



## From the Author

There are many reasons to teach recorders. The most widely cited one is that they provide students with the experience of playing a wind instrument without the stress of reeds, buzzing, or tricky fingerings, making them a great preparation for later experiences in band. But recorders are much more than pre-band instruments. They are legitimate instruments on their own, and they provide a great opportunity for children to learn standard notation in a relevant way. Since students are typically successful with them, recorders deliver a musical confidence boost too.

My goals while writing *Recorder Monster* were to create a curriculum that:

- **Is systematic:** Each of the five units is centered on a Monster Mantra, which helps students remember key factors for successful playing. New rhythms, pitches, and symbols are introduced in sequential difficulty and are reinforced in the repertoire for each unit. Named routines help students and teachers to break a large process into small, manageable, repeatable steps.
- **Is thorough:** Each unit includes learning targets, teacher tips, fingering exercises, rhythm practice, leveled songs, worksheets for concept review, and both written and performance assessments. In addition, each unit has two supplemental pieces to reinforce the concepts from the unit and to provide a performance opportunity. The supplements include a recorder consort (duet or trio, some of which include parts for alto recorder) and a full ensemble (recorder with pitched and non-pitched percussion).
- **Is flexible:** The curriculum can be broken up over multiple years, or it can be used as the core element of a single year. To accommodate teacher preference for different sequences of pitch introduction, Units 2 and 3 are interchangeable. Choose the sequence that works best for you and your students.
- **Provides support for the teacher:** Teachers with an instrumental background may find that teaching recorders comes naturally, but for those with less instrumental experience, it can be overwhelming. My goal is to keep the experience positive for everyone, and this curriculum is designed to aid teachers at any level of experience.

- **Is fun and motivating for students:** The five traditional folk songs in each unit have alternate lyrics that are a little naughty or silly. Most of my students enjoy the silly lyrics, and that helps them buy in to the curriculum. If you prefer, you can use the traditional lyrics, which are available on the CD.
- **Has a physical indicator of student success:** Students can earn a Monster Card anytime they pass a performance assessment. My students enjoy trading with their friends, trying to collect all of the cards. You can print these cards yourself, or purchase a box of 750 glossy cards.
- **Is aligned with National Core Arts Standards and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:** On the CD, you will find a grid that shows which elements of the curriculum align with which standards.

I have been teaching and refining this curriculum for several years, and I am very pleased to share it. I hope that it brings you and your students joy and much success.

*Mari Selway*



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\* Unit 2 and Unit 3 are interchangeable. Choose the order in which you want to introduce pitches to decide which unit should happen first in your classroom.

# Day 1: Introducing the Recorder

Once the students get recorders in their hands, it's their mouths you have to worry about! Recorders make a truly horrible sound before kids learn to control them. Keep the first experience with recorders short and targeted. The goal is to control the sound (not to make music or play a song). I teach this mini-lesson several times in the spring of Second Grade. When we start recorders in Third Grade, the students are immediately successful because they already practiced and developed muscle memory for creating a good sound.

Analogies and imagery will minimize the issue of over-blowing, but ultimately you need to prepare yourself for a few minutes of torture. It will get better quickly!

## *Learning Target: I can play my recorder with a controlled sound.*

*Recorders require very little air!* Give students an image to help them picture how to blow:

- Imagine they are blowing on a butterfly wing, but they don't want to blow the butterfly away.
- Imagine they are blowing on a candle flame just enough to make the flame flicker but not go out.
- Imagine they are keeping a leaf floating in the air by blowing through a straw.

Insist on the left hand on top from the beginning!

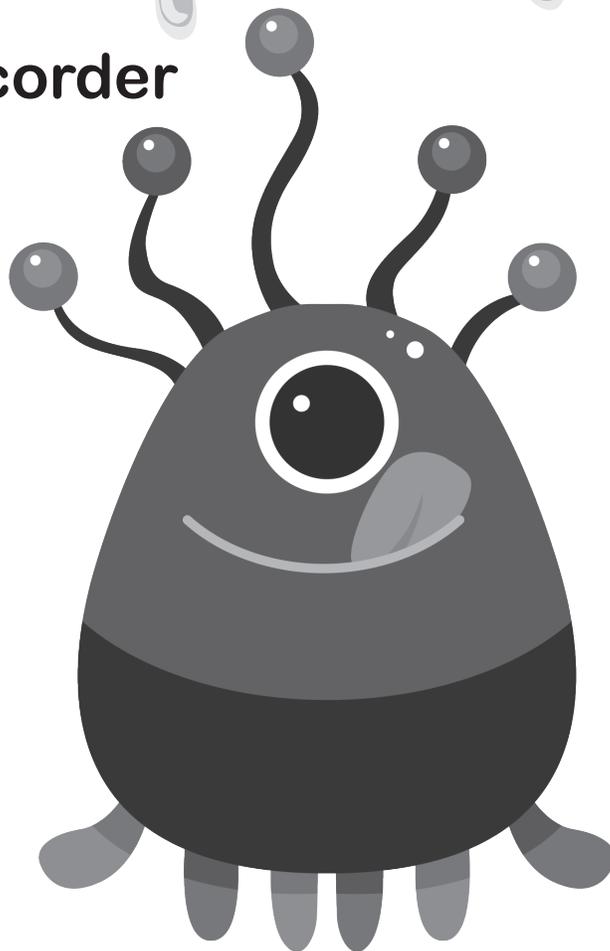
- If you are facing the class, consider putting your right hand on top so the students mirror you.
- Reference a landmark in the room to help students remember left from right. (In my classroom, the hand closer to the window goes on top.)

