

Orchestra Elective Study Guide

From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> & @simplestudiesinc on Instagram

The String Family/ Beginner Orchestra

The four stringed instruments in Orchestra

From smallest to largest

- **Violin-** The smallest and highest pitch instrument in the Orchestra.
- **Viola-** Bigger than the Violin, and has a slightly lower/ deeper sound than the Violin.
- **Cello-** The second largest instrument in the Orchestra, with its rich medium low tone.
- **Bass-** The largest and deepest sounding instrument in the Orchestra.

Background History

- The early ancestors of the string family are the Arabian people in the 14th and 16th centuries.
- During the 1500's, there were only 2 types of violas.
- Viola da gamba- Played on the knee. *For example: Cello and Bass*
- Viola da braccia- played on the shoulder. *For example: Violin and Viola*

The 4 instruments



Violin



Viola



Cello



Bass

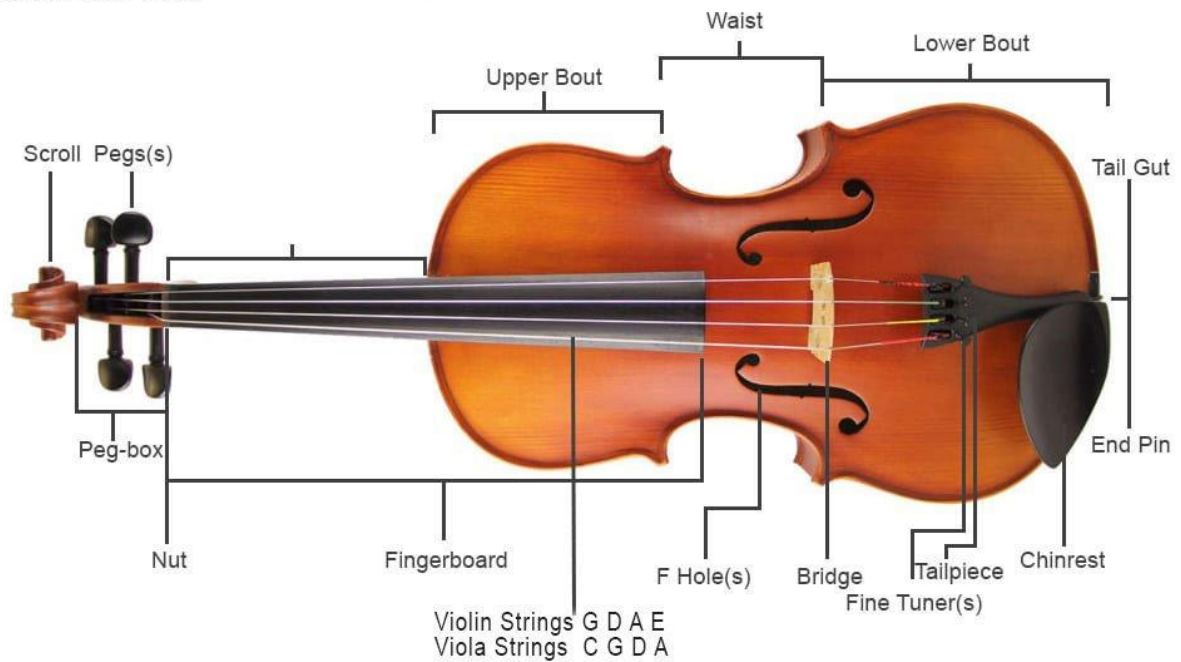
The 4 strings on every instrument

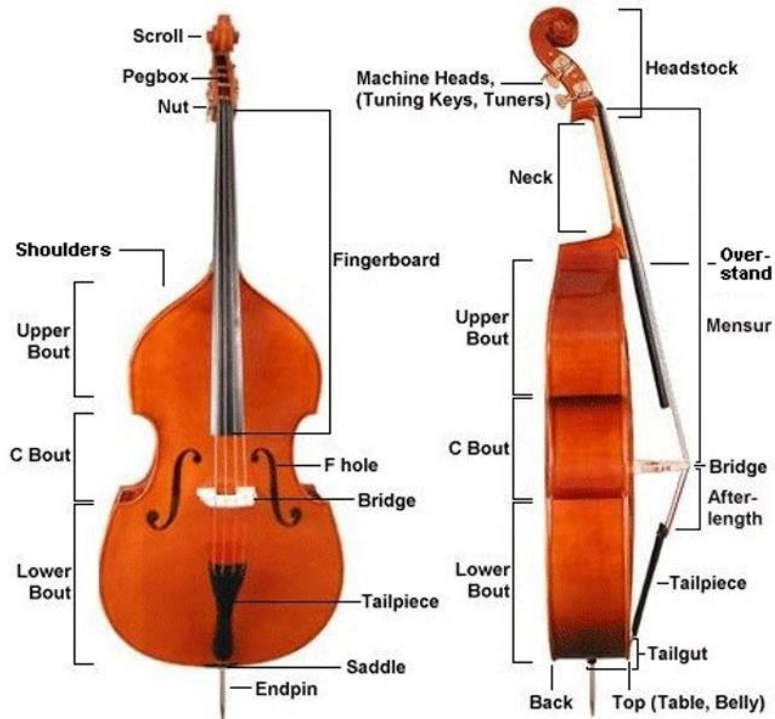
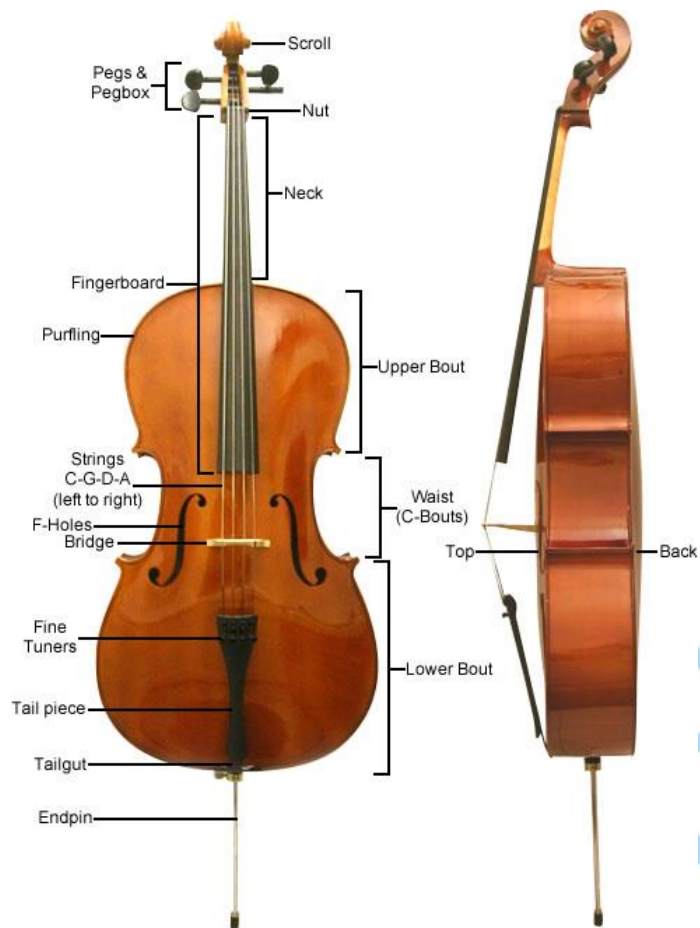
From Left to right

- **Violin-** G (deepest), D, A, E (highest pitch)
- **Viola-** C (deepest), G, D, A (highest pitch)
- **Cello-** C (deepest), G, D, A (highest pitch)
- **Bass-** E, A D, G

Parts of the instrument

Violin & Viola Parts





Parts of a Bow:

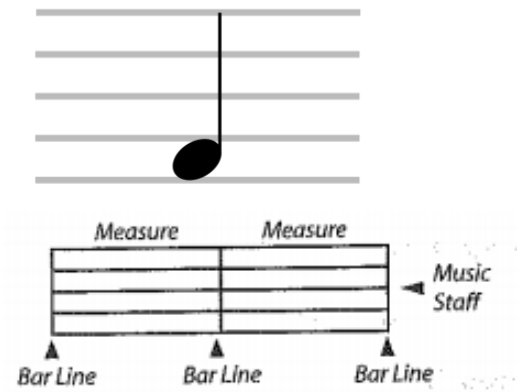
NEVER TOUCH THE BOW HAIR


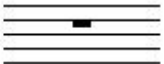

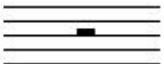






Take Special Care

- Protect your instrument from the heat, cold, and quick changes in temperature.
- Follow your teacher's instructions when taking the instrument out of the case.
- Always wipe off the instrument with a dry soft cloth. Make sure all of the fingerprints and all the rosin, which helps create friction between the bow hair and strings, are gone.

