



# Oboe 101

Oboe advice for the non-oboe player

KAREN E. BALLENGEE

FALL 2017

# Background Information

An elementary school instrumental music teacher is expected to teach a variety of instruments. Some of these instruments might be outside the teacher's area of expertise. For example, the band director could be a trumpet player who is teaching beginning oboe players. This director may have had a woodwind methods class in college, but would not be an expert on that instrument. Yet, to first-year students and their parents, the band director is viewed as the musical expert. Unless the student is fortunate enough to have a private instructor, the band director is the resource for all things pertaining to the student's instrument. This guide will give first-year band directors the resources to be able to start first-year students on the oboe. Included in this guide are equipment and music suggestions, basics for producing a tone, fingering explanations, and resources.

# Learning Outcomes & Types of Questions

## Learning Outcomes

- ▶ The participant will successfully compare and contrast music equipment and resources and select the most appropriate materials for their classroom.
- ▶ The participant will successfully recall the basics of oboe assembly, maintenance, embouchure, and tone production and demonstrate for their students.
- ▶ The participant will successfully recall the different types of fingerings, select the most appropriate fingering for the situation, and demonstrate the fingering for their students.

## Types of Questions

- ▶ Job task
- ▶ Goal-oriented procedural knowledge



# Meet Dave.



This is Dave. It's Dave's first year as a band director at Westmore Elementary School and he has two students who will begin the oboe this year. Dave had a woodwind methods class in college, but he was a trombone major so he has a lot of questions about the oboe.

**DIRECTIONS:** Click the question clouds to find out more about the oboe.

# Equipment



Student oboes are made of plastic and come without the extra keys found on professional model instruments. Plastic is recommended for beginners as it is more durable. There are many options available to rent or purchase an instrument.

**DIRECTIONS:** Click the question clouds to find out more about instruments and accessories.

HOME

# Instruments

These are some of the better models of student oboes and, as a result, they cost a little more. These instruments both use the modified conservatory system which is usually only available on intermediate instruments. The additional trill keys allow a smooth transition from note to note.

Additional Brands:

- Bundy
- Jupiter
- Giardinelli
- Larilee
- Fox

## Selmer 123FB

\$2,539 (new)

- Key of C
- Resonite body
- Modified conservatory system
- Ab-Bb and left-hand C-D trills
- Range to low Bb

## Yamaha YOB-441

\$2,852 (new)

- Modified conservatory system
- Semi-automatic octave keys
- Covered keys
- Trill keys: C# † D#, F# to G#, A# to B, B to C#, right C to D
- ABS resin body

EQUIPMENT

HOME



# Accessories



Cork grease

Swab

Reed case

Reeds



Most advanced oboe players make their own reeds, but pre-made reeds can be easily purchased. These reeds range in price from \$8.00 to \$24.00 for a single reed. Some suggested brands for beginners are:

- Eastman
- Emerald
- Jones

**EQUIPMENT**

**HOME**

# Music

What **method book** should I use?

What kind of **supplemental music** is available?

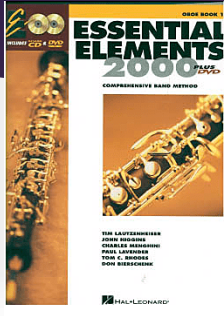
There are many band method books on the market that provide interactivity through Smart Music, DVDs, or CDs. These are the perfect books for today's students who grew up with technology. There are also oboe-specific books that focus on the problems and pieces of the oboe. In addition to the method books generally used in schools, there are supplemental materials that give the students additional options for literature.

**DIRECTIONS:** Click the question cloud to find out more about books and music.

HOME

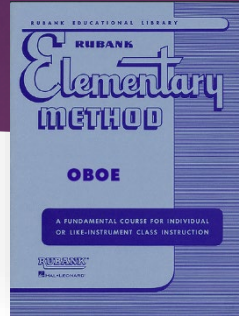


# Method Books



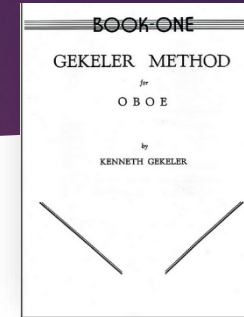
## Essential Elements 2000 Book 1

This book is great because it can be used with Smart Music and the students have a choice of practicing with a DVD or CD. The layout is attractive and easy-to-read. The notes are introduced in an odd order and many new notes are introduced at once which could be a problem for young students.



## Rubank Elementary Method

This book is very basic and low-tech. Rubank is always the best way to learn scales and technique. Oboe fingerings have changed over the years, so there are some incorrect fingerings in this book. The book also advances at a rapid pace which might be too fast for younger students.



## Geckler Oboe Method Book 1

This is a more oboe-specific book and might be better used in a private lesson setting. The book has no interactive elements, but does offer oboe specific problems, exercises, and music.

