
Strings 8

Curriculum Guide

Scranton School District

Scranton, PA.



Course Name: Strings 8	Grade: 8
Prerequisites: Grade 7 Strings: Students should have rhythmic notation, note identification skills, and an intermediate level of instrumental playing techniques.	
Course Description: This course is designed for 8th- grade students in orchestra, to build upon progressive concepts and knowledge gained in 7th grade with a deeper level of content and practice under the guidance of a certified Pennsylvania music teacher. Students will enhance their proficiency in music terminology, instrumental techniques, music theory, and demonstration of skills through a structured and supportive environment. The course will emphasize understanding instrumental pedagogy, band repertoire, and music literacy while exploring genres, composers, and historical context. Lessons will integrate a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate English Language Learners (ELD), students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP), 504 plans, and Emotional Support(ES). This curriculum is designed for the chorus classroom, it is offered as a 45-day class rotation integrated with other related arts. Students will build on foundational knowledge acquired in previous years while progressing in their ability to perform solo, duet, small group, and ensemble pieces.	

45 Day Summary

45 Day Overview		
Topic	Standards / Assessment Anchors	Pacing Guide
<i>Refinement of Instrumental Techniques:</i> -Students will refine their embouchure, hand position, posture, and breathing techniques. -Emphasis on tone production, dynamic control, and articulation. -Continue development of vibrato (if applicable) and technical dexterity.	9.8.B 9.1.8.B, G, H	Foundational Skill- Ongoing

<i>Expanded Scale Studies & Technical Exercises:</i> -Students will learn and perform one-octave major scales (C, G, D, Bb, F, and Eb) with proper fingerings and intonation. -Introduction to minor scales and chromatic exercises.	9.1.8.A, B, C, G, H; 9.2.8.F; 9.3.8.D	Foundational Skill - Ongoing
<i>Intermediate Music Theory & Sight Reading:</i> -Students will expand their knowledge of key signatures and time signatures (including 6/8 and cut time). -Sight-reading exercises using varied rhythmic patterns and articulation.	9.1.8.A, B, C, G, H 9.2.8.F 9.3.8.D	Foundational Skill - Ongoing
<i>Rhythmic Studies & Advanced Metter Recognition:</i> - Reinforce understanding of syncopation, triplets, and dotted rhythms. -Students will perform and compose rhythmic exercises.	9.1.8.A, B, G, H 9.2.8.F 9.3.8.D	Foundational Skill - Ongoing
<i>Ensemble Skills & Rehearsal Techniques:</i> - Reinforce listening and blend within sections and full ensemble. -Emphasize balance, intonation, phrasing, and dynamic contrast. -Perform intermediate-level ensemble literature.	9.1.8.A, B, C, G, H 9.2.8.F 9.3.8.D	Foundational Skill - Ongoing

<i>Introduction to Improvisation & Composition:</i> -Basic improvisation exercises within a given scale or chord structure. -Encourage students to create simple melodic phrases. -Students will compose short melodies and notate them correctly.	9.1.8.A, B, C, G, H 9.2.8.F 9.3.8.D	Foundational Skill - Ongoing
<i>Music History & Genre Exploration:</i> - Students will explore historical periods (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th Century). -Discuss composers and cultural influences on music. -Listening and analysis of jazz, film scores, and modern band music.	9.1.8.A-K 9.2.8.A-L 9.3.8.A-G 9.4.8.A-D	Foundational Skill - Ongoing

Detailed Breakdown By Topic

Topic	Standards / Assessment Anchors	Essential Knowledge & Skills	Vocabulary	Resources & Activities	Assessments	Suggested Time
Refinement of of Instrumental Techniques	9.1.8.A - C 9.3.8.A 9.2.8.D	Students will understand the basic structure of their assigned instruments, including the different parts and their functions (e.g.,	Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, mouthpiece, ligature, reed, valve, slide, stick,	Teacher-Generated Materials: Visual aids with labeled diagrams of each instrument. SmartBoard Presentation: Showing step-by-step videos of	Teacher Assessment/Formal , Informal Observations	Week 1-2 Ongoing review when necessary

