



# **CHEROKEE BLUFF**

## **MARCHING BEARS**

### **Section Leader Training**

#### **A. Components of a sectional**

##### **1. Warm-up with long tones (10 minutes)**

1. Air support
2. Posture
3. Quality of tone/sound
4. Intonation (and tune individually after warm-up is done)

##### **2. Technique-building exercises (15 minutes)**

1. These should not just be played and then crossed off the list. Really spend some time being picky about making sure everyone is using the same (and correct) technique. If these are done well, they will be able to play the music much better.
2. You do not have to do every single thing at each sectional. If you want to spend all 15 minutes on just one thing, that is ok.
  1. Scales that go to the extreme highs and lows of each instrument to work on range
  2. Vibrato for flutes and alto saxophones
  3. Double-tonguing and lip slurs for brass
  4. Exercises that use all different kinds of articulation

##### **3. Music (25 minutes)**

1. Don't just play through music. Take it in small chunks and ensure that everyone is comfortable with the part before moving on.
  - Sometimes people will never be comfortable, and at some point you'll need to move on and mark that section as a part that needs to be practiced at home that you will come back to next week and expect improvement.
2. Start and end with a section of the music everyone is already comfortable with, and only play that one time.
3. The bulk of the time should be spent on a section that is difficult, either because of the individual parts being hard or difficult putting the different parts together.
4. If there is a playing test coming up on something, you may want to consider administering a "practice" playing test. Have each student do their test, and then offer them feedback of what they need to work on to improve their test when they have the real test



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#### **4. Wrap-up/Warm-Down (5 minutes)**

1. Set goals for the week, including what needs to be practiced at home, and what will be revisited in next week's sectionals that wasn't all there today.
2. Ask if anyone has any sections of music that wasn't reviewed today that they want help with next week.
3. Brass players, play some long tones on low notes to loosen the muscles

#### **B. Strategies to use when working on difficult sections**

1. Slow the music down
  2. Use a metronome. Try not to clap in place of a metronome unless absolutely necessary. You can also have the metronome go twice as fast so it is playing the eighth notes instead of quarter notes, or three times as fast to subdivide the triplets.
  3. Clap rhythms together
  4. Play the passage all on one note
  5. Have section leader play along with a lower part that is struggling
- Note: playing one at a time is good, but in these first few sectionals, it is more important that each member feels comfortable and sees sectionals as a time to get support instead of feeling pressured. Most new people who are not comfortable will choke if they are asked to do something by themselves that they struggle with. If you see this happening, go ahead and move on instead of dwelling on it. We want to make sure everyone is encouraged to come to sectionals each week, and if they are feeling like it is a negative or non-supportive environment, they may try to start finding excuses not to show up, which will only hurt that person and the section in the long-run. This does NOT mean give everyone a free pass when it comes to holding them responsible for practicing at home and learning their parts, it just means don't put them on the spot right away.
  - Do not be afraid to give out compliments, especially if it is someone who has been struggling. As soon as you see them start to "get it," congratulate them on it. It may be something super small, but when they see that their peers/friends are proud of them, they are more likely to want to continue to impress them in the future by working



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hard. Remember that part of sectionals is about building our family culture, and it needs to be a culture of love and support. If this happens, they are more likely to accept constructive criticism when it is given in the future.

- As section leaders, others are looking up to you, especially with what you are doing in class. Make sure you are following class rules and showing everyone (especially freshman) the type of behavior and work ethic we expect all band members to have. Put your phones away, take your instrument home and practice especially on weekends, don't talk during class, always have your pencil and mark your music whenever you're told to, etc.