[MUSIC](#)[HOME](#)

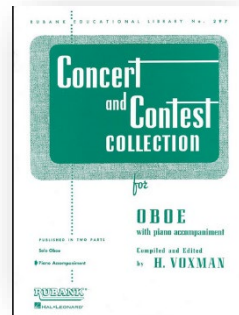
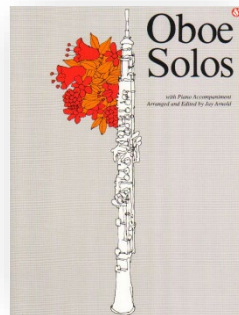
# Supplemental Music

## From the Maryland Grade 1 list

Title	Composer	Publisher
Minuet in G	Bach	Medici
Largo	Dvorak	Belwin
The Sway	Saint-Saens	Carl Fischer
Sentimental Lady	Weber	Belwin

Most state Music Educator Associations have a list of graded solos for each instrument. If your state does not have such a list, visit the state of [Maryland's](#). There are also books with a variety of solos. First year students would generally play a Grade 1 or 2 solo.

## Solo Collections



MUSIC

HOME

# Getting Started



The first couple of weeks of lesson instruction should be spent learning to care for the instrument and learning to produce a tone. Proper assembly and maintenance will keep the instrument out of the repair shop. Proper hand position and embouchure will get the students off to a good start.

HOME



# Care and Maintenance

The oboe is quite easy to maintain. These instruments should be kept away from water and should be swabbed after each use.

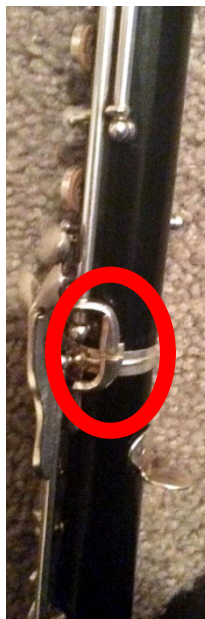


STARTING

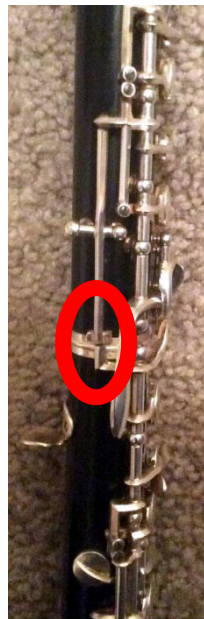
HOME

# Assembling the Oboe

## Bridge Keys



Left

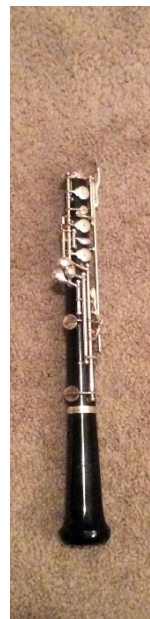


Right

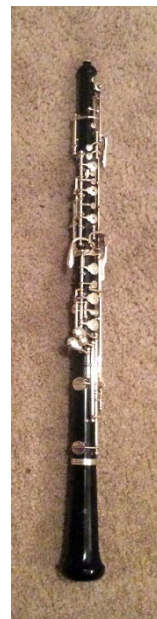
## Assembly Order



1



2



3

The best way to assemble an oboe is to put it together from bottom to top.

Great care should be taken to line up both bridge keys though some instruments might play better with the bridge keys slightly misaligned.

**STARTING**

**HOME**

# Producing a Tone

Hand position, tonguing, and embouchure are difficult topics to teach. Here are some basic principles. The resources provided provide further information for reinforcing these techniques and troubleshooting any problems.

## Hand Position

- Left hand on top
- Right hand on the bottom
- The right thumb sits below the thumb rest
- The hands should form a C

## Tonguing

- The tongue doesn't start note.
- The tongue should release from the tip of the reed to make sound
- Students can practice tonguing by using just the reed

## Embouchure

- Form an "O" with the lips
- The teeth should not have contact with the reed
- The bottom lip should make a cushion



Reeds should be soaked for 3-5 minutes before playing

**STARTING**

**HOME**



# Fingerings



Most woodwind instruments have the same basic fingerings. The oboe is slightly different because it contains **two** octave keys. The oboe has alternate fingerings, but not as many as the clarinet.

