

HOW TO START STUDENTS ON THE TROMBONE

1. Teach the student to take the instrument out of the case and assemble it.
2. Beginning embouchure (good for all brasses, but horn placement differs):
 - Have the student say the letter “M”, keeping lips closed
 - Place two fingers over the corners of the mouth
 - Make sure the lips are wet, not dry and not stretched
3. Blow enough air to produce a buzz, hopefully centered around an F.
4. Take the mouthpiece, grasping the top of the shank, and place 50/50 on the lips.
5. Repeat blowing the air, again (hopefully) with the buzz centered around an F.
6. Adjust for these problems:
 - NO SOUND:
 - Make sure lips are wet
 - Relax the lips
 - Blow more/less air as needed
 - PITCH TOO HIGH (at least a P4):
 - Blow slower air; relax lips
 - PITCH TOO LOW (at least a P4):
 - Blow faster air; firm mouth corners
7. Try a simple tune (“Mary had a .../Hot Cross Buns/etc.) starting on F. Breathe when needed, but not after each note.
8. (Assuming everything up to this point has worked) Assemble the trombone:
 - Slide is LOCKED
 - Bell is roughly 3" away from the slide when assembled
 - LH first finger is straight and on the mouthpiece shank
 - RH thumb is on the slide brace, facing the student; 2 fingers above; 2 fingers below
 - Slide/bell form a “V” when the student looks straight ahead
9. First note should be an F. If not, adjust air/embouchure accordingly (see #6).
10. Immediately play 2-4 F’s in a row (using the “TAH” syllable) to make sure the student does not breathe between each note or stop the air with the tongue.
10. Try these 3 notes, again in one breath using the “TAH” syllable: F (1st), E ♭ (3rd), D ♭ (5th). Then have the student play simple tunes on these 3 notes, breathing after each short phrase. Another option is to use D (4th), C (6th) B ♭ (1st); however, the C in 6th may be a problem for smaller students!
11. In subsequent lessons begin in the book. Be aware that student have first learned D ♭ rather than D ♮ and will need to be taught the difference.

HAPPY TROMBONE PLAYING!