

Swope Band Golden Rules of Music

**Memorize these and apply them to your music playing.
You will be on your way to becoming a great musician.**

- Never, ever, ever breathe after a crescendo if there are notes immediately following. Crescendos build momentum and breathing will disrupt this.
- Long notes are boring unless you do something with them. Decide what to do: *fp*? crescendo? diminuendo? crescendo then diminuendo? Make it interesting. If you are not sure, ask.
- Moving notes are the most important. Bring them out when you have quarter notes, eighth notes or 16ths. If you don't have moving notes, play soft enough to hear the sections with the moving notes.
- Music is written in phrases or musical sentences. Generally this is 4 or 8 measures at a time. Do not break the phrase. Take a big enough breath to get through or sneak a breath.
- Stagger breathing is a must! If you can't make it until the end of the phrase, sneak a breath when your neighbor is not breathing. This is better to do within a measure and not at a barline.
- Not all dynamics are written in the music. You can make the music more interesting by adding more dynamics and expression. For example, as the notes go up, crescendo, and, as the notes go down, diminuendo.
- The lower and bigger your instrument, the shorter you will have to play.
- Piano does not equal slow! Loud does not equal fast! Be careful to maintain tempo when you change dynamics.
- Smooth does not equal slow! Short does not mean fast! Be careful to maintain tempo when you change the style of articulation.
- Tuning is a must. This must happen constantly on every note you play. Adjust by firming up or relaxing if you hear waves. Trombones can move the slide up or down slightly to adjust. Flutes can roll in to lower the pitch or roll out slightly to raise the pitch. No waves means you are in tune!
- Faster air will solve 90% of tuning and sound problems. Make sure you are supporting the air all of the time. Slow tempos require more support.
- Dynamics are written in music for the entire ensemble and not for individual players. If it says *forte*, it means *forte* for the entire band or the section playing that part and not for you as an individual. Be sure not to play too loud.