

# MASTER OF THE ALPHABET

7 letters. Repeating. Forward and backward. Starting on every letter.

## Sequence of Instruction

1. Practice going forward (repeating).
2. Practice going backward (repeating).
3. Practice with a steady beat (hands on lap).
4. Practice from A to A (forward and back), one note per beat.
5. Practice B to B, C to C, D to D, E to E, F to F, G to G.
6. Practice 2 notes per beat.
7. Practice 4 notes per beat.
8. Add the foot tap (matching the hands).

## Class notes

1. Students match the instructor's correct *playing position*.
2. Students match the instructor's correct *hand position*.
3. Students match the instructor's *tone* and *articulation*.
4. Students match the instructor's hands (up and down).
5. Students "watch the conductor," "listen to one another," "match," and "stay together."

## Mastering the Alphabet

1. Students perform from memory (with student exceptions).
2. Students perform or "pass-off" one line (scale) at a time, one note per beat.
3. Students perform or "pass-off" one line at a time, two notes per beat.
4. "Master of the Alphabet" is achieved when students can perform the alphabet 2 notes per beat from A to A through G to G at a steady tempo with no mistakes.
5. "Super Master" is achieved with 4 notes per beat (2 on the down, 2 on the up).
6. "Ultra Super Master," for crazy over-achievers, is with 8 notes per beat.

*Before students learn to play (or even hold) their instruments, many important lessons are taking root. Critical behaviors – including sitting correctly (playing position), tapping the foot and keeping a steady beat – are becoming automatic.*

## Benefits of “Master of the Alphabet”

1. Students are continuing to develop an internal feeling of pulse and the ability to externalize it.
2. Students are learning to feel 1, 2 and 4 notes per beat (subdivision).
3. Students are learning to perform at faster and slower tempos.
4. Students are learning to find their best performance tempo.
5. Students are hearing the words “Check your playing position;” “Check your hands;” “Listen to your neighbors;” “Match;” “Watch me.” They’re learning ensemble skills.
6. They’re practicing scales (they just don’t know it yet).

## Alphabet Bonus Stuff

1. Students have something fun to practice starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school. We are creating a culture of practicing and “playing” our instruments. We don’t do homeWORK in band. We PLAY. *Band is different than other classes.*
2. Right away, beginner students are **performing**, learning to manage feelings of excitement and also dealing with anxiety, frustration and disappointment. They are practicing their “inner game.”
3. Students experience the exhilaration of achieving something that is both challenging and meaningful to them.
4. Students learn that practicing works and can talk about good and bad practice habits.
5. Since every student has the opportunity to achieve “Master of the Alphabet,” students learn to support one another and celebrate each student’s success.
6. There is no time-limit on learning and achieving. *Band is different than other classes.*

# Master of the Alphabet

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A B C D E F G A

B C D E F G A B

C D E F G A B C

D E F G A B C D

E F G A B C D E

F G A B C D E F

G A B C D E F G