

## Trumpet Lesson Plan

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### Summary

In this lesson, students learn about the history and evolution of the trumpet. The teacher discusses the instrument's earliest forms such as the shofar, its use in ancient Egypt, the Baroque era challenges without valves, and the 19th century invention of valves that made modern trumpet playing possible. The lesson also explores the trumpet's role in jazz, swing, rock and roll, ska, and mariachi music.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/Tqok1YTwFS4?si=CS8q4guHY82T2fW8>

### Objective

Students will understand the historical development of the trumpet, its cultural significance, and its impact on various musical genres. They will compare early forms of trumpets with modern instruments and analyze how technological changes influenced musical expression.

### Standards

- NGSS MS-PS4-1: Develop a model to describe that waves are reflected, absorbed, or transmitted through various materials. (applied to sound production in trumpets)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas of a primary or secondary source and provide an accurate summary.
- C3 D2.His.2.6-8: Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and continuity.

### Materials

- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Projector or screen for images of trumpets (optional)
- Printed copies of the 9 Fun Facts
- Worksheets (provided below)
- Writing utensils

## Introduction

Begin by asking students what instruments they are familiar with and whether any have played brass instruments. Show an image of a trumpet and ask students to describe how they think sound is made. Introduce the shofar and explain that it was one of the earliest trumpet-like instruments. Transition into the idea that simple horns evolved into the brass instruments we know today.

## Activity

Present the timeline of trumpet evolution: shofar, Tutankhamun's trumpets, natural trumpet, Baroque compositions, valve invention, jazz, and modern styles.

- Play short clips (optional) of trumpet sounds from different eras, such as a shofar blast, a Bach concerto, and a jazz solo.
- Divide the class into small groups and have each group discuss how one innovation (metal, valves, jazz improvisation) changed the role of the trumpet.
- Have each group present a short summary of their discussion to the class.

## Assessment

Students will complete the worksheet with questions covering trumpet history, function, and cultural use. Their group presentations will be assessed for participation and understanding of key concepts.

## Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Content Understanding	Demonstrates strong knowledge of trumpet history	Shows good understanding with minor errors	Partial understanding, some confusion	Major errors, limited knowledge
Participation	Actively engaged, contributes ideas clearly	Participates but less consistently	Minimal participation	No participation
Worksheet Completion	All answers correct and complete	Mostly complete, minor errors	Incomplete, several errors	Very little or not submitted
Group Presentation	Clear, accurate, well organized	Mostly accurate, organized	Lacks clarity or accuracy	Disorganized, inaccurate

## 9 Fun Facts

**1. Long before metal trumpets, people blew ram's horns, most famously the shofar.** It is still used in Jewish ritual today, especially during Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. The shofar proves that human horn-blowing traditions reach back to prehistory.

[https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah\\_1160973](https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1160973)

**2. The oldest surviving metal trumpets were discovered in Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt.** Crafted in bronze and silver, they are over 3,000 years old and show remarkable skill in ancient metalwork. These instruments prove that Egyptians had already transformed ceremonial horns into art objects.

<https://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/detail.aspx?id=15043>

**3. By the Renaissance and Baroque eras, advances in metalwork produced the long natural trumpet with no valves.** These instruments were used for courts, ceremonies, and battlefields, carrying their sound clearly across distance. Their design made them powerful signaling devices as well as musical tools.

<https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/3842/natural-trumpet-italy-17th-century>

**4. Composers like Bach tested the limits of the valveless trumpet.** In works such as the Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, the trumpet had to play brilliant and agile lines in the high clarino register. This showed the instrument could be more than a military signal, it could be a soloist's voice.

<https://www.bachvereniging.nl/en/bwv/bwv-1047>

**5. In the early 1800s, inventors Heinrich Stölzel and Friedrich Blühmel created valves for brass instruments.** Adding three valves gave the trumpet a full chromatic range and allowed it to change keys smoothly. This innovation transformed the trumpet into the versatile instrument we know today.

<https://www.theinstrumentplace.com/history-of-the-trumpet>

**6. In the 20th century, jazz turned the trumpet into a star instrument.** Louis Armstrong was a pioneer, his tone, improvisational skill, and joyful expression made the trumpet a leading voice in American music. He reshaped jazz, showing that a trumpeter could be the emotional and musical heart of a performance.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/to-really-appreciate-louis-armstrongs-trumpet-you-gotta-play-it-180959184/>

**7. Trumpets helped glue rhythm and blues together with early rock and roll.** In the jump-blues and R&B bands of the 1940s and 1950s, trumpet players drove energetic riffs and strong dance beats that rock and roll later adopted. Those horn-driven arrangements created a musical bridge from jazz-based R&B to the raw power of rock.

<https://hackbackpages.com/2024/08/02/blow-those-horns-cause-it-sounds-like-victory/>

**8. By the 1960s, trumpets were popping up in unexpected corners of popular music.** The Beatles surprised listeners with a piccolo trumpet solo in Penny Lane, inspired by baroque music. At the same time, ska in Jamaica built its upbeat rhythms around horn sections, with trumpets carrying bold melodic lines. Both styles showed how versatile the trumpet had become across cultures.

<https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/instruments/trumpet/piccolo-solo-penny-lane-david-mason-paul-mccartney/>

**9. Today, trumpets appear in modern pop and Latin music alongside guitars, synths, and beats.** From reggaeton to arena pop, their sound adds brightness and celebration. The blend of traditional mariachi style and global pop shows the trumpet's lasting appeal.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/glee-clubs-and-fans-take-note-viva-mariachi-129771704/>

## Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Review

1. What is a shofar made from, and how is it still used today?
2. Where were the oldest surviving metal trumpets found?
3. Who invented the valves that gave trumpets a chromatic range?

### Discussion

4. Why was playing Bach's trumpet music in the Baroque period especially difficult?
4. How did the invention of valves change the role of the trumpet in music?

### Reflection

5. If you had to choose between playing or painting a trumpet every day, which would you choose and why?
6. How does the history of the trumpet show the relationship between technology and creativity?