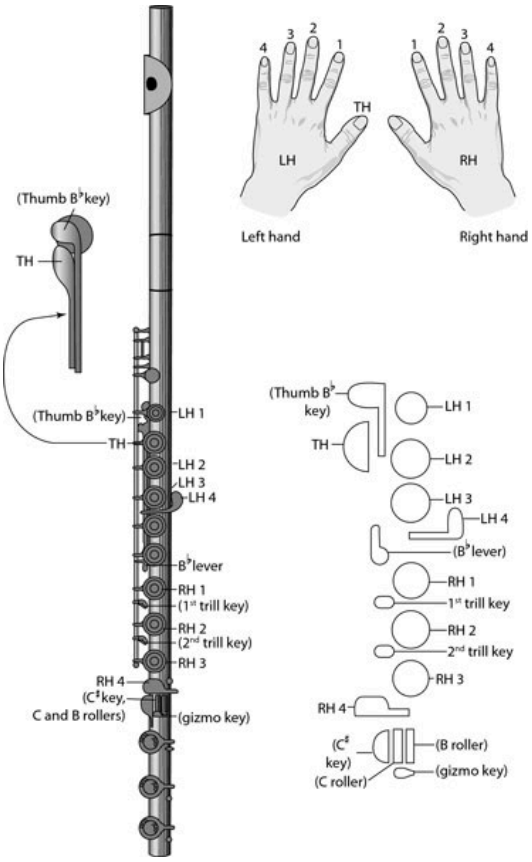
Brighton Band Flute Guide

Assembly and Instrument Basics

- Be alert when opening and closing the instrument case. It is recommended to put an arrow on your case to show which side should face down. Always open your instrument case on a flat surface.
- Do not grip the flute too strong during assembly because you can bend keys. Always handle with care as dents can cause loss of tone quality.
- Take the middle joint and place it in the right hand. Take the head joint and connect the two pieces of the flute in a turning motion. Make sure you do not grip the head joint at the lip plate. The tone whole will line up with the center of the keys of the middle joint.
- Take the foot joint in the right hand and connect it to the bottom of the middle joint using a gentle turning motion. The rods of the foot joint will line up with the center of the keys of the middle joint.
- You hold the flute to your right with the left hand closest to the head joint and the right hand closer to the foot joint. When the left hand is placed correctly, the fingers will be toward the player. When the right hand is placed correctly, the fingers will face the audience. You will have to learn to balance your left and right sides. The primary points that hold the flute are the base of the left index finger and the right thumb. The thumb of your right hand will be between your index and middle fingers.



- You should swab your flute after playing it every time. If you are playing for a while, it is a good idea to swab it frequently. If the swab gets rough or dirty, get a new one. Insert the swab into the larger end of the body and bring it to the narrow end.
- Water and dirt can be removed from pads by using cleaning paper. This is needed if keys begin sticking. Be gentle.
- It is recommended to frequently wipe your flute clean with an instrument cloth. Handle with care and make sure you get the keys.

- If you set your instrument down, separate it at the head and middle joint and make sure you set it keys up. If you have a flute stand, use that instead.
- If you notice any pads are torn, the keys do not line up, or the keys are not at an even height, the instrument needs to go to the repair shop. Do not try to fix it yourself.
- It is recommended that you take your instrument in for general maintenance every six months. It is best to do this at a time when you are not actively performing it (during a break). With this being said, you should still practice during breaks.

Singing

- All instruments produce sound that imitates the human voice. Singing is an important tool for developing great ensemble tone quality and intonation. It is important that you take a serious approach to singing. The resonance and breath support necessary for singing are quite similar to proper playing.
- The key when singing is projection.
- Singing is the first standard on the national standard for instrumental music education. Playing an instrument is the second standard.
- The throat should be open.
- The face should be relaxed.
- The mouth shape should be oval like – the longer part of the oval from nose to chin.
- The same approach to breathing, air support, and direction of air with your wind instrument, applies to singing.
- Everyone should always be listening to match the pitch (ensemble setting)
- We will use different vowel sounds, including humming
- We believe in using audiation - check the pitch before, during, and after singing
- Whenever you have a hard time playing a section, it is a good idea to sing the part to get it imbedded into your head.

Tuning

- To tune, you need to adjust the head joint.
- If the head joint is pushed in, it will raise in pitch. If the head joint is pulled out, it will lower the pitch.
- Warm up thoroughly before tuning
- Tune at a mezzo-forte dynamic level and do not use vibrato
- Play the tuning note strait (no vibrato).
- Use a trustworthy electronic tuner to tune
- For tuning, play the F at the top of the staff and work up the scale to the Bb above the staff. Hold the Bb for a few seconds before adjusting.
- There is a tuning plug at the closed end of the head joint. If the plug is not in the correct location, the instrument will be out of tune. Check that it is placed in the correct position by inserting a cleaning rod into the open end of the head joint until it touches the cap. If it is correctly placed, the etched line on the cleaning rod should be exactly at the center of the tone hole. If the plus needs to be moved outward, tighten down the threaded cap. If it needs to be moved inward, loosen the cap and push in.

