



RADNOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Course Overview



8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra  
7881 - 1

**General Information**

Credits: N/A  
Length: Full Year  
Weighted: N/A  
Format: 2 X Per Cycle

Prerequisite: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra  
Grade: 8

**Course Description**

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra is an instrumental performing course for students learning a member of the stringed instrument family (violin, viola, cello or bass). Typically, students are in their fifth year of study. All students participate in one small group class, a lesson comprised of up approximately ten students of like instruments; and two large group classes, a rehearsal group comprised of all participants, up to approximately sixty members; in a six-day cycle.

**Course Objectives:**

The objective of this course is to allow the students to grow as ensemble musicians, to increase their knowledge and application of personal technique, and their knowledge of historical and technical aspects of music beyond the level achieved in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

- Analyzing creators' content and how they manipulate elements of music provides insight into their intent and informs performance.
- Performers make interpretive decisions based on their understanding of context and expressive intent.
- To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place and cultures. The context and how a work is presented influence the audience response.
- Response to music is informed by analyzing context (social, cultural and historical) and how creators and performers manipulate the elements of music.
- Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.
- The personal evaluation of musical work(s) and performance(s) is informed by analysis, interpretation and established criteria.
- How does understanding the structure and content of musical works inform performance?
- How do performers interpret musical works?
- How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?
- When is a performance judged ready to present? How do context and manner in which a musical work is presented influence audience response?
- How does understanding the structure and context of music inform a response?
- How do we discern the musical creators' and performers' expressive intent?
- How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)?

### **Common Assessments:**

Students will participate in four individual playing assessments per graded quarter. Each assessment will include one technical or scalar aspect and one performance aspect. Each aspect will be judged on a rubric by the teacher for the following criteria: Tone, Knowledge of Keys or Key Signatures, Rhythm, Dynamics, Intonation, Bowing and Posture. Students will be afforded a study guide near the beginning of the quarter and to be completed by the end of said quarter. The total point value for each assessment is 100 points. The same rubric will be used for all four playing assessments. The compilation of each playing assessment will result in a seating change within the orchestra usually based on highest to lowest scores. This is the only manner in which students might be conceived as being compared to each other. The main purpose of each assessment is to see individual student growth over the course of the year.

### **Major Units of Study:**

There are two major units of study: Winter Concert Preparation and Spring Concert Preparation. Within these two units, students will gain greater technical proficiency on their chosen instruments through study, practice and assessment, and will progress to higher levels of ensemble performance achieved in 7<sup>th</sup> grade as a result.

### **Materials & Texts**

- Student Instruments
- Published compendium of age-appropriate performance music, up to and including Grade 4;
- Technique books, which include but are not limited to the following:
  - “Essential Technique 2000, Book III” by M. Allen, R. Gillespie, P. Tellejohn-Hayes, published by Hal Leonard Corporation
  - “All for Strings – Theory Workbook 1 and 2” by Gerald Anderson and Robert S. Frost; “Viva Vibrato! By Gerald F. Fischbach and Robert S. Frost; and
  - “Harmonized Rhythms for String Orchestra-Progressive Melodic Rhythmic Studies” by Charles Forque and James Thornton and edited by Gerald Anderson, all published by Neil A. Kjos Music Company; and
  - “It’s String Time- A Step-by-Step Approach to Develop Accurate Rhythm” by James D. Ployhar and George B. Zepp, published by Belwin, Inc.
  - “Fun With Flats,” arr. Merle J. Isaac, Wynn Music, Pub.
  - “Daily Warm-Ups” by Michael Allen, Pub. Hal Leonard

In addition, students have access to electric string instruments, such as the electric violin/viola, electric cello and electric bass.

### **Summer Assignment**

All incoming students are contacted and given guidelines to prepare for this course in advance. It is recommended that they keep their instruments through the summer months, practice and take private lessons, if possible, to maintain skill levels.