

# Self-Assessment for Music Lessons

Use these questions to explore your interests and goals for music.

## 1. What kind of music do you like?

Here's a sample list of music styles (these are the ones listed on iTunes):

Alternative	Country	Jazz	Rock
Blues	Dance	Latino	World
Children's Music	Electronic	R&B/Soul	
Christian & Gospel	Folk	Pop	
Classical	Hip-Hop/Rap	Reggae	

If you're not sure which of those styles describes the music you like, see if one of the descriptions below sounds like you:

- (a) I like music that I can sing along with
- (b) I like to rock out
- (c) I like music that fits my mood when I'm feeling lonely or down
- (d) I like music that fits my mood when I'm feeling mellow and happy
- (e) I like music that's familiar from when I was growing up
- (f) I like music I can dance to
- (g) I listen to whatever is on

Do you listen to music often?

- (a) All the time – I turn music on whenever I can.
- (b) I listen to the radio in the car.
- (c) I like to listen to music when my friends/siblings/parents put something on.
- (d) I hear cool music sometimes on TV or in video games.
- (e) I used to listen to music a lot, but now I don't really know what's out there.

- 🎵 If you want to play music, listening to lots of music is a good first step. For one thing, it helps you figure out what you like.
- 🎵 Before your first music lesson, try to think of some songs you would like to play. If you can't think of anything, ask your friends and family for some suggestions.
- 🎵 It's a great idea to bring your music player or a CD to your lesson. Your teacher can help you figure out how to play the songs you like.

## 2. What do you want to do with your instrument?

What inspired you to want to take music lessons?

- (a) I saw a band play and it looked really cool
- (b) I love music and I've always wanted to play
- (c) My friends play instruments and it seems like fun
- (d) I want to join the school band
- (e) I used to take lessons and now I want to get back into it
- (f) My parents think I should learn an instrument

When you picture yourself playing an instrument, what do you imagine?

- (a) I want to be a rock star – onstage in front of thousands of people

- (b) I want to sit in my living room and play a few tunes
- (c) I want to get together with my friends and jam
- (d) I want to play in an orchestra or band
- (e) I want to play in a talent show
- (f) I want to be a concert soloist
- (g) I'm not sure, it just seems like fun

- ♪ Knowing what you want to do with your instrument helps you set goals and stay motivated to play.
- ♪ Learning how to jam at home takes a lot less work than becoming a professional musician, but they're both great goals. Whatever you aim for, have fun!

### 3. How much time do you want to spend playing music?

Learning an instrument takes time. Think about how much time you have, and let that guide your expectations for how much you'll learn and how quickly you'll improve.

How often do you think you will make time to practice?

- (a) I could play for at least a few minutes every day
- (b) I'm really busy, so I probably won't have a chance to practice much
- (c) I'll probably play a lot – at least half an hour a day
- (d) I might practice a few times a week, for 10 minutes or so

- ♪ If you want to make a lot of progress, plan to practice regularly. Your teacher will give you assignments and help you set goals. You'll be asked to practice technique in addition to learning songs, and you'll have opportunities to perform in front of other people.
- ♪ If you don't expect to practice much, you can enjoy lessons even though your skill level won't change rapidly. Your teacher will help you explore ways to enjoy music. You'll build knowledge that will help you understand music better, and you'll eventually be able to play along with CDs and play with your friends.

Parents of students: do you plan to supervise your child's practice time?

- (a) I would probably remind my kids to practice regularly
- (b) I don't have time to nag my kids about music practice
- (c) I would set a practice schedule for my kids and follow up to make sure they work on their assignments every day

- ♪ Children typically don't choose to practice on their own. Unless your child is unusually self-disciplined or highly motivated, ask yourself whether you have the time and energy to supervise their music practice. An honest assessment now may save you a lot of frustration.
- ♪ If you can commit to helping your child practice at least 4 days a week, he or she will be more likely to make significant progress and build measurable skills. Practice time can be as little as 5-10 minutes a day, so this may be easier than you think.
- ♪ If you don't plan to supervise your child's practice, music lessons can still be a valuable activity:

- (1) Weekly lessons give kids a chance to interact one-on-one with an adult other than their parents. Friendship and mentoring can become just as important as playing the instrument.
- (2) A professional instructor can help your child develop a lifelong enjoyment of music and a foundation of music knowledge.
- (3) If your child has an older sibling or friend who plays an instrument, they may be more likely to practice on their own. Introduce yourself to other students, and you may meet a new friend!

Do you have time to attend weekly lessons?

- (a) I'm busy, but I can commit to 30 minutes a week.
- (b) I have time right now, but I'm not sure how long that will last.
- (c) No problem, I have plenty of free time.
- (d) My child has time, but I'm not always free to drive them.
- (e) We have a lot of other family activities – adding another commitment could be challenging.
- (f) I go out of town a lot, so I'd probably miss some weeks.
- (g) My schedule is crazy, and I don't think I could make it every week.

- ♪ Weekly lessons are the best way to make progress playing an instrument. Looking forward to your lesson each week helps remind you to play. If you need help with something, you know you can ask your teacher. You develop a relationship with your teacher – they have a chance to figure out your learning style and what type of music will interest you.
- ♪ If you have time for lessons right now but you may be more busy in a few weeks or months, a short-term commitment is just fine. Once you form the habit, it may be easier to keep a weekly schedule – or you may just get a good introduction to the instrument and then take a break until your schedule eases up again.
- ♪ Meeting other students is a great way to find possible carpools in case your child needs a ride to lessons. The Charlottesville Transit Service provides resources to help children learn to use the bus system; you can download their Educational Enrichment Guide through the city website, [www.charlottesville.org](http://www.charlottesville.org).
- ♪ To save time, plan activities in conjunction with your child's lessons. The Richardson Guitar Studio is located close to Blue Ridge Yoga and Rocky Top REC, as well as Circa, the Habitat Store and other shops.
- ♪ When a scheduling conflict is unavoidable, it may be possible to reschedule your lesson. See our studio policy for details.
- ♪ If your schedule is exceptionally busy but you still want to take a lesson now and then, we offer drop-in lessons. Drop-ins are not recommended for beginners, but they can be fun and inspiring for intermediate players.