Improving Legato and Phrasing

Middle School Trombone Clinic

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Legato uses three important skills: smooth air, light tongue, quick slide

1. **Smooth Air**

Give your air someplace to aim (blow on hand, paper, buzz into inspirex spirometer, pinwheel)

Play with smooth air like you are holding one long note (no tongue)

 

Longer pattern (no tongue yet):



Practicing smooth air through lip slurs:



Practicing smooth air in a song:

First, start with no tongue and work only on smooth air:

* Blow air stream on hand/paper
* move to pinwheel and blow tune
* move to trombone and do air trombone, no tongue or sound (listen to the air: is it smooth?)
* play tune smeared, no tongue



2. **Light Tongue**

On a smooth air stream, articulate “doo, doo, doo”, check on pinwheel, hand or paper

Single Pitch:



The following exercise compares legato to detached articulation. Keep air moving for both. Shift between “doo doo” to “too too”.



Changing 1 position:



Faster exercise to go between tongue syllables.



Then try changing 2 or more positions.

3. **Quick Slide**

* Tongue and slide movement need to happen at the exact same time, as quick as a valve can be pushed down
* Make sure slide is in good working condition
* Lightly grip slide
* Quick, but relaxed, slide motion

Use the following exercise to practice quick slide. During 8th rests, see how fast you can move the slide.

 

Putting it all together:

1x. On a pinwheel or hand

2x. Air Trombone: everything but sound

3x. play