Posture

- Sit-up – put both feet on the floor, keep your back strait, and sit on the edge of your chair
- Sitting tall will allow your body to take full breaths and move naturally.
- There should be not tension in your shoulders or elbows.
- Do not lean backwards and do not bend forward. It creates tension in the body that inhibits proper breathing. Your back should never touch the back of your chair.
- Keep your head strait. Do not draw in the chin; this will cause a tense sound.
- While playing, your flute should be parallel to the ground. Adjust the instrument to you. Do not adjust yourself to the instrument.
- Hold your instrument up with your right thumb.

Breathing

- The correct breathing technique is known as abdominal breathing. This is not the shallow breathing that moves the shoulders and upper chest.
- When you lay down on your back, your body naturally abdominal breathes. I recommend this as a starting point to find the proper way to breathe with your instrument.
- To properly abdominal breathe, imagine your are inhaling into the bottom of your back. Open your rips. When exhaling, keep your diaphragm low and abdomen supported. Do not expand or contract the abdomen and keep the abdomen firm. Do not exhale all of your air at once. Make a thin, fast airstream while feeling pressure from the abdomen.
- If you expand your lungs fully, your lungs will push out on the diaphragm. This will cause expansion of the ribcage and some from the abdomen.
- Take a full breathe and blow with speed for a rich sound– a shallow breathe will not produce a good tone.
- While playing, you need to learn to take quick, deep breaths that are in time with the music. Breathing gym can help with this.
- A good exercise when working on passages is to perform the articulations and fingerings as you normally would, but only with air (creating no sound). This allows you to work on nothing but air control.
- Do not hold the air as you are breathing. We believe in a concept known as “one air motion.” The air is either moving into the body or moving out of the body. This helps with musical phrasing. Thing of the breath as being part of the music.
- It is recommended to learn how to breathe on all counts of the music. Learn to not take breaths on longer notes, in the middle of phrases, or on beat four of common time.

Embouchure

- Flute players must learn a flexible embouchure without tension
- Press your lips together at the corners and sides like a smile. Pull the corners of your mouth slightly back.
- Leave an oval opening in the center of your lips to blow air out. Focus on only allowing air out of this small opening.
- Be careful not to curl your lips.
- Air will go into the instrument directly. You will create air pressure using your lips.
- The center of your lips moves forward to form an airstream passage in the middle of your lips.
- Do not puff your cheeks. You will lose control and never get a good sound.
- To change registers from low to high on the instrument, the air speed must be increase. Generally, the corners of your mouth also go slightly forward. You do not tighten them.

Finger Technique

- The step-up flute has open holes, which means in order to get a good sound, the pads of the fingers have to cover the entire tone hole. Therefor, it is best to start playing the flute placing the pads of your fingers on the center of the keys.
- Keep your fingers just above the keys at all times. This allows for accuracy and speed.
- Press the keys with the pads of your fingers. You hands should make a curved, C shape with your hand. The fingers should not be strait.
- When playing the chromatic scale, check your fingerings. Some alternate fingerings can allow you to play the scale smoother.
- When performing difficult trills, seek out a trill chart for an easier fingering.
- The fingers always should transition quick and crisp no matter the tempo.

Fixing Unstable Sounds

- Air Support – without good air, the sound will be unstable

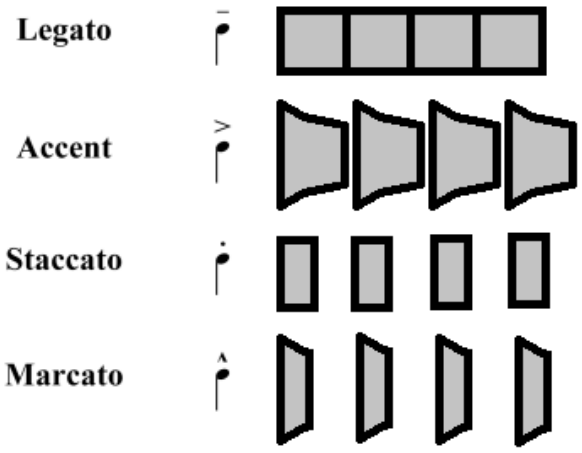
Tonguing and Articulation

- Keep the air flowing. Your lips will respond and vibrate naturally.
- At all times, you must maintain the same sound you had during long tones.
- Make sure you keep the embouchure stable as you tongue
- Your tongue throat and lips should be relaxed. Focus more on your air stream and less on the tongue. Blowing too fast makes the tone spread and creates a rough attack.
- Pay attention to your air when you tongue. Blowing too fast makes the tone spread.
- Pronounce the syllable “dah” to find out where you need to tongue on the roof of the mouth. When articulating, please follow the chart below:

Articulation	normal	legato	staccato	marcato	accented
Syllable	dah	doo	dah	Dah	Dah
Difference from the normal enunciation	N/A	Smoother beginning and more connected	Same beginning as normal with half the length	Slightly more emphasis at the beginning with half the length	Slightly more emphasis at the beginning of the note, a slight decay

- When slurring, do not use the tongue except a legato tongue at on the first note. Make sure you create good air flow that relates to phrasing.
- When playing staccato, be careful to not put too much attack on the note
- Think about slightly faster air at the beginning of accented and marcato notes.
- When performing staccato notes, think of it as a water faucet. When you shut the faucet off, the water pressure is still there ready to go. Your air stops when the tip of your tongue touches the roof of your mouth, but air pressure is still ready to come out. When there is space, the tongue is waiting on the roof of your mouth unless you are taking a breath.

