Name _____ Date _____

Instrument Families of the Orchestra: How Each Family Makes Its Sound

Directions: These questions are about the four families of the orchestra. Think about how each one makes its sound.

1. Match each family to the way its sound starts.

Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ strings
2. _____ woodwinds
3. _____ brass
4. _____ percussion

A. air is blown across a hole or through a reed
B. it is hit, shaken or scraped
C. lips buzz into a cup-shaped mouthpiece
D. an electric speaker makes the sound
E. a bow or a finger makes strings vibrate

2. Mateo wants to join the brass section of an orchestra. Which of these should he learn?

A. oboe B. viola C. trombone D. snare drum

3. A saxophone is made of metal, but it is a woodwind. Why?

A. The player pulls a bow across it.
B. The player's breath makes a reed vibrate.
C. The player hits it with mallets.
D. The player buzzes into a cup-shaped mouthpiece.

4. How many of these are string instruments: violin, flute, cello, trumpet, harp, double bass, clarinet and triangle?

_____ instruments

5. Fill in each blank about four bowed strings.

Word bank
cello • viola • violin • double bass

Of the violin, viola, cello and double bass, the _____ is the smallest and plays the highest notes. The _____ is the largest and plays the lowest notes.

6. Which of these belongs in the percussion section?

A. French horn B. cymbals C. cello D. piccolo

7. Choose the words that show how two brass players change notes.

Word bank
valves • reed • slide • bow

A trombone player moves a long _____ in and out to change notes. A trumpet player presses _____ to change notes.

8. Which of these brass instruments is the biggest and plays the lowest notes?

A. tuba B. trumpet C. trombone D. French horn

9. Some percussion instruments can play a tune, but others cannot. Which of these can play a tune?

A. cymbals B. xylophone C. triangle D. snare drum

10. The alphorn is a very long wooden horn from Switzerland. Players buzz their lips into its cup-shaped mouthpiece. Which family is it in?

A. percussion B. brass C. woodwind D. string