



BAND

What is one successful method you have utilized to develop your students' awareness of intonation?

- At the start of rehearsal, once each student is settled, they start humming a concert F (with no drone). This signals others that it's time to focus and it builds their internal sense of pitch. Once all students are humming, we open to singing, and then we play to match the note. Having an inner sense of higher and lower, even for just one note, is critical in building awareness for *all* the notes they will play. By starting in this way, every rehearsal begins with musical sounds and student leadership. —*Jo Ann Champion, Hutto MS*
- My warmup method combines articulations with focusing on concert F. Going no faster than 106 BPM, we progress from whole notes to eighth notes, working on accurate starts and stops along with unifying note lengths. At the end we use F around the room, some days with the metronome and some without. This final exercise helps students focus on characteristic tone quality, uniformity of volume, and tuning. —*Adam Charles Lara, Diamond Hill Jarvis HS*
- First, I have students play a concert pitch (F, A, B-flat) with Tonal Energy projected on the board. Then they play the same pitch with their eyes closed, listening across the band for any waves or to hear the ensemble well blended, with overall intonation. —*Jonathon Cruz, Zan Wesley Holmes MS*
- We incorporate singing and daily tuner use starting in beginner band. Before playing, they sing note names on pitch while fingering or while counting rhythms on music, scales, and chorales to internalize pitch relationships. This strengthens pitch accuracy and blend before transferring to instruments. We also emphasize chord tuning by teaching students alternate fingerings, marking a downward arrow on thirds, and adjusting each note in a chord. —*Kelby Koch, Kranz JH*
- While it takes time, work to improve tone quality through good posture, carriage, breathing, equipment, embouchure, calm/full breathing, quality air, singing, and listening to models of good tone. Beyond that, teach appropriate horn length (slides, middle, barrel, headjoint, neck) and tuning tendencies of the instrument. Hum, sing, and play daily. Do interval studies, scales, Remington exercises, and sight-singing. Make it fun! Use a digital piano, drones, tuners, and free tuning game apps. Play professional recordings and ask questions. Raise levels of awareness and higher-level thinking. Teach them the best tuning notes in a good order to tune and use the clip-on tuners if you can. —*Kevin Knight, Crosby ISD*
- Teaching beginners, I play a drone note on the Harmony Director and play in tune on an instrument. Then, I purposefully play flat and ask if they hear the waves in sound. Then, I play in tune again to see if they hear the difference. I also ask them to close their eyes and raise their hands when I am in tune, first playing sharp and then in tune. Students use tuners and microphone pickups, as well as tuner caddies. This is a daily reminder that they can and should use their tuner as a personal help device while developing their ears. —*Katie Lewis, Maus Middle School*
- One effective method I've used is encouraging them to close their eyes and visualize the pitch contours or the "musical notes" of speech. This helps students focus on the rise and fall of intonation, not the words themselves. By visualizing the tone as a note or melody, they can better understand how intonation influences the meaning and emotion behind speech. This method also fosters a more intuitive grasp of speech patterns, allowing students to develop a natural and fluid understanding of intonation. —*Cody Knott, Eastland HS*
- The first step is to direct students' attention to their tone and that of the section. We have tone contests in which each student in a section plays one long tone and the band votes on the best tone in that section. Then, the section members work to match the winning tone. We then discuss what elements contribute to a great tone. Once the tone is focused, intonation is naturally better and is easier to adjust. —*Anonymous*
- An often-overlooked solution is teaching brass students how to properly set their valve slides. Many will play an open or first position note beautifully in tune only to struggle as they add valves or attachments. Once they have completed their "wheel alignment" with their slide settings, it is much easier to direct their listening for interference patterns and to nimbly adjust pitch. —*Jason Tucker, Mattei MS*
- With daily breathing exercises, we emphasize the connection between *breathing with resonance* and *playing with resonance*. We transition to unison F, followed by passing the note around the room so students listen to themselves and those around them. Then we do long tone exercises with a drone pitch reference. I alternate between days with a singular pitch compared to the drone and days of attention to studying the intervals. We move to slurs and flexibility exercises to build the ability to physically adjust pitch and play scales to hear in key signatures. Finally, we continue this work as we work on repertoire. —*Cameron Green, Gainesville HS*