

Concert Etiquette

Tuning

At the start of the concert, the orchestra will need to tune their instruments to make sure they are all tuned to the same pitch.

Watch here ►

The video above shows the orchestra tuning – look out for:

1. The leader of the orchestra (first violin) entering to applause, bowing and the standing and looking to the oboe
2. The oboe playing the note A – this is the note all the instruments tune to. The oboe has a relatively stable pitch and can be heard easily over the other instruments, so it is a good choice to tune to.
3. The woodwind tune first, then the brass, then the strings
4. Once the orchestra have finished tuning, the conductor will walk on stage.

The Conductor

The Orchestra Performance video to the Mozart piece is an excellent video to watch to understand how the start of a concert works.

Video of performance:

Watch here ►

Notice the following in the video:

1. The audience clap as the conductor walks on stage.
2. The conductor then shakes the hand of the leader of the orchestra (the first violin) before bowing to thank the audience.
3. The conductor then stands on the small raised stage (called a podium) - this is so the conductor can see and be seen by everyone in the orchestra.
4. As they move to the stage, the clapping stops and the orchestra prepare to play their instruments. You can see this as they raise their instruments ready to be played.
5. The conductor then starts conducting using their baton to start the music!

When do I clap?

Sometimes there are small pauses in the music, and it can be tempting to clap at these points. However, the music is not over yet. The conductor will stay animated during a pause, and this is a clue to the audience that the music is not yet over, and they should not clap. When the conductor relaxes by lowering their baton (and the players relax and put down their instruments), that is usually the time to clap!

The activities below might be useful to help your learners to understand more about concert etiquette to help ensure the concert is an enjoyable experience for everyone.

Short 5-minute task: Orchestral Fails

Watch the video below, which is a performance of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. This extract shows the transition between two movements – the first ends very quietly, and the second starts very loudly. When a piece has more than one movement, the audience does not clap until the very end.

In our concert, all the pieces are standalone except the Elgar (where there are 4 short separate pieces, so please clap after the final one).

Watch here ►

When you watch the video, ask students to watch what the orchestra, audience and conductor are doing.

Medium 20-minute task: Role play and rules

This is a great task to try before heading to the concert hall.

Firstly, set your classroom space up as a concert hall, aiming to have:

- A stage area at the front from performers, facing the whiteboard
- An audience area with rows of chairs facing the stage area

Divide your class up into different groups and ask them to read a different scenario. The idea is that each group takes turn to act out their scenario, with the rest of the class trying to guess what the scenario is. They can record this as thumbs up (for behaviours we wish to encourage!) and thumbs down (for behaviours to avoid). This is even better if you can play a clip of music on the whiteboard during their task – a great piece is the storm from Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 **found here ►**

Scenarios might include:

1. The audience talking through the music
2. The audience start clapping when the music goes quiet, but has not finished
3. The audience sit quietly and listen to the music
4. The audience are restless and moving about on their chairs
5. The audience keep turning round to the person behind them
6. The audience gets up out of their seats and goes to the toilet

For each scenario, ask pupils to give thumbs up for good behaviours and thumbs down for bad behaviours.

As you discuss as a class, create a Dos and Don'ts for how to behave in a concert. As your class have then created it, it becomes easier to work together on when at the concert itself. There is space to do this in the Student Workbook, or you could create your own and display it in the classroom.

Thumbs Up

- Sit still and quietly in your seat
- Clap at the very end of the piece when the conductor relaxes
- Listen carefully and enjoy the music
- Turn off mobile phones (if you have them)
- Show respect to the musicians and staff
- Wait to leave until your teacher tells you to
- Say thank you to the staff at the end

Thumbs Down

- Fidget, wiggle or leave your seat during the music
- Clap in the middle of the music when the conductor is still animated
- Talking, whispering, making noises during the concert
- Laugh, point or distract others
- Stand up or wave during the performance
- Not following instructions

Longer 45-minute task: mini concert

This is a great task to try, not only to practice concert etiquette but also to bring music into your school.

If you have any pupils at your school who play an instrument or sing, this could be a great way of doing a short concert where your class can practice being an audience and celebrate their peer/s performing.

If you do not have performers available in your setting, this can be achieved using the music you will hear in the concert using the YouTube links in the Teacher Resource Guides.

Start by reviewing the key rules for a concert – the Dos and Don'ts – that you created in the task above.

Then, assign your class different roles:

- Audience
- Ushers

The ushers help guide the audience to their seats, perhaps handing out a programme and remind the audience where the fire escapes are in case of an emergency.

The audience sit and wait for the concert to start following the rules. Ensure they clap at the right time!

Encourage the audience to behave using the rules you have created while they listen to the performances. If you are using recordings, you could use any of the pieces that will be used in the *Orchestra Unwrapped* concert to help students to get to know the music.

At the end, review with your class. What behaviours did they get right? What areas need a bit more focus going forwards?

