

Lesson Plan A: Describe an instrument

In Student Assignment A, a particular instrument was researched. This lesson can be used to reinforce the concepts explored in that assignment, and to highlight the similarities and differences between various instruments.

If you use this lesson in this way, it might be advisable to vary Assignment A thus: instead of being free to choose an instrument to research, students (or student groups) could be allocated instruments, to ensure that a representative range of instruments is covered.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Think creatively about concepts such as pitch range, tone, etc.
- Explore the difference and similarities between instruments
- Utilise and develop skills involved in public speaking through practice and observation.

Prerequisites

- Sibelius Instruments navigation skills
- Ability to access information related to specific questions and tasks
- Student Assignment A completed

Materials needed

Sibelius Instruments on a classroom computer.

The Lesson: Instrument Charades

In normal 'Charades' the clue-giver suggests through mime a person, place or thing which the audience tries to guess. In 'Instrument Charades' the field of possible subjects is restricted to the instruments the students have studied. Moreover, in order that the relevant knowledge be tested, the rules for the charades might be adapted thus:

- No clues about the name or shape of the instrument are permissible, only about its sound features (range, tone, sounds produced by special techniques, etc.);
- Sounds (but not words) can be made by the mimer. Thus, students give clues by demonstrating the instrument range on the classroom piano, and (more fun) imitating the tone of the instrument, and the sounds created by instrumental techniques and special effects. It would be valuable for the class itself to devise code actions for the hint categories peculiar to this game: 'special technique', 'timbre', etc.;
- If the identification is proving difficult, the teacher can relax the rules to allow easier clues such as shape, imitations of playing the instrument, etc.

Keep Sibelius Instruments running (but with the screen of course hidden from the class audience), to be used where the student is unable to represent musical concepts themselves, and for verification and reinforcement of the musical ideas conveyed.