

Sample Music Interview Questions

General questions

1. What makes you a strong candidate for this job? A middle school position? An elementary job?
2. Why do you want to be a music teacher?
3. Describe the place of music in the overall educational program?
4. Describe your experience working with Special Education students?
5. Describe the selections you would program for a concert?
6. What do you consider your greatest asset as a teacher?
7. What are some personality characteristics you feel are undesirable in teachers?
8. How did you feel about your favorite teacher? Why?
9. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
10. To what professional organizations do you belong?
11. What conferences or workshops have you attended recently?
12. Why are you leaving your current job?
13. Why do you want to teach here?
14. How do you feel about weekend or evening activities and festivals?
15. How important is it for students' teachers to be at their festivals?
16. How important are ensemble trips to you?
17. How do you feel about competition?
18. If offered the position, how do you see your involvement in the music program?
19. What kind of discipline do you require as a teacher?
20. Describe proper classroom atmosphere.
21. What kind of administrative support is required for you to be successful?
22. How do your students describe you?
23. Describe the kinds of training you have had as a teacher, beyond formal degree programs. What were 2 important inservice courses or workshops you have taken/attended, and what impact have they had on your teaching?
24. If you were to choose 3 vital emphases that would direct your teaching for _____ students, what would they be?
25. Tell us what training you have had in the areas of learning styles, dimensions of learning and assessment, and what impact they have had on your teaching?
26. How has your teaching changed in the past 2 years?
27. A benchmark for third graders is that they have learned quarter, half, dotted half, whole and pairs of eighth notes with corresponding rests. How would you assess that learning has taken place?
28. Our district has a team of general music, string, and band teachers in each elementary school. All of these persons share a student population. What personal qualities do you have that would make you an effective team member?
29. A parent comes to you and tells you that s/he is unhappy with the way another music teacher in the building is approaching something regarding their child. You also teach this student, and, privately, you think that the parent is correct. What would you do?
30. You are teaching a class of 5th graders and they are performing a dotted quarter/eighth note combination hesitantly or incorrectly. What would you do?
31. If we were to ask other, non-music, teachers in your building about you as a colleague, what would they say?
32. Describe a lesson in which you would use classroom instruments. What would be the process, when would you use the instruments, etc.

33. What does it mean to have a learner-centered classroom?
34. What do you do with a student who resists music?
35. Describe your lesson planning procedure.
36. Discuss the process you use in developing the singing voice.
37. How would you integrate the music program with the classroom curriculum?
38. Give some examples of materials you would use to build a diverse repertoire.
39. Describe how the National Standards in Music have impacted your teaching.
40. Describe your background and knowledge of each of the following methodologies: Orff, Kodaly, Gordon, Suzuki, Dalcroze.
41. Besides teaching, what other experiences have you had working with children?
42. What are your keyboard skills like? Vocal skills? Secondary instrument skills?
43. Give us an example of one of your recent musical challenges with a student, and how you addressed the problem.
44. Tell us about your style of teaching, and what kinds of things you think are important in a music curriculum?
45. Briefly, describe your personal philosophy of music education.
46. Describe a current or recent project in which you worked with other colleagues, and explain your role in this work.
47. How would you use music to develop a sense of community in this building—to bring students, parents, families and teachers together?
48. How important is performing in the general music classroom?

Instrumental music questions

49. When should students start playing music instruments?
50. What is the role of singing in instrumental music education?
51. Describe the recruiting process you would use to start beginners?
52. What is the relationship between instrumental and general music?
53. Are there any instruments on which you would not start beginners? Why?
54. A trumpet student is having difficulties with tonguing. Describe how you would approach this problem.
55. Describe a beginning clarinet lesson.
56. What do you think about pull-out lessons?
57. How would you warm up a band? An orchestra?
58. Tell us how you would go about tuning a middle school band.
59. What are the most common problems for beginning instrumentalists?
60. How would you organize and plan a typical band rehearsal?
61. How many concerts should a high school band play in a year?
62. What is the role of marching band in the overall music program? Jazz ensemble?
63. Our high school has a concert band and an orchestra. Should wind players perform in orchestra if they are not interested in doing so? If so, how should the wind players be selected for orchestra?
64. Discuss the role of private instruction in school instrumental music programs.
65. What is the ideal instrumentation for a high school concert band? Wind ensemble? Jazz ensemble?
66. Who should be allowed to start a music instrument?
67. Should students be allowed to join band in high school if they have never played an instrument before?
68. How would you choose repertoire for your ensemble?

