

Instrumental Lessons

Planning Advice and Template

by the music educator

How To Use This Resource

This is a simple resource to assist all instrumental teachers to plan, take notes and keep students accountable in the easiest way possible. If you have students who don't practice, struggle to tell students how to practice, or are finding organising your students overwhelming, this is for you!

This resource contains two parts:

- Suggested lesson timings and ideas
- Lesson Notes Template

Now at the end of the day, you are the person who knows your students best. That's why this resource is so simple; not everything works for everyone, and you should never feel forced to teach in a way that doesn't work for you or your students. That's why this resource is also adaptable; there is space to expand or shrink it as you see fit.

What this resource will give you is a guide to how to manage an instrumental lesson, and how to give your students meaningful notes to support their practice when you're not there.

One of the questions that many people ask about this resource is why 'singing' is included, even though it's designed for all instruments.

It is not about making sure every music student is in choir; it's just that singing is an indispensable tool in developing every student's musicianship. Singing develops a musician's ear, and with many instruments ensures that students move beyond muscle memory to the much more reliable longterm technique of audiation.

Other resources are in development by *the music educator* to support you in this, however you would be surprised by what you already know. Start with scales, intervals and go from there. You are the expert in the room; trust yourself!

Discover more music resources at [themusiceducator.com](https://www.themusiceducator.com)

© the music educator - Jenny Guilford 2021, All Rights Reserved

Suggested Lesson Timings and Ideas

These suggested lengths, with accompanying ages, are simple guidelines. Every student has a different capacity for concentration, which you as their teacher can discover. Also, although the timings seem specific, apply them as you see fit! It just helps to give lessons a shape, and realise what is an achievable goal for each lesson.

20-minute lesson (3 to 6 year olds)

- 5-minutes warm up game/singing
- 5-minutes scales/nursery rhymes
- 7-minutes learning pieces (sitting at instrument)
- 3-minutes end of lesson game

Students who require this length of lesson need to focus on exposure to music, and managing having a lesson at all. This is particularly important if they are already at school; remember they have had a full day before they get to you. That's why there is a strong emphasis on games, and not too much time sitting.

30-minute lesson (7 to 13 year olds)

- 2-minutes warm up singing/aural tests
- 3-minutes scales and exercises
- 10-minutes learning piece number one
- 10-minutes learning piece number two
- 5-minutes lesson reflection/guided improvisation*/game

Students who require this length of lesson will have clearer goals for their lessons, and it's important to talk to them and their parents about what those are before you begin. You'll notice that it's suggested to only look at two pieces a week. From experience, it has become clear that quality is much better than quantity. Better to swap out which pieces are looked at each week than look at all of them poorly.

**Guided improvisation should not be a scary idea. All that is required is a simple chord progression on a loop (it could even be sourced on YouTube). Students can start with just a few notes, then add more when they are confident. It is not about perfection, but rather about building confidence.*

45-minute lesson (13+)

- 2-minutes warm up singing/aural tests
- 8-minutes scales and exercises
- 10-minutes learning piece number one
- 15-minutes learning piece number two (main focus of the lesson)
- 5-minutes check in piece number three
- 5-minutes goal setting/guided improvisation*

There is an assumption in these lesson timings that this student is one who has already been studying their instrument for some time. If they have not, the suggestion would be to start with a shorter lesson length, so as not to overwhelm them with new information. Similarly to the previous lesson timings, note the focus on two lessons a week, with a check-in on a third. Finally, with this age of student, adding goals for their weekly learning is an important step in them becoming a self-driven learner. Read more below about these goals, as well as guided improvisation.

60-minute lesson (15+)

- 2-minutes warm up singing/aural tests
- 8-minutes scales and exercises
- 15-minutes learning piece number one
- 20-minutes learning piece number two (main focus of the lesson)
- 10-minutes check in piece number three
- 5-minutes goal setting/guided improvisation*

Students who require an hour long lesson should be reasonably advanced on their instrument. This does not mean that the warm-up can be scrapped; it is a basic educational premise that should always be followed. There is not much to add about these lesson timings that is different from other lessons. However, don't forget, that no matter how advanced these students may seem, they still need to get back to the basics, and be pulled beyond their 'favourite' types of music. That's why there is still room to do guided improvisation, which could just as easily become guided listening, music history discussions, or whatever extends the student in their learning.

Date of Lesson: Monday the 2nd of June		Practice Tally	
Practices for this week:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Expected time: 30 minutes	
Warm Up	<p>Singing: Practice singing major and minor scales, starting on C. Sing once with piano, then once without, checking your pitch at the end.</p> <p>Exercises: Alberti bass line exercise. Relax and drop wrist, and remember to 'rock' back and forth. Pancake exercise to start EVERY practice this week.</p> <p>Scales: Focus on E flat major fingering; hands separately, then together. 60 - 80 bpm (4/beat).</p>		
	<p>Teacher Notes: Practice up to bar 25 ONLY. Hands separately, focusing on the phrasing in the right hand. In bar 4, remember to allow your wrist to move. If it locks, you can't get to the next part! Left hand: practice pianissimo. 52 - 60 bpm (2/beat)</p> <p>Student Notes: Got up to 56 bpm. Need help on phrasing in the right hand.</p>		
	<p>Teacher Notes: Great work on putting hands together! Focus on bars 34-48, balance out the crescendo across the whole time. Use exercise in Hanon to help.</p> <p>Student Notes: Think I managed the crescendo practice.</p>		
	<p>Teacher Notes: Carry on with last week's notes - must look at this piece in lesson next week!</p> <p>Student Notes: Learnt the notes of the whole piece, first two pages hands together.</p>		
Questions for next lesson:	What fingering would work best for the Beethoven bar 14? Is the Bartok technically a dance?		

Date of Lesson:

Practice Tally

Practices for this week:

Expected time:

Warm Up

Singing:

Exercises:

Scales:

Teacher Notes:

Student Notes:

Teacher Notes:

Student Notes:

Teacher Notes:

Student Notes:

Questions for next lesson:

	Teacher Notes:	
	Student Notes:	
	Teacher Notes:	
	Student Notes:	
	Teacher Notes:	
	Student Notes:	

Date of Lesson:		Practice Tally	
Practices for this week:		Expected time:	
Warm Up	<u>Singing:</u> <u>Exercises:</u> <u>Scales:</u>		
	Teacher Notes: Student Notes:		
	Teacher Notes: Student Notes:		
	Teacher Notes: Student Notes:		
Questions for next lesson:			

	Teacher Notes: Student Notes:	
	Teacher Notes: Student Notes:	
	Teacher Notes: Student Notes:	

Terms of Use

These documents are designed and built entirely by our team at the music educator. We are not here to load you with confusing legal terms, but it is important to set out expectations of use.

These are:

- Resources may be shared within **one** school/education institute per purchase.
- Resources are the intellectual property of Jenny Guilford - the music educator.
- A purchase entitles you to the non-exclusive use of the resources purchased.

At the end of the day, we want to be able to trust you! These resources have taken a lot of time, and are the result of a lot of studying and experience. If you have any queries, don't hesitate to contact us through our website.