The Basics

- **Beat-** The “pulse” of music. This should be very steady .
- **Quarter note-** One beat of sound
- **Quarter rest-** One beat of silence.
 - Rests tells us to count the silent beats .
- **Music Staff-** This is where you will see all of your notes on.
 - It has 5 lines and 4 spaces.
- **Bar lines-** Divide the music staff into measures.
- **Measures-** The space in between each bar line.

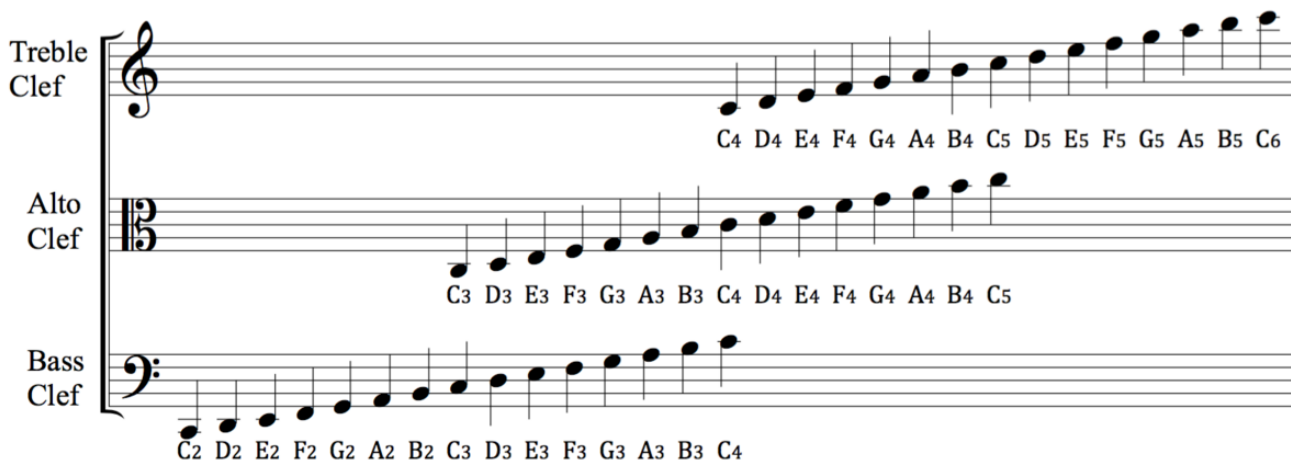


Name	Note	Rest	Length
Whole Note			4 beats
Half Note			2 beats
Quarter Note			1 beat
Eighth Note			1/2 beat
Sixteenth Note			1/4 beat

The 3 clefs

A clef is a musical symbol used to indicate the pitch of written notes.

- **Treble Clef:** *Violins play with this one*
- **Alto Clef:** *Violas play using this clef*
- **Bass Clef:** *Cello and Basses use this clef to play*



The diagram illustrates the three clefs and their corresponding pitch ranges across three staves:

- Treble Clef:** C₄ D₄ E₄ F₄ G₄ A₄ B₄ C₅ D₅ E₅ F₅ G₅ A₅ B₅ C₆
- Alto Clef:** C₃ D₃ E₃ F₃ G₃ A₃ B₃ C₄ D₄ E₄ F₄ G₄ A₄ B₄ C₅
- Bass Clef:** C₂ D₂ E₂ F₂ G₂ A₂ B₂ C₃ D₃ E₃ F₃ G₃ A₃ B₃ C₄

- **Time Signature-** This tells us how many beats are in each measure and what kind of note gets one beat. For example, when you see 4/4 at the beginning of a clef this tells us that there are four beats per measure, and each quarter note gets 1 beat.
- **Double Bar-** tells you the end of a piece of music.
- **Repeat sign-** Go back to the beginning and start playing the music again.
- **Counting-** With each beat, tap your foot to know which beat you are on.
- **Pizzicato-** The plucking of a string.
- **Scale-** A sequence of notes placed in ascending or descending order.

