

Homework & Practice Tips

Most of the time, the only homework you will have in band/orchestra is to practice your instrument. Regular and structured practice, as in sports or exercise, is the only sure way to improve.

How often? Daily practice is ideal; you should practice at least three times a week minimum. Wind Ensemble, Performing Band, Jazz Band and Advanced Orchestra students will often require more time. Some students will practice only after school, which is fine; others will practice only on weekends, some have set days to take their instrument home (such as when they get a ride, etc.)

How long? Shorter, regular practice sessions will be more effective than fewer longer ones. Practice sessions should last at least 20 minutes. 30 minutes is a good amount if you practice at least 4 times each week. More importantly, practice to reach set goals (that you have written down), rather than just for a specific amount of time.

When to practice? Set a regular time each day, as you should with all homework, to practice (maybe leave playing your instrument as a reward for completing or break from other homework). Some students choose to practice their instrument in the band room after school. The band room is open most days until 4:00 (often later) so you may practice and receive help, if needed.

What to practice? You should always start your practice session by warming up (scales, long tones, breathing exercises) for 3-6 minutes, followed by playing some exercises/lines from your book that focus on improving your technique. You should then move on to review what you worked on in class that day, and then work on any music that was assigned for the next day. Save something you really enjoy playing for the end of your practice session. Always take time in practice to slowly go over problem sections in your music - this saves a great deal of time in rehearsal. Remember - "practice" time is the time to work on your individual problems; "rehearsal" time is our group time - effective practice will lead to more fun in rehearsals!

Where to practice? Examples of good places would include the band room, your bedroom, a quiet spot outside, your garage - anywhere where you have a place to set up your instrument and music without distractions.

How is practice graded? We will be sending home Practice Sheets for you to record your practice times/areas of practice. While it is important to spend time practicing, how well you practice class material is much more important.