitted results as your teacher instructed.)

### Need Help with SmartMusic?

Call toll-free, 1-866-240-4041, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Central Time.