

Embouchure Study - Trumpet

**A WIBC Band Director's
Special Presentation**
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Introduction

This is a photographic study of embouchure formation at the sixth and seventh grade level. These photographs will demonstrate both good and bad embouchures.

Why Focus on Embouchure?

Pitch, range, and articulation are all affected by the interface of the lips and the mouthpiece.

Good embouchure is a critical factor in successful tone production.

Poor embouchure can result in a thin, pinched, or restricted sound, and/or inaccurate pitch.

Proper Embouchure

Here are some examples of good embouchure. These students play with a characteristic trumpet sound that is pure, controlled, and in tune. The tone is good throughout a range of dynamic levels.

Good Embouchure 1



- Lips are firm, but not tight.
- Excess pressure is not exerted by the mouthpiece on the lips.

Good Embouchure 2



Corners of the mouth are secure against the teeth.

Mouthpiece placement is good, not too high or low on the lips.

Good Embouchure 3



Center of lips are relaxed, chin is smooth.

Angle of trumpet is good.

Poor Embouchure

Poor embouchure can be seen in various forms and combinations.

Attributes to check:

- Lips – Tightness, exposure, balance, and placement
- Corners firm against cheeks
- Cheeks not puffed
- Smooth chin
- Mouthpiece pressure

Poor Embouchure 1



- Lower lip is pushed forward.
- Mouth corners are drawn down.
- Student overblows to compensate.
- Tone is unfocused and pitch is bad.

Poor Embouchure 2



- Lips are too tight (too much “smile”).
- Poor trumpet angle to lips caused by withdrawn lower lip.
- Student’s range is limited and unpredictable.

Poor Embouchure 3



- This is an example of “biting.”
- Squeezing the lips together is causing the chin to bunch.
- Also, this student is using pressure of the mouthpiece on the face in an attempt to increase range.
- The tone is thin and out of tune.

Poor Embouchure 4



- The trumpet is too low on the face.
- Exposure of the red part of the lips is uneven.

Poor Embouchure 5



- Lips are too “pouty”
- Lower lip is folded over and not firm.
- This student’s tone is harsh and “blatty.”

Poor Embouchure 6



- Lips are rolled in and uneven.
- Excess pressure is exerted by the mouthpiece on the lips.
- This student produces a strained, forced sound.

Poor Embouchure 7



- Lips are rolled too far in.
- Tone is tight and thin.
- The mouthpiece is, however, placed evenly on the face.

Poor Embouchure 8



- The mouthpiece is placed too high on the lips.
- This student struggles with range and articulation.

Poor Embouchure 9



- The upper lip is covering the lower lip.
- The instrument is slightly high on the mouth.
- The student would benefit by practicing forming the letter "B".

Poor Embouchure 10



- The trumpet is placed too high on the mouth.
- There is too much pressure against the lips.
- The tone sounds strained.
- This student would benefit from practicing the “sigh breath” and relaxing the lips.

Poor Embouchure 11



- Lips are firm, but not tight.
- This student appears to be puffing the lips rather than the cheeks.
- The tone sounds forced.
- Articulation is difficult for this student.

Exceptions to The Rules

- Some students may exhibit poor embouchure characteristics but still have a good sound.
- Other students may have good embouchure but lack breath support to produce a good sound.

Exception Embouchure 1



- Tone is good in spite of the appearance of biting and excess pressure.

Exception Embouchure 2



- Lips are firm, but not tight, yet this student plays with a tight, thin tone.
- Lack of breath support causes this student to have range issues.

Exception Embouchure 3



- This student has gorgeous tone and a great range despite the lips appearing to be rolled in.
- The chin also appears bunched.