69. How would you design a typical high school/middle school band concert program? How many selections would be programmed? What kinds of pieces would you choose and why?
70. Tell us how you would set up the concert band in terms of seating and instrument placement. Would you use risers?
71. How would you set up the jazz band? Where is the ideal place for the rhythm section in the band's set up?
72. Discuss your approach to teaching improvisation?
73. Tell us about a composition project you have done with your students.
74. How would you integrate music with the other academic subjects in the middle/high school?
75. How would you incorporate world musics into the band curriculum?
76. What beginning method book would you use?
77. How would you suggest that beginning instrument instruction be organized? In "like" groups, or in mixed instrument classes? Why?
78. What is the ideal starting age/grade for beginning instrumental music instruction?
79. There is a guidance counselor in the high school who is not a supporter of the band program. This person discourages students from including band in their schedules, and tells students to drop band in favor of courses in other subjects. How would you try to improve this situation?
80. Your first trumpet player is also the starting point guard on the girls' basketball team, and there is a conflict with a game and a concert scheduled for the same evening. How would you try to resolve the problem?
81. How important are competitions and festivals to you?
82. How do you handle seating in the band? Are students permitted to "challenge" for higher seats? How and when?
83. What does "going down the line" mean? What do you think about this strategy?
84. Show us how you would start a piece with a band.
85. How should special learners be integrated into the band program? What teaching techniques and strategies would you use to accommodate students' learning needs?
86. What are your feelings about "rote" instruction? How and when should it be used, if at all?
87. What, if any, rhythm and/or tonal syllable systems do you use in your teaching?
88. Our general music teachers are strong advocates of the Kodaly rhythm syllable system, and we have made a district-wide commitment to this approach. Are you comfortable with this system, or would you prefer to implement another approach with your instrumental students? Why?
89. Your All-State oboist refuses to play in marching band, and the music program policy is that all concert band members must participate in the marching band. How would you address this situation?
90. What would a student-centered approach look like in the band rehearsal setting?

Choral questions

91. How do you feel about same-sex choral ensembles in the school music program?
92. What is the role of sacred music in the school choral music program?
93. What is the best age/grade for singers to begin private voice instruction?
94. Discuss the role of the accompanist in the choral setting.
95. What is the role of the "show" choir in the choral music program? Jazz choir? Madrigal ensemble?

96. Talk about the place of the musical in the overall choral program.
97. Describe a good choral sound. How do you go about developing this type of sound?
98. Your best tenor is also the first chair trombonist in the school band program, and is planning on being a music education major in college. He has just told you that he is considering dropping chorus to concentrate on the trombone and get ready for his college auditions. What would you say to him?
99. What strategies would you use to attract more male voices to the choral program?
100. What is the ideal balance of voices for a high school chorus? How many of each voice part and in what proportion?
101. How many choruses, and of what types, would you have in the high school choral program? Why?
102. Talk about the role that the chorus plays in developing good public relations for the school.
103. How many public performances would you schedule in a year?
104. When planning a trip with your chorus, what issues do you consider?
105. You are meeting a middle school student for the first time. How would you convince him or her to join chorus?
106. You meet a parent of one of your students in the grocery store, and the parent tells you that her child is considering dropping chorus. What would you say to the parent?
107. The high school principal comes backstage after the closing night of the spring musical, and after congratulating you, tells you that because of the enormous crowds the show has been attracting that she wants the show to run for an additional 2 nights. How would you respond?
108. Your chorus has just returned from an evaluation festival with a superior rating, the “Best in Class” trophy, and glowing reviews. The chorus booster club president suggests that you schedule another trip for the following year to the same festival. What do you say?
109. The Pickle Packers International have just called and asked your chorus to provide entertainment for their annual meeting at the local convention center. How do you respond?

Questions to ask

110. Is there a district music curriculum?
111. Why is this position open?
112. Could you describe the teaching schedule for this position? How many classes/ensembles per day/week? How long are class periods?
113. What kind of schedule is in place? Block? Modified block? How is music handled in this type of schedule?
114. How long is the school/professional day? Start and end times? Are faculty expected to stay after the school day?
115. What teaching methodology has been in place in this school?
116. Is there a district-approved music textbook?
117. What is the average class size in the school?
118. What is the school climate like? Do teachers work together? Collegiality?
119. Could I see the room?
120. Is there a room devoted to music, or does music share with other subjects?

121. Is there any traveling required for this position? To how many schools/rooms?
122. What are the music facilities like? What kinds of equipment are available for use?
123. Is Special Education treated as a self-contained class or mainstreamed through all classes?
124. What kinds of expectations are there regarding committee assignments, duties (lunch duty, hall duty, etc.) and before/after school meetings?
125. Is there a music department coordinator/supervisor/administrator?
126. Do the music teachers meet on a regular basis?
127. What kind of teacher preparation time is built into the schedule?
128. What opportunities are available for professional growth/development?
129. Is/are there a staff accompanist?
130. How many performances are required?
131. Is the chorus/band/orchestra scheduled during the school day?
132. What kind of budget is available for:
 - a. Sheet music
 - b. Equipment; instruments, CDs, sound reinforcement/stereo equipment
 - c. Repair, piano tuning
 - d. Accompanists, private teachers, marching band staff, musical directors
133. Are there stipends for extra curricular assignments (such as jazz band, show choir, studio orchestra, musicals)?
134. Could you tell me about the community (socio-economic status, free/reduced lunch rates, demographics), and their support for the music program historically?
135. What kinds of technology resources (computer, printer, keyboard, computer applications, stereo equipment, email account, web space) and inservice (training, courses) are available for teachers?
136. How is the music program viewed by other teachers in the school/district?
137. What is the music program's reputation in the area/region/state/nationally?
138. Do the school/district's music teachers participate in county and state professional organizations and events?