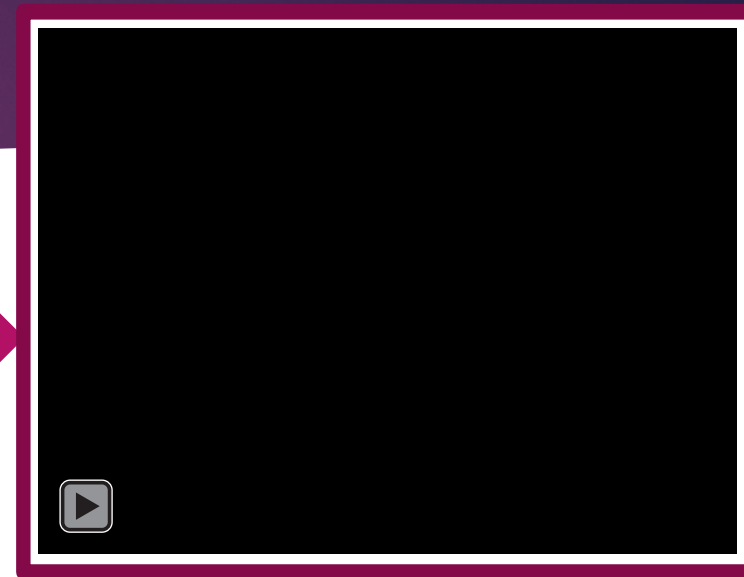
**DIRECTIONS:** Click the question cloud to find out more about basic and alternate fingerings.

HOME

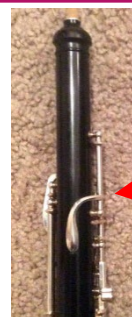
# Basic Fingerings



The half hole method requires that only half the hole of the B key to be covered. The player should slide the finger instead of rolling the finger. There are several YouTube videos available to learn this method.



Press **Play** to see the half hole technique demonstrated.



Back View

- 1<sup>st</sup> octave key
- Use left thumb



When the second octave key is used, the first octave key should also be used



Front View

- 2<sup>nd</sup> octave key
- Use left forefinger
- Also use 1<sup>st</sup> octave key

**FINGERINGS**

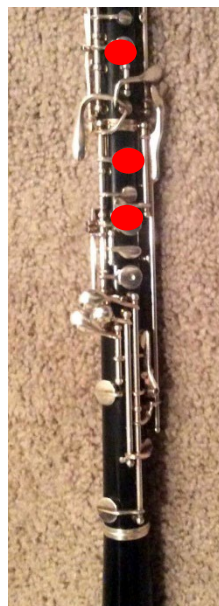
**HOME**

# Alternate Fingerings

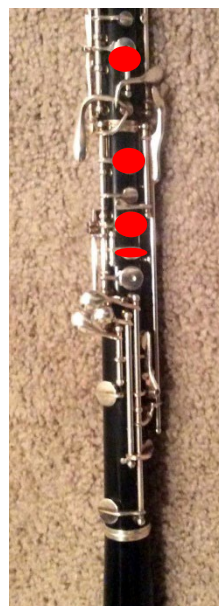
The only alternate fingering that first-year oboe students will need to know is the alternate F.

## Regular F

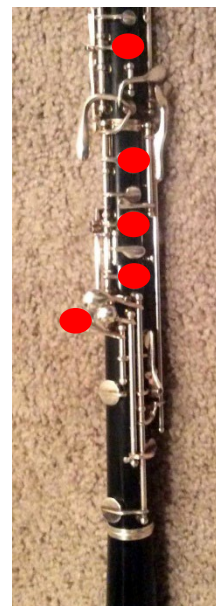
This fingering works fine if you are playing in a scale pattern such as the example below.



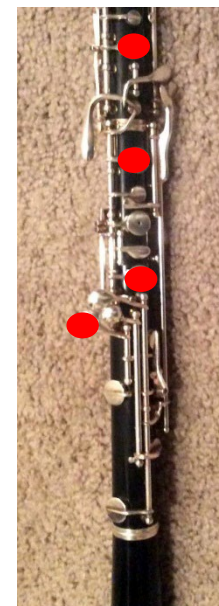
E



F



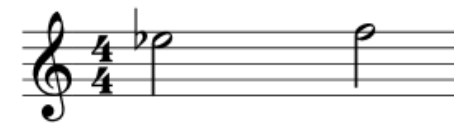
E $\flat$



F

## Alternate F

In the example below, regular F won't work because the player is required to slide the third finger of the right hand up which is almost impossible at a quick tempo. With alternate f, the player only needs to lift the middle finger of the right hand.



FINGERINGS

HOME



# Resources

What are good  
**resources** for  
oboe?

What are some  
good **books** on  
the oboe?

Are there **apps**  
for oboe?

Wow! That is a lot of information to remember. Dave is still a little confused about the oboe. Here are some resources that can help you and Dave teach your beginning oboe players.

**DIRECTIONS:** Click the question cloud to find out more about books, resources, and apps.

FINGERINGS

HOME

# Web Resources



International Double Reed Society

This group is for professional and amateur double reed players. The IDRS holds conferences every year.

Weinermusic.com

Product Search

Weiner Music caters to woodwind players and is a great resource for oboe equipment and music.

*Jeanne* Inc.