Holding the Bow

1. Hold the bow in your dominant hand near the tip with the frog pointing to the right.
2. Place the bow between your thumb and second finger.
3. Shape the remaining fingers on the bow stick.
4. Turn your right hand over, and be sure your thumb is curved.

Down Bow- Move the bow away from your body.

Up Bow- Move the bow towards your body.

*9 times out of 10 you will begin with a down

∨ = up bow

▢ = down bow

bow!*

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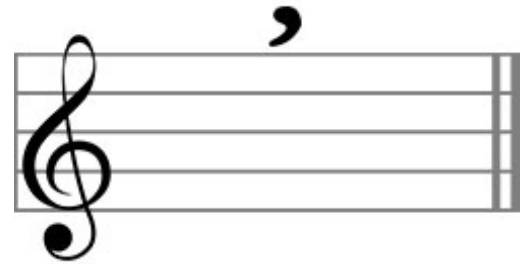
Key Signature- Tells us the key the piece is in and which notes have sharps or flats.



All about Bowing

Bowing is the playing of an instrument with a bow on a string.

- **String levels:** Place your arm forward, then up to play higher pitched strings, and move your arm back and down to play lower pitched strings.
- **Bow Lift-** Lift the bow up and return it to its starting point.
- **Staccato-** Playing with a one bowed stroke.
- **Hooked Bowing-** When you play 2 or more notes in one bowing direction.
- **Legato-** smooth bowing



Tempo

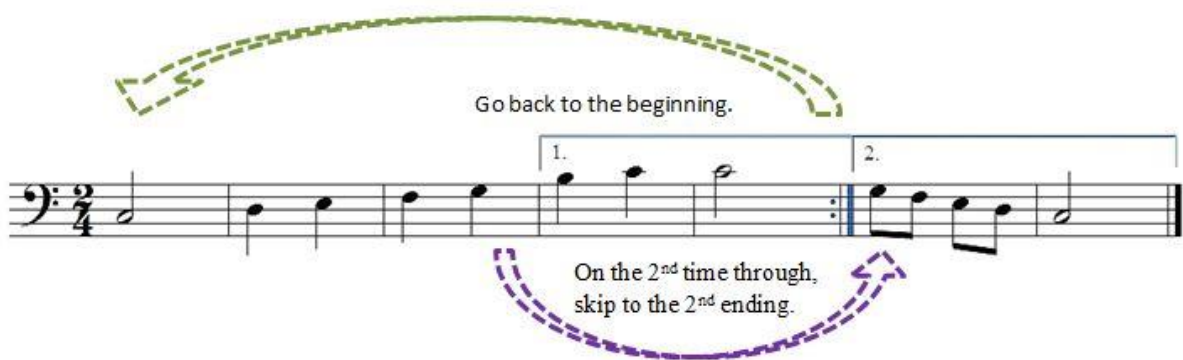
The speed of music

- Most tempo markings are in Italian
- **Allegro-** Fast tempo
- **Moderato-** Medium Tempo
- **Adante-** Slow-walking tempo

1st and 2nd ending

- You will play the 1st ending the 1st time through, then you will repeat that same section, skip the 1st ending and play the 2nd ending instead.

A great example:

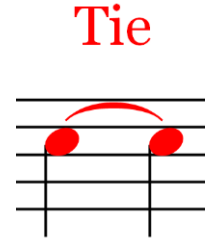


Chord and Harmony

- When 2 or more pitches are sounding at the same time; this creates a chord and harmony.

Ties and Slurs

Tie- A curved line that will connect two notes of the same pitch. →



Slur- A curved line that connects two notes with different pitches. →



Music Theory

Upbeat- The note that appears before the first full measure.

Natural- This sign cancels a flat or sharp and will remain in effect for the rest of the measure. →

Half Step- The smallest distance between notes.

Whole Steps- The largest distance between notes. Made up of two half steps.



^^^^ Same applies for all instruments on their clefs^^^^

Chromatic scale- scale that's made up of only half steps

Chromatic Scale



* Important to memorise so you can master all of your scales and arpeggios*

C major- All notes will be natural, meaning, NO sharps or flats.

Dynamics

- Tells the musician at what volume to play at.

The list of words below are crucial to know when playing an instrument...

