

Instrument Families: Woodwind

The woodwind instrument family is one of two (the other being Brass) that are played using wind. When they decided on the name woodwinds, these instruments were made of wood. Now, they are also made of different types of metal and plastic. Some natural woodwinds- like the ocarina- have also been made of glass, clay, ceramic, reeds/grasses, or bone.

Types of Woodwind Instruments

Flutes

These instruments are played by blowing air across their mouthpiece. Sometimes they are played sideways or blown on their end (some have a special mouthpiece called a Fipple). They often have at least one end open, but some do not.



Western Concert Flute (sideways)



Recorder (blown on end/fipple mouth piece)



Ocarina (closed/vessel flute)

Reed Instruments



Unlike flutes, these instruments are played by blowing air into a mouthpiece which causes its reed(s) to vibrate. Some instruments have one reed, while others have two! *[There is also an additional type called a “free reed” which is usually seen in harmonicas and accordions.]*



Saxophone (single reed)



Clarinet (single reed)



Oboe (double reed)



Bassoon (double reed)

Activities for Your Child

High and Low

Below are two woodwind instruments that can play very high and very low pitches. **Play both recordings below for your child, but don't let them see the picture: only listen.** Afterwards, ask your child what they think each instrument looked like. What did the sound of the instruments remind them of? What size do they think the instrument is? *When finished guessing, let them watch the video with you- were their guesses right?*

Piccolo (half-sized flute)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EFLa5dK-nU>

Contrabassoon



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgNoTOgVxSg>

Instrument Matching Game

In another attachment, you will find a woodwind matching game. Cut out the images, mix them up, and place them upside-down. See if your child can find the matches! Help your child to identify the instrument they've found by reading the name. Look for recordings of these instruments online if you've never heard their sound before.