Search our entire store...

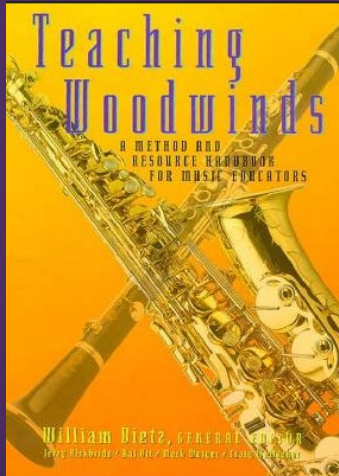
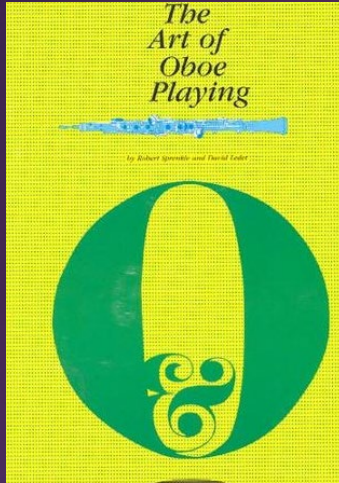
Jeanne specializes in woodwind music.

Click the logos to visit the sites.

RESOURCES

HOME

# Books on Oboe



## *The Art of Oboe Playing*

This book has a history of the oboe, tips on getting started and oboe specific exercises. It is perfect for oboe performers and anyone who teaches oboe.

---

## *Teaching Woodwinds*

This book has information on all of the woodwinds. The oboe section information on embouchure, a fingering chart, and an extensive repertoire list.

**RESOURCES**

**HOME**

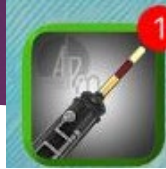
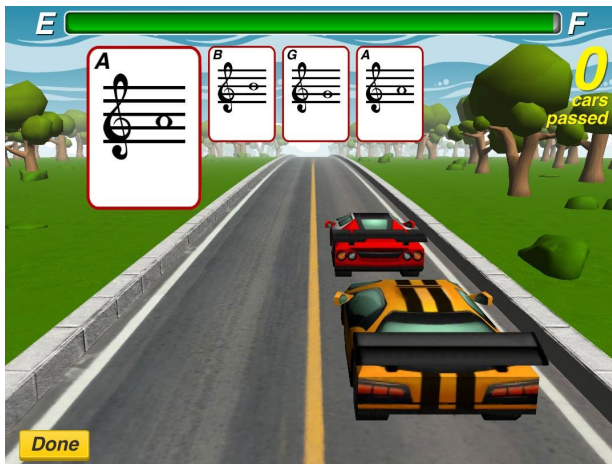


# Oboe Apps



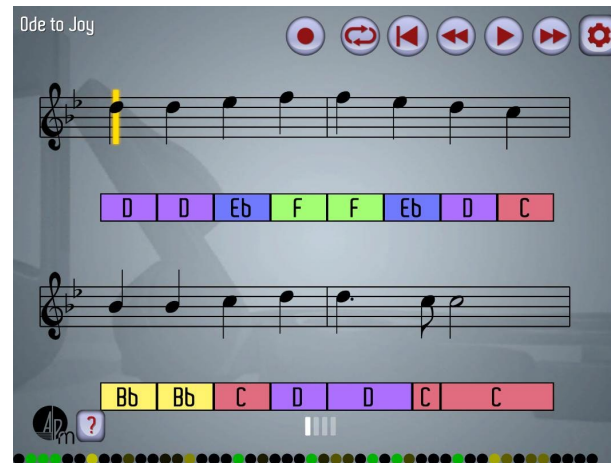
## Oboe Racer

This app is good for students to practice notes. A note shows up on the screen and the student must answer correctly to pass other cars.



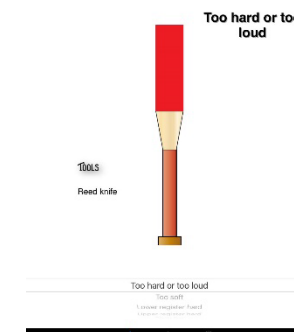
## Oboe Play-Along

This is an excellent app for music reading. The music appears on the screen and the student plays along.



## Oboe Reeds

This app shows the user where to adjust the reed to fix certain issues. This wouldn't be a good app for a beginning student, but would be an excellent resource for a band director to trouble-shoot reed problems.



RESOURCES

HOME

# References

Dietz, W., Kirkbride, J., Weiger, M., & Whittaker, C. (1998). *Teaching woodwinds: A method and resource handbook for music educators*. Schirmer.

## **Photo Credits**

Jeanne webpage

International Double Reed Society webpage

Weiner Music Webpage

Oboe Racer app

Oboe Reed app

Oboe Play-along app