SCHOOLTIME
PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

This activity addresses PA Academic Standards 9.1.3.C, 9.1.5.E and National Core Arts Standard MU:Cr2.1.2a, MU:Re9.1.2a

Instrument Characters

Get to know the instruments of the orchestra! In this activity, you will imagine an instrument as a character in a story.

Step 1: Meet Your Instrument

Choose one instrument from the orchestra: _____

- What family does your instrument belong to?
- What is your instrument made of?
- How does your instrument make sound?
- What size is your instrument?
- How high or low can your instrument play?



Step 2: Listen to Your Instrument

- Listen to the piece of music listed for your instrument. What words describe your instrument's sound? Is it smooth like silk? Scratchy like wool? Shiny like sparkles? Warm like a cozy sweater? List as many describing words as you can.

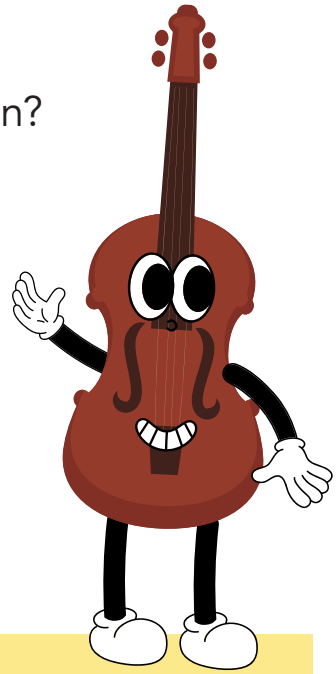
- What else do you notice about your instrument?

Step 3: Create Your Character

Listen to the piece of music for your instrument again. This time, imagine your instrument as a character in a story. Write down or draw ideas that come to mind while you listen. Use the Character Worksheet to capture your ideas.

Here are a few questions to help you imagine your instrument as a character:

- What is your character's name?
- What does your character look like? Are they a person? An animal? Something new?
- What do you imagine your character is doing?
- What is your character's personality? Are they joyful, nervous, silly, energetic, sleepy? Something else?
- What other words best describe your character?



Optional Extension: Share Your Character

- Pair up with a classmate. Introduce your instrument character to them. Then listen to your instrument's piece of music together.
- How well did the music match what your classmate expected based on your character? Can your classmate envision the character you describe? What do they notice?
- Switch roles. Learn about your classmate's character. Listen to their piece of music together. Is it what you expected? What do you imagine when you listen? Can you see the character your classmate has created? What else do you notice?

Instrument Music Library

String Family



- Violin: José Serebrier: Aires De Tango
- Viola: Ulysses Kay: "Sonatine"
- Cello: Camille Saint-Saëns: "The Swan" from *Carnival of the Animals*
- Bass: Ida Carroll: Fantasie

Woodwind Family



- Flute: Sofia Gubaidulina: Sounds of the Forest
- Oboe: Ralph Vaughan Williams: Oboe Concerto: I. Rondo Pastorale
- Clarinet: George Gershwin: Promenade - Walking the Dog
- Bassoon: Nancy Galbraith: Sonata for Bassoon: Movement I

Brass Family



- Horn: Kenneth Amis: Prelude No. 1: Pastorale
- Trumpet: Cecilia McDowall: Framed: IV: Winter Landscape
- Trombone: Anthony Barfield: Meditations of Sound and Light: II. Air
- Tuba: Ralph Vaughan Williams: Concerto for Bass Tuba: I. Prelude

Percussion Family



- Percussion: Casey Cangelosi: Glamour
- Marimba: Keiko Abe: Tambourin Paraphrase
- Snare Drum: Mitch Markovich: The Winner
- Timpani: William J. Schinstine: Sonata No. 1: III.

Character Worksheet

Name	
Appearance	Personality
Description	