

	Grade 6 The Foundation	Grade 7 Expanding the Skills and Musical World	Grade 8 Leadership and Mastery
Unit 1	Posture and Bow Basics: Focus on establishing proper instrument posture and a relaxed, efficient bow hold. This unit includes exercises for straight bowing, bow placement, and basic tone production.	Shifting into New Positions: Students will learn the concepts and mechanics of shifting, typically starting with shifting from first to third position. This unit includes exercises and simple repertoire to practice shifting smoothly and in tune.	Vibrato and Tone Production: This unit is dedicated to developing vibrato for expressive playing. Students will also refine their overall tone by adjusting bow speed, weight, and contact point.
Unit 2	First Position Mastery: This unit is dedicated to building muscle memory and finger dexterity in first position. Students will learn and perform one-octave scales and arpeggios in common keys.	Advanced Bowing and Articulation: This unit introduces more advanced bow strokes, such as <i>martele</i> (a hammered, detached stroke), and begins to explore <i>spiccato</i> (a light, bouncing bow stroke). Students will learn to apply these techniques to create different musical styles.	Advanced Shifting and Positions: Students will continue to build on shifting skills, moving to higher positions and learning to navigate the fingerboard with greater ease and accuracy.
Unit 3	Rhythmic Literacy: Students will be introduced to a wider range of rhythms, including eighth and sixteenth notes, dotted rhythms,	Minor Keys and Harmony: Students will be introduced to minor scales and arpeggios, expanding their understanding of harmony and	Advanced Theory and Performance: Students will study more complex music theory concepts. The focus will be on

	and basic syncopation. This unit emphasizes counting out loud and developing a strong internal pulse.	musical moods. They will learn to identify relative and parallel minors.	preparing and performing more difficult repertoire.
Unit 4	Ensemble Skills and Etiquette: This unit focuses on the social aspect of orchestra. Students learn to watch the conductor, blend their sound with the section, and follow rehearsal etiquette. This is where they begin to understand the concept of "listening while playing."	Musical History and Styles: Students will explore the differences between musical periods, such as Baroque and Classical. They will learn how composers from different eras used musical elements and will apply this knowledge to the music they perform.	Sight-Reading and Problem-Solving: Students will develop their sight-reading abilities, a crucial skill for any musician. This unit will also focus on independent problem-solving—identifying and correcting mistakes without a teacher's immediate guidance.
Unit 5	The Language of Music: Students will learn to recognize musical symbols and terms, including dynamics (<i>piano, forte</i>), tempo markings (<i>andante, allegro</i>), and articulations (<i>legato, staccato</i>).	Advanced Rhythmic Studies: This unit introduces more challenging rhythms and time signatures, such as 6/8 and compound meters. Students will work on complex rhythmic patterns and sight-reading exercises.	Leadership and Mentorship: As the most experienced members of the orchestra, 8th graders will be encouraged to serve as section leaders and mentors. They will assist younger students and play a significant role in helping the entire ensemble succeed.