

# Hey Kids, It's a Trumpet



The Trumpet is the smallest member of the brass family. Its tone is bright and penetrating.

## History

For hundreds of years instrument makers have experimented with different shapes and sizes of trumpets.

### *Natural Trumpets*

Natural trumpets are like bugles, which have no valves to change the pitches. Sometimes you can see them being played in orchestras when the music of Johann Sebastian Bach is being played.

### *Slide Trumpets*

Beginning in the 15th century instrument makers experimented with slides for the trumpet, similar to the trombone slide. The slide allowed the trumpet player to play more notes, though it was awkward to play. This went on for about 400 years.

### *Valve Trumpets*

Finally in 1813, valves (those button thingies) were invented.

## How It's Played

To make a sound on the trumpet the player buzzes his/her lips into a cup-shaped mouthpiece. The valves on the trumpet allow the player to quickly switch the length of tubing that the air is going through, to provide a whole new set of notes. All the trumpet player has to do is press down the valve combination that they want ... and presto! ... more notes.

## How It's Made

The trumpet has a cylindrical bore, which means that the tubing stays about the same size for most of the length of the instrument until it flairs at the end, forming a



small bell. Trumpets also have a thinner tubing than other members of the brass family, which is another reason for its bright sound.

### **The Trumpet Family**

The trumpet family has many members, from the tiny piccolo trumpet to the gigantic bass trumpet. The most popular trumpets include the Bb trumpet and the C trumpet.

The Bb trumpet is by far the most popular trumpet, being the favorite trumpet of beginning students, jazz musicians, and classical musicians.

The C trumpet is the trumpet preferred by symphony orchestra musicians, because its slightly smaller size provides a brighter and more lively tone.

### **Fun Fact**

Trumpets are made of brass, a metal made of copper and zinc. Both of these metals are found in vitamins. This means that during your life you may eat an entire trumpet - and it would be good for you!

