

ALTO SAXOPHONE LESSON 1

VID LINK: [Lesson 1](#)

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

To get the most out of these lessons first watch each segment of the video. Pause the video wherever you need to and slowly go through the exercises yourself before going on. As you practise the work use the video as a reference but spend most of your time playing slowly and patiently off this pdf. Once you feel confident return to the video and try to play along with me! If you can more or less keep up you may be ready for the next lesson.

THEORY

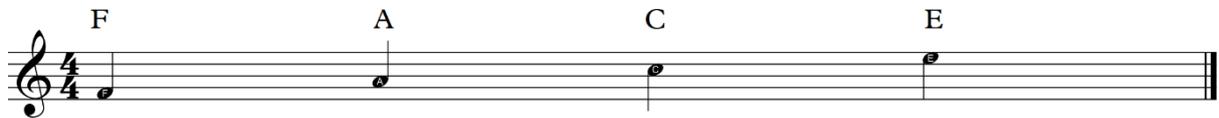
Pitch

In order to indicate higher and lower sounds we add lines to our music. If a note occurs on a higher space or line than the previous then its pitch is higher. We write in 5 lines of pitch and these 5 lines are called the STAFF.



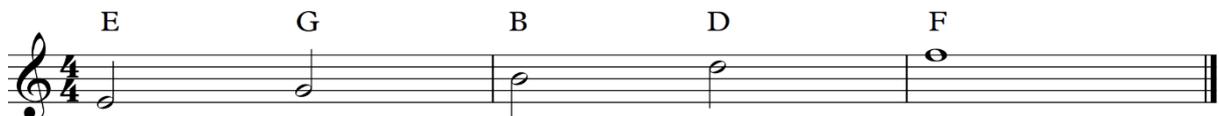
We also now include a TREBLE CLEF  at the beginning which indicates what note each line and space will be. Each line and space has a note assigned to it.

The spaces spell **FACE** starting from the lowest space.



The lines spell **EGBDF** starting from the lowest line. We can remember this by saying:

Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit



BREATHING, TONGUING, AND POSTURE

Breathing

The natural way many people take deep breaths involves filling the top of the lungs, making the chest and the shoulders rise. This is not the most efficient method however.

When playing wind instruments, breath is drawn down into the bottom of the lungs first and the lungs are filled from the bottom up. This is done by pulling the diaphragm (the muscle attached to the bottom of your lungs that makes them expand and contract) down. This has the effect of pushing your stomach out. If you are doing it right it should take you about twice as long to fill your lungs with air than usual.

This is hard for some and easy for others. It can take some time to master and make natural so it is important to try it every time you play. In time you won't have to think about it.

The Mouth and Tongue

Before putting the mouthpiece in your mouth, cover your bottom teeth with your bottom lip. This will be the cushion for the mouthpiece and reed.

Put the mouth piece in your mouth and close your lips around it. Your upper lip should be about halfway between the tip and the top of the mouthpiece.

When playing your sax, don't bite hard on the mouthpiece. Relax your jaw down. This will enable the reed to vibrate freely and create a better sound.

Whenever we play a note we first 'tongue' the note. This is done by putting the tip of your tongue on the tip of the reed and keeping it there as you blow. A split second after you blow, take your tongue away and the sound should come out clearly. This makes a soft *t* sound at the beginning of every tongued note.

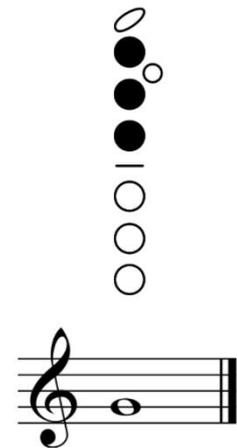
Posture

Always have a straight back when playing your saxophone. If you are standing, keep both feet shoulder-length apart and your back straight. Never crane your neck to reach your mouthpiece- always adjust your neckstrap so that the mouthpiece swings into your mouth when your head is straight.

If you are sitting, sit on the end of your chair towards the right and hang the saxophone over your right side. Keep your back straight when you play.

Posture is important for breathing but also is a health concern- bad posture can lead to back problems.

NOTE FINGERING



TONE

- Breathe in as deeply as you can and play G for 4 seconds. Tongue the beginning.
- Try to expel all your air by the end of 4 seconds.
- Repeat this 5 times each practise.
- If you run out of air early try to let your air out more slowly.

1 2 3 4



EXERCISES

Each exercise has a BREATH MARK after the second bar that looks like a comma. Try to breathe out constantly from the beginning and only breathe in at the breath mark.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7. Sight Reading



PRACTISE TIPS

The more you practise the better you'll get.

If you practise once a week you'll improve slowly. If you practise every day you'll improve very quickly.

As a bare minimum you want to be playing your instrument three times a week but any more will get you mastering your instrument that much sooner.

Learning an instrument isn't like learning facts and then using your memory to recall them when prompted. You're training your muscles just as much as your mind and that's why repetition is so important.

Schedule in your practise times and stick to them. If you don't have much time even five minutes can be effective and is certainly much more effective than none.

It takes discipline but it's well worth it because playing a musical instrument can bring you joy for the rest of your life.

Next time I see you I want you to have worked so hard that you could play your exercises with your eyes closed.