- The following chart is a visual representation of what different types of articulation sound like. It is known as the Articulation Visualization Key:



Bopping

- Bopping is a technique that is used to improve timing, uniformity of articulation and tonal resonance upon the initiation of sound. It is normally applied by marching ensembles, but can be used in concert ensembles as well.
- Bopping is executed by reducing every articulated note to a "round" staccato eighth note.
- Slurred passages are played full duration to the end of the slur.
- Tied notes are not sustained.
- Make sure that the throat remains open and relaxed. Keep notes open ended (no "dit" articulations, only "dah").

Dynamics

- Dynamics are controlled by air speed, not the amount of air
- Tempo and dynamics have no correlation.
- When playing loud or soft, you need to listen to yourself and control your sound. Tone is the most important factor. When practicing at home, it is okay to experiment with dynamics to gain more control, but do not do so in a rehearsal setting. Control your sound.
- Some groups define their dynamics by expelling all of their air evenly over the assigned count structure for that dynamic. This can be a good exercise to memorize what each dynamic feels like. You should never fully "empty the tank" as this effects tone. The following is recommended to be performed at 108 beats per minute:

4 beats	6 beats	8 beats	12 beats	16 beats	20 beats	24 beats	28 beats
fff	ff	f	mf	mp	p	pp	ppp

This exercise can also be performed on a balloon to practice with resistance. As a young musician, it is recommended to start on one of the middle dynamics and work out from there. Focus on tone (quality of sound).

Performing Long Tones

- Take a big breath and focus on tone. Blow out with abdominal support. Be careful not to accent the beginning of the note.

- Start the note with the tongue. Release the tongue form the roof of your mouth at the same time you start playing.
- Start with warm air and release with a breathe
- Keep a consistent airstream and sound
- Perform numerous long tones (at least 5 for the duration of a full breathe exhale)
- Long tones are meant to be exactly that, long. If you are by yourself, take a deep breath and use the full extent of your air on one tone. If the tone is not long enough, take a deeper breathe.

Scales

- Learning scales is very important since most literature is based on scales. They are the fundamentals of all playing.
- One you learn a scale, play it every day.
- Playing scales in different articulation styles will help you to play varying musical styles
- Arpeggios can also help you to develop better control across the instrument; play them with various styles of articulation.

Solutions to Common Problems

- When needing to tongue fast, you need to patiently practice. It is crucial that you have the correct tonguing method. Practice slow. Since air stream created the sound, you need air pressure and speed. We use tonguing to have more accurate articulations. Your tongue should have minimum motion and be relaxed. That makes your tongue move fast. When your tongue gets tense or moves too much, try with an even slower tempo and little by little make the tempo faster.
- If you try to play low notes with the same air stream as the middle range, it often does not work because low notes require a different speed of air. When the inside of the mouth is closed too much, the sound cannot resonate. Try using the syllables “woo” abd “Oh” to lower your chin down. Your throat should be open while playing. Experiment with the air amount going into the flute and find the best sound.
- When playing high notes, a faster airstream and more pressure is required, so we tend to blow downward. Our lips, mouth, and throat tend to get tense, which restricts the resonance of sound. Intonation (tuning from note to note) gets worse. If you blow forward, the pitch will go high.
- The third octave E, F#, and G# can be hard to play. To develop them, utilize overtones by using a lower pitch and adjust to a faster airstream. For E, play an A and then speed up the air stream for the E. For F#, play a B and speed up the air stream for the F#. For G#, play a C# and speed up the air stream for the G#. After practicing this for a while, switch back to the regular fingerings and it should be much easier.
- When you notice a pitch is out of tune, identify if it is sharp or flat. There are several ways to fix notes that are sharp or flat. When we play louder, our pitch tends to go sharp and when we play softer, our pitch tends to go flat. When a pitch is sharp, direct your air stream downwards into the tone hole. When a pitch is flat, direct your air more across the tone hole. In addition, check for alternate fingerings to bring notes in tune.
- Do not decrease your air speed at the end of phrases, as this will lower the pitch. Keep good air flow and abdominal support.
- The embouchure has to be adjusted between low notes and high notes. This means you have to be careful when adjusting. You must learn how to control the airstream depending on the register. The abdominal support and the speed of the air also have to be adjusted along with the embouchure.