



The Colour Awards - Strings

Each Award has its own criteria to work towards and this will hopefully help you to understand what you (or your child) needs to work on to achieve their next colour award.

YELLOW AWARD



- ▶ Keep in time with the rest of my group *playing in time in an ensemble (group) is an important skill, you need to listen carefully, be aware of others and count. This is tricky whilst not at school but practise playing along with backing tracks if possible to develop your ability to play with other parts.*
- ▶ Work out a simple tune by ear *This helps us to think about what we are playing and develop an understanding of where notes are on our instrument. Start with something simple like Twinkle Twinkle (Start on open D... D D A A... now work out which fingers to use, do the notes go higher or lower?)*
- ▶ Play a simple tune from memory *Practise playing a couple of bars with music then cover and see if you can play without, then look at the next two bars, then the next two etc. Can you put it all together? This helps us internalise a tune (be able to sing it in our head)*



YELLOW AWARD



- ▶ Notice when I am out of tune and know how to correct myself *Look carefully at where you place your fingers, use stickers to help if necessary but better still try and listen to the notes you are playing.. Are they in tune? You may sometimes need to adjust the position of your fingers.*
- ▶ Play and hear the difference between #s and naturals *now you are learning new notes, you will sometimes need to move fingers e.g. 1st finger back for a B flat (or F natural violins), second finger moves closer to 1st for notes like F or C natural (violins) or using 2nd finger instead of 3rd (Cellos). Always check your key signature to make sure you know whether to play sharps, naturals or flats.*
- ▶ Play slurs *Playing more than one note in one bow (join them together smoothly)*



These two notes

Played together in an up bow

slur

YELLOW AWARD

▶ Always maintain good posture, bow hold and left hand shape

Good posture and bow hold is really important to make a good tone or sound. Violins & Viola - ensure you rest your violin under your chin holding the scroll up, don't forget to use your shoulder rest or sponge to make it more comfortable. Your fingers should curve round the bow with little finger resting on top, do not grip your bow.



Cello - make sure you are sitting comfortably on the edge of the chair with your back straight, you should hold the cello between your knees, the top should rest on chest and pegs roughly level with your ears. Bow hold is different for cellos - curve fingers round the bow & do not rest the little finger on top like violinists, try and keep your hand and arm relaxed and do not grip the bow.

Your left hand fingers should be curved not flat and ensure your thumb is resting on the back of the fingerboard (cellos - hand should be in a C shape) or edge of the fingerboard of the fingerboard (violins / viola)



YELLOW AWARD

D major scale

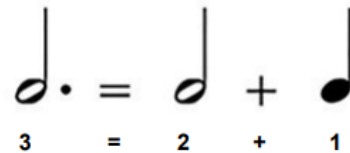


D major scale



- ▶ Play scales and arpeggios this is a important way of learning different finger positions. A scale is where you play every note going upwards e.g. D Major would be D E F# G A B C# D - start on the D string and play 0 1 2 3, 0 (A) 1 2 3. (Violin) or 0 1 3 4, 0 (A) 1 3 4 (cello) Scales can be **major** (happy sounding) or **minor** (sad sounding)
- ▶ An arpeggio is the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the scale e.g. D - D F# A D
- ▶ Read and play notes on all four strings, dotted rhythms and tied notes A dot after a note makes the note half as long again e.g.

A dotted minim lasts for 3 beats because half of a minim (2 beats) is a crotchet (1 beat).



A tie joins two notes together (not to be confused with a slur, a tie is two notes the same, a slur is two different notes) e.g.



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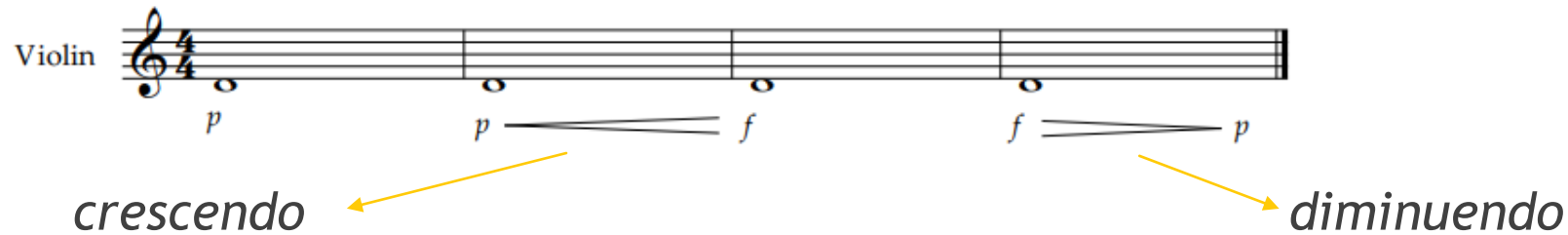


For example:

Two tied crotchets would sound like a minim.

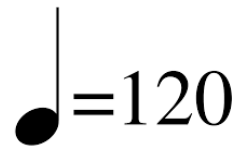
YELLOW AWARD

- ▶ Do a crescendo and diminuendo A crescendo means getting **LOUDER** and diminuendo means getting **QUIETER** (NB reminder: *f* forte is loud, *p* piano is quiet) e.g.



- ▶ Make decisions about the style of my pieces thinking about, for instance: dynamics, tempi and articulation As you become more confident with a piece, it is important to think about how you are playing it not just which notes you are playing. **DYNAMICS** is the volume of the music, **TEMPO** is the speed at which you play and **ARTICULATION** is whether you are playing short, detached or spikey notes or whether you are playing smoothly. Have a look at the ArtForms website yellow section <https://artformsleeds.co.uk/strings-yellow-award/> for some good examples of what tempo and articulation mean if you are not sure.

YELLOW AWARD



Metronome marking - crotchet
= 120 beats per minute



- ▶ Know how tempo is indicated in a written part and play at different speeds *At the start of a piece there may be an Italian term e.g. **Andante** (walking pace), **Allegro** (quick) or **lento** (slow).. There are many more...! Or there may be a metronome marking. (it is a good idea to practise with a metronome occasionally to check you speed. (if you haven't got one there are many free ones online or apps you can download - please ask parents permission first!)*
- ▶ Make up (improvise or compose) a simple tune *many people find making up their own tune a bit daunting.. Don't! 😊 it's a great way to be creative. Have a go at the improvisation challenge on the website. (strings- yellow award.. There is a different one for each instrument; violin, cello / bass & viola)*
- ▶ Finally... Practise frequently and Perform a tune with friends for an audience and talk about what went well *This is the best way to show what you can do and will develop your confidence - play to a family member, friend, class mates or even the family pet!*