		mouthpieces, valves, slides, etc.). The teacher will guide them through the process of assembling and disassembling their instruments, ensuring they know how to care for and clean their instruments to maintain proper functionality and hygiene. Proper embouchure, posture, articulation (staccato, legato, accent), breath control, tone production. Expanding on the knowledge learned in the previous year.	Resonance, articulation, vibrato, diaphragm support, projection, embouchure control.	instrument assembly and disassembly. Hands-on Practice: Students will work with their instruments under teacher supervision, ensuring proper technique. Instrument Exploration: Allowing students to handle different instruments to learn their components and how they produce sound. Method Books: Essential Books		
High Intermediate Level of Playing - Instrumental	9.1.8.B, C, G, H	Students will review the fundamentals of playing their instrument, starting with posture, embouchure (for brass and woodwind), and grip (for percussion). The teacher will emphasize the importance of correct posture for sound production and breath	Embouchure, stick, mallets, posture, sound production, resonance, breath control, reed, ligature.	Teacher Demonstration: Showing correct playing posture and embouchure. SmartBoard/Video Demonstrations: Examples of professional musicians playing with correct	Teacher Assessment/Formal , Informal Observations	Week 3-4 Ongoing review when necessary

		control for wind instruments. Students will practice focusing on tone quality. Percussion students will demonstrate basic and intermediate level of snare drum strokes and mallet techniques. Expanding on the knowledge learned in the previous year.		technique. Method Books (e.g., Essential Elements): Students practice simple exercises to develop technique. Instrument Stands & Tuners: For independent practice and tuning.		
Practicing the Notes	9.1.8.B, C, G, H	Students will review the first few notes on their instrument. They will review staff notation and identify the notes they are playing (e.g., FACE and EGBDF for treble clef instruments, ACEG and GBDFA for bass clef instruments). Proper fingerings for these notes will be taught, with an emphasis on producing clear, resonant sounds. Intonation will be introduced as students learn to adjust their	Staff, treble clef, bass clef, note names, intonation, fingerings, valve positions (for brass), key positions (for woodwinds).	Instrument Method Books(e.g. Essential Elements): Specific exercises targeting the first few notes. Teacher Demonstrations: Step-by-step guidance on playing the first notes with proper fingerings. SmartBoard and Sheet Music: Visual aids showing the staff, clefs, and note locations. Independent Practice:	Teacher Assessment/Formal , Informal Observations	Week 3-4 Ongoing review when necessary

		playing for the correct pitch. One-octave major scales, chromatic scales, articulation studies, technical dexterity. Expanding on the knowledge learned in the previous year.		Students practice note production with regular teacher check-ins.		
Music Theory & Sight Reading	9.1.8.A - C	Identifying and playing in multiple key signatures, time signatures (6/8, cut time), sight-reading rhythmic and melodic passages. Students will develop the ability to read and perform simple melodies on their instruments, connecting their understanding of pitch, intervals, and music notation to their playing. They will learn to identify melodic patterns and practice playing both stepwise and intervallic melodies. The focus will be on connecting the visual representation of notes on the staff with	Ledger lines, transposition, phrasing, articulation markings.	Instrument Method Books(e.g. Essential elements): Specific exercises targeting the recognizing notes on the staff and sight reading. Teacher Demonstrations: Step-by-step guidance on playing notes with proper fingerings. SmartBoard and Sheet Music: Visual aids showing the staff, clefs, and note locations. Independent Practice: Students practice note production with regular teacher check-ins.	Teacher Assessment/Formal , Informal Observations	Week 3 - 5 Ongoing review when necessary

		the physical action of playing the correct pitches on their instrument. Students will also begin to recognize the importance of phrasing and expression in melodic playing. Expanding on the knowledge learned in the previous year.				
Rhythmic Studies & Advanced Meter	9.1.8.A - H, 9.3.8.A-G	Students will understand the role of rhythm in music, including the ability to identify, clap, and count basic rhythmic patterns. They will learn rhythmic values for whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests. The concept of time signatures will be introduced, and students will practice reading and performing rhythms in various meters (e.g., 4/4, 3/4 , adding 6/8). Conducting patterns	Key signature, transposition, major scale, C Major, Bb Major, G Major.	SmartBoard Presentation: Showing key signature charts and how they affect each instrument. Key Signature Drills: Students practice identifying key signatures on flashcards or worksheets. Playing Exercises: Simple songs or scales in C, Bb, and G Major. Teacher Demonstrations: Showing how to play in different keys on various instruments.	Teacher Assessment/Formal , Informal Observations Mid-Quarter Evaluation	Week 5 -6 Ongoing review when necessary

