

Understanding Your Beginner Band Skill Rating

What Is It?

Your Band Skill Rating is a way of measuring your playing skills on your instrument.

How Is It Measured?

Your Skill Rating is calculated by using a chart called the Band Skill Rating Chart, which you will find in this packet. Beginners have 2 charts. One, for your first Band Skill Rating in November, and the other, for all other ratings. **All band members are required to have a copy of these charts in their folder.** The chart is made up of rows and columns. The left column shows which skills are being measured to determine your rating. Once a particular skill level is well enough developed to get on the chart, it is possible to score from 7 to 10 points in each category.

Because you are a Beginner, the first Band Skill Rating Chart only has 2 columns, and the highest possible score is only 8 points in each category. **Because of this, the highest possible score on your first Band Skill Rating is 80 points.** Some students (especially on flute, but others too) may score as low as 50, because you may not have produced a sound yet. **As long as you're practicing regularly, don't worry about this.** By February, you should have your score in the target range.

If a particular skill is not developed to the point of getting on the chart, you will receive zero points for that category. If you're a beginner, this can be common. For example, many flute players have trouble producing a sound for much of their first year. **Don't let a low rating discourage you. If you're practicing regularly, you will improve your rating.** On the back of the Skill Rating Chart you will find some tips for understanding, and improving each category.

When Is It Measured?

Your skill rating is measured at every class lesson, and every full band practice. You will receive a copy of your Band Skill Rating in November, February, and June.

What Is The Purpose?

There are several purposes for this rating. The most important purpose is to give you a better idea of your progress as a musician. Since most band students will earn an "A" in class for attending practice and learning music for performances, this rating will give you a better idea of how effectively you are practicing. Your skill rating will also be used, in combination with other factors, to help determine your band and lesson group placement, as well as your grade in band.

How Can I Improve My Rating?

Attend all classes. Pay attention. **Above all, practice!!** The best way to improve as a player, is to practice regularly. Most students need 4 or 5 practice sessions per week to learn their assignments in a reasonable amount of time. These sessions should average about 20 to 30 minutes each.

Your assignments are designed to improve your skills and make you sound great. Students who complete their assignments quickly will eventually be the highest rated players in the school.

***** See the reverse side for Skill Targets *****

About Band Skill Rating Targets

Note that Jr. Winds or Wind Ensemble music is far more difficult, and requires more experience in both reading notation and playing your instrument, than Concert or Beginner Band.

For example: A Beginner with a skill rating of 95 is most likely not as skilled a musician as a Wind Ensemble member with a rating of 85.

Most students need to progress through each band to gain the experience needed to play in Wind Ensemble.

Skill Targets

<i>Beginner Band</i>	<i>70 or higher in February 80 or higher in June</i>
<i>Concert Band</i>	<i>75-85 or higher</i>
<i>Jr. Winds</i>	<i>80-90 or higher</i>
<i>Wind Ensemble</i>	<i>85 or higher</i>