- *Forte (f)* - Play loudly.
- *Piano (p)* - Play softly.
- *Mezzo (m)* - Moderately/ half the softness or loudness

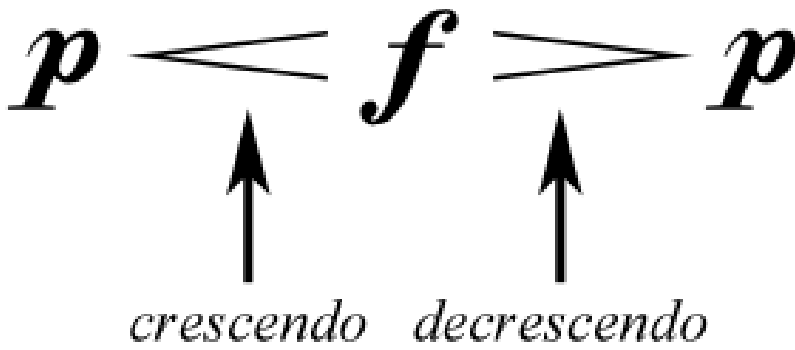
When adding “Mezzo” in front of any dynamic it will cut it down by half.

- Ex: *Mezzo Piano*- moderately soft
- *Mezzo forte (mf)* - Moderately loud




- *Pianissimo* (*pp*) - very quiet
- *Fortissimo* (*ff*) - very loud

Changing Dynamics

- *Crescendo* - gradually get louder
- *Decrescendo* - gradually get quieter



Overview of Dynamics (super important - listed **below**)

Dynamics Chart		
In italian	Symbol	Definition
pianississimo	<i>ppp</i>	very, very quiet
pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	very quiet
piano	<i>p</i>	quiet
mezzo piano	<i>mp</i>	moderately quiet
mezzo forte	<i>mf</i>	moderately loud
forte	<i>f</i>	loud
fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	very loud
fortississimo	<i>fff</i>	very, very loud
crescendo		gradually getting louder
decrescendo		gradually getting quieter
diminuendo		gradually getting quieter



Intermediate/ Advanced Orchestra

Everything below is what you will need to know to become the best musician you can possibly be.

Improvisation- freely creating your own music as you play.



Interval- The distance between two notes.

Intonation- How accurate each note is played in tune.

Eighth Notes/ Rests, Dotted Quarters and Eighth Notes



These types of notes will be all over advanced pieces of music, so it is very important to know how to play them.

Eighth Note & Eighth Rest

 = 1/2 beat of sound
 = 1/2 beat of silence



Dotted Quarter & Eighth Notes

 →  = 2 Beats
1 & 2 &

A dot adds half
the value of the
quarter note.



Fermata- This symbol tells you to hold the note longer than normal or until your director tells you to stop.



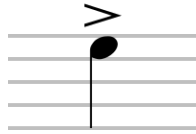
Ritardando- Gradually slow down. On music you will see this written as *rit.*

Lento- Very slow tempo

Andantino- Slightly quicker than andante (look under subheading called Tempo)

- Every musician needs to have Listening Skills, meaning you have to pay very close attention to what your teacher/ director is telling you to do. Some teachers like to change the tempos to fit their classes personal level.*

Accent- This emphasizes the note. →

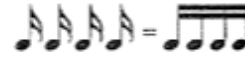


Sixteenth Notes

Sixteenth Notes



4 sixteenth notes = 1 beat
Each sixteenth note = 1/4 beat



A single sixteenth note has 2 flags on the stem.

Syncopation- When an accent is on a note that doesn't have as strong of a beat compared to other notes. Very common in pop and classical styles.

Musical Form- When musicians or singers play the same music but at different times. This is also known as Counterpoint.

Minor Scales- A series of notes that follow a definite pattern of whole steps and half steps.

Mixed Meter- When the time signature changes in a piece of music.

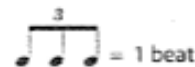
Ex: One line can be in a 4/4 time signature, while the other one will be in 2/4.

Cantabile- To play as if you're singing. This will be represented in your music with an "e."

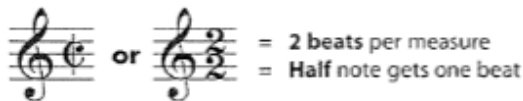
These next two theories are super *important* to know...

Triplets

A triplet is a group of three notes. In $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, or $\frac{4}{4}$ time, an eighth note triplet is spread evenly across one beat.



Time Signature Cut Time (Alla Breve)



○ = 2 beats
♪ = 1 beat
♩ = 1/2 beat

Performing Spotlight

- Being dressed appropriately and using proper concert etiquette is ideal. Showing respect to others, being on time, and remembering all equipment all takes part in proper concert etiquette.

Natural Harmonics- These are tones created by a vibrating string divided into equal sections.

Shifting- This is when you slide your left-hand smoothly and lightly across the fingerboard to create new pitches.

Sight Reading

- This is when you are playing a new piece of music for the first time.

A great method to use is STARS...

Look for...

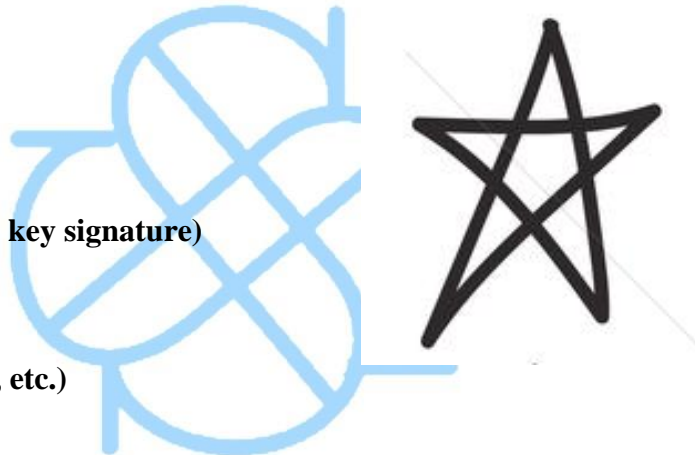
Sharps and flats

Time Signature

Accidentals (Notes not in the key signature)

Rhythms

Signs (Dynamics, repeatings, etc.)



Compositions- The art of being able to write your own original music.

Double Stops- When you play two strings at the same time.



Advice to succeed in Orchestra

Participation is key

- All orchestra members have to work together in order to make beautiful music.
- If one section isn't doing their job, then the whole group falls apart.
- Collaboration and cooperation are ideal in order for an orchestra group to work together.
- Patience is the most important thing to remember in orchestra. When one section is doing practice, you need to be patient, and air bow/shadow bow until it's your section's turn.

Important things to do when you get new music

- Write your name on the top. If you have a stand partner, there is a good chance that the music can get mixed up. Save yourself from the mishap.
- For highschoolers!! - Mark all over the music. Write in finger notes, beat numbers, beats of rests, anything that will make you master the piece of music.
- Keep all of your music in one place. Most students have a folder, so all they have to do is take it out and be ready to go.

Practice!

- Practice every day
- Practice will only make you better. Take 20 minutes out of your day and review a few measures or lines you are struggling with, and repeat them. Something is better than nothing!
- When you develop a practice routine, you will develop discipline and muscle memory. If you only play your instrument in class, your muscles will have trouble remembering what they did during your last lesson and you won't make much progress.

What should you do?

- When starting a piece with a difficult key signature, you should mark the fingerings.

- After practicing a piece to get notes and rhythms correct, next you should mark bowings
- When practicing a section with one difficult bowing, you should play the problem bowing a few times.

Images Cited....

Violin www.stringworks.com

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Parts of a bass <https://www.playmusic123.com/blogs/news/how-to-set-up-an-upright-bass-double-bass>

Bow Diagram: <https://yourmusicsupply.com/parts-of-the-violin/>

Measure diagram- Essential Elements interactive notebook

Bow lift picture- <https://melodyful.com/complete-list-of-music-symbols-with-their-meaning>

Notes and rests diagram <https://www.guitarandmusicinstitute.com/>

1st and 2nd ending picture <https://www.musicreadingsavant.com/reading-music-lesson-42-1st-and-2nd-endings/>

Tie and slur <http://donrathjr.com/ties-slurs-music-theory/>

Violin half and whole step diagram <http://meadowlarkviolin.com/violinblog/category/Theory>

Chromatic Scale <https://www.tekportal.net/chromatic-scale/>

Crescendo and decendo <https://musiccrashcourses.com/lessons/dynamics.html>

All other images are from Essential Elements for Strings book 1 and 2 (Cello Edition)