		will also be introduced to reinforce rhythmic understanding. Performing syncopation, triplets, and dotted rhythms accurately.		Instrument Method Books(e.g. Essential elements): Specific exercises targeting Key Signatures.		
Introduction to Improvisation & Composition		Improvising short melodies, composing in simple time signatures, using music notation software.	Improvisation , motif, theme, chord progression, transposition.	Guided improvisation exercises, short composition assignments.	Teacher Assessment/Formal Informal Observations	Week 7-9 Ongoing review when necessary
Music History	9.1.8.A - H, 9.2.8 A-L, 9.3.8.A-G, 9.4.8.A-D	Students will gain a foundational understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of different music genres, including jazz, classical, modern, and world music. The teacher will present key composers, landmark pieces, and stylistic elements of each genre. Students will also learn to identify genres by listening to audio examples. The	Jazz, Modern, Classical, Musical, World Music, Contemporary	SmartBoard Demonstrations: Showing historical references to current music topics. Listening Exercises: Recognizing different genres of music. Instrument Method Books(e.g. Essential elements): Specific exercises targeting the History of Music (e.g. Mozart Melody and its historical importance)	Teacher Assessment/Formal Informal Observations	Week 7-9 Ongoing review when necessary

		influence of social, political, and cultural movements on music will be discussed.				
Ensemble Playing & Independent Musicianship Demonstration	9.1.8.A, B, C, G, H 9.2.8.F 9.3.8.A, B, D 9.4.8.A, B	Students will develop ensemble awareness, including listening to other sections, balancing dynamics, and matching articulation styles across the group. Introduction to sectional playing: Small group rehearsals will emphasize blending within sections and playing independently while maintaining ensemble unity. Students will improve sight-reading skills by working with duet, trio, and full-band music, focusing on rhythmic precision and intonation adjustments within an ensemble. Introduction to basic conducting patterns to improve cueing awareness and entrances/exits in	Ensemble, blend, balance, intonation, articulation, sight-reading, phrasing, dynamics contrast, tempo changes, sectional rehearsal, cueing, conducting patterns, rubato, fermata, unison, harmony, and counter-melody.	Full-band rehearsal pieces (high - intermediate level): from Essential Elements Book 1, Essential Elements Book 2, and Standard of Excellence series. Solo, duet and trio exercises to develop individual musicianship while maintaining ensemble awareness. Listening assignments: Students analyze recordings of professional ensembles, focusing on intonation, articulation, and phrasing. Sectional rehearsals: Small groups work on parts separately before rejoining full-band rehearsals to improve accuracy and blend. Peer feedback sessions: Students perform in small	Teacher Assessment/Formal Informal Observations Final Evaluation	Week 7-9

		performances. Exposure to different musical styles within band literature to enhance interpretation and expressiveness.		groups and offer constructive feedback on tone, rhythm, and articulation. Basic conducting practice: Students learn 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8 conducting patterns and take turns leading their section in warm-ups.		
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Fundamental Music Vocabulary 8 (Sequential and Scaffolding)

Rhythm

Rhythm	Eighth note/rest	Dotted quarter note/rest
Steady Beat	Syncopation	Pickup Note
Whole note/rest	Sixteenth note/rest	Metronome
Half note/rest	Triplet	Counting
Quarter note/ rest	Dotted half note/rest	

Tempo/Dynamics

Tempo	Largo	Crescendo
Dynamics	Allegro	Piano
Ritardando	Andante	Forte
Accelerando	Moderato	Mezzo Forte
Presto	Decrescendo	Mezzo Piano

Musical Symbols/ Music Theory

Music Staff	Measure Number	Melody
Grand Staff	Treble Clef	Phrase
Whole/Half Step	Bass Clef	Harmony
Interval	Alto Clef	Solo/Duet/Trio/Quartet
Line/Space	Repeat Sign	Unison
Bar Line	Legato	Accidental
Double Bar	Accent	Enharmonic
Ledger Lines	Staccato	Sharp/Natural/Flat
Time Signature	Marcato	Tie
Common Time	Fermata	Slur
1st & 2nd Ending	Coda	Scale
Key Signature	D.C. al Fine	Arpeggio
Measure	Fine	Chromatic

Glissando

Major/Minor

Chord

Pitched/Unpitched

Breath Mark

Articulation

Phrasing

Strings Terminology

Tuning Peg

Strings

Orchestra

Orchestral Families

Violin

Viola

Double Bass

Ensemble

Blend

Balance

Cello

Up Bow

Shadow Bowing

Pizzicato

Hooked Bowing

Down Bow

Bow Lift

Intonation

Articulation

Sight-reading

Acro

Posture

Fingers

Perform

Practice

Timbre

Etiquette

Vibrato

Tremolo

Form

Form

AB Form

ABA Form

Canon/Round

Trio

Waltz

Introduction

ABBA

Rondo Form

Theme/Variation

Counter-melody

Music History

Composer

Jazz Music

Johann Sebastian Bach

Arranger

Ragtime

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Conductor

Blues

Gioacchino Rossini

Genre

Classical Music

John Philip Sousa

Symphony

Contemporary

World Music

Modern Music

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart