

2 Orchestra Basics

They often play classical music. They also play marches, tangos, and waltzes. Maybe their music excites you. Maybe it bores you. But orchestras are a basic part of music tradition.

An orchestra is made up of four groups of instruments. The largest group is the strings. One well-known stringed instrument is the violin. An orchestra has many of these. Often 15 or 20 are being played at once. Other stringed instruments are violas, cellos, and basses. A viola looks like a violin, but it has a lower sound. Cellos and basses are larger. They rest on the floor. They are played with a bow. Sometimes a harp is also played. The string section sits at the front of the orchestra. It is at the right, left, and front of the conductor.

Another section is the woodwinds. It includes several instruments. Clarinets, flutes, and oboes are woodwinds. A bassoon is another. It has a deep tone. How did these instruments get their name? At one time, they were all made from wood. (Now some, such as flutes, are made from metal.) And players blow into them, using "wind." Woodwind players sit in front of the conductor. They are right behind the strings.

Brass is a third section. In it are various kinds of horns. Three or four may be trumpets. There may also be trombones and French horns. (A French horn has a long tube coiled in a circle. It makes a mellow sound.) The tuba is also in the brass section. It is the largest brass instrument. The brass section sits right behind the woodwinds.

The final section is percussion. It includes any instrument that is struck. An orchestra may have several kinds of drums. Bells are also percussion instruments. So are xylophones and pianos. Most of these instruments are loud, so they are put at the back of the orchestra.

Main Idea	1	Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M	15
Mark the statement that is <i>too broad</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B	5
Mark the statement that is <i>too narrow</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	5

- Orchestras include many kinds of woodwind instruments.
- Orchestras are made up of four different groups of instruments.
- Orchestras play beautiful music.

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 This passage is mainly about
- the music played by orchestras.
 - the instruments in an orchestra's four sections.
 - what different instruments sound like.
 - where different sections of an orchestra sit.

- Supporting Details** 3 The largest section in an orchestra is the
- strings.
 - brass.
 - woodwinds.
 - percussion.

- Conclusion** 4 A xylophone would be found in the
- woodwind section.
 - brass section.
 - percussion section.
 - string section.

- Clarifying Devices** 5 To help you visualize an orchestra, the writer explains
- how various instruments sound.
 - where different sections sit.
 - why pianos are percussion instruments.
 - the difference between a violin and a viola.

- Vocabulary in Context** 6 In this passage the word *mellow* means
- out of touch.
 - drumlike.
 - musical.
 - smooth and pleasing to the ear.

Add your scores for questions 1-6. Enter the total here Total
and on the graph on page 214. Score