Body position matters!

- Model proper posture and give it a name. I say, "Look like a musician."
- Be sure all recorders are pointing toward the floor (45 degree angle) as opposed to pointing toward you (90 degree angle.)

A good sound from the beginning leads to a great sound in the end!

1. Have students cover the thumb hole and topmost hole to play B. Reference one of your images for soft air flow.



2. Model a nice sound. Let them try again.
3. Remind them to keep their cheeks flat. Let them try again.
4. Change the fingering to A or G. Let them try again. (Name the notes as you do this so the students start learning their fingerings.)
5. See who can hold a sound for the longest period of time: the better they conserve their air, the longer they will be able to play.
6. Ask the students to play one at a time. When the whole group plays at the same time, a child may not realize they are the one overblowing. When they play alone, the over-blowers will hear themselves and be able to self-correct.
7. Ask students to partner up and play for each other to check for good sound and complete covering of the holes.
8. Do a spot check with all fingers down. After squeezing low C for thirty seconds (without blowing), there should be a bubble on each finger.

# UNIT 1

## Learning Targets

### Symbols:

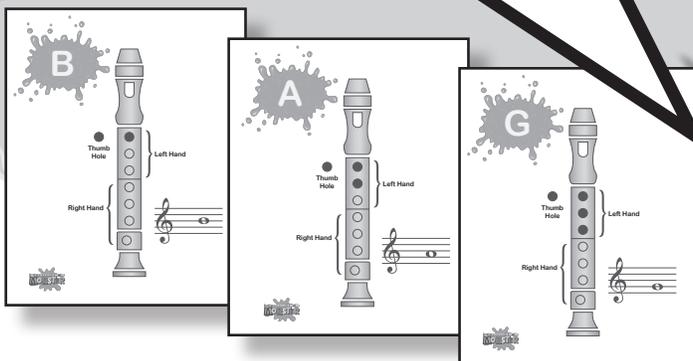


### Rhythms:



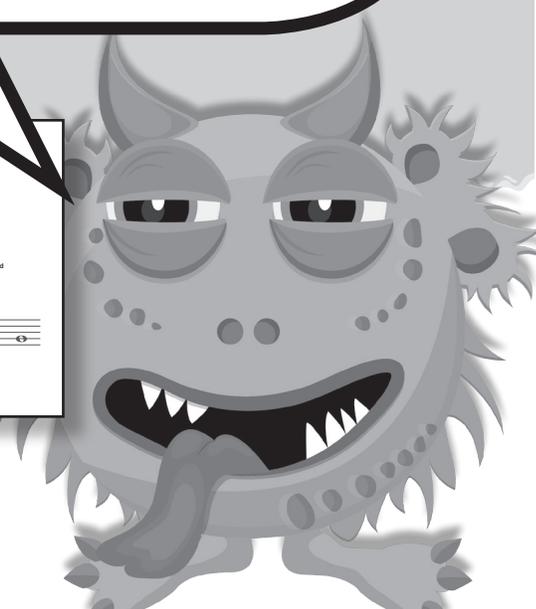
### Pitches:

B, A, G



- \* I can read and play B, A, and G on my recorder.
- \* I can read and play quarter notes, quarter rests, and eighth notes.
- \* I can read and play a song on my recorder.

This unit introduces the fingerings and staff positions for B, A, and G as well as the rhythm symbols for quarter note, quarter rest, and beamed eighth notes. Before you start Unit 1, be sure to do the Day 1 Lesson on page 13 to teach the students how to control their air for a proper tone.



### Repertoire

Silly Title (Traditional Title)	Perf. Track	Acc. Track	Student Page	Teacher Page
Big Gross Bugs (Hot Cross Buns)	7	8	8	19
Monsters in the Moonlight (Au Claire de la Lune)	9	10	8	21
Eating Garbage (Merrily We Roll Along)	11	12	9	21
Go to Sleep (Fais Do Do)	13	14	9	22
Down by the Mansion (Down by the Station)	15	16	10	22
Some Feet – Recorder Consort	57	n/a	n/a	62
Bubble Gum – Ensemble	62	63	n/a	71

### CD files

- \* Unit 1 Goal Setting
- \* Pitch Identification Worksheet
- \* Rhythm Worksheet
- \* Unit 1 Review Flashcards
- \* Unit 1 Assessment
- \* Student versions of each song (with traditional lyrics or monster lyrics)
- \* Consort and Ensemble Scores and Parts
- \* Groovy Grooves
- \* Assessment Slips
- \* Performance Reflection
- \* Performance Assessment Chart
- \* Monster Cards

### Posters

- \* Fingering Charts
- \* Routine Posters
- \* Performance Rubric Poster
- \* Monster Mantra Poster
- \* Learning Target Poster

# B, A, and G

*Learning Target: I can read and play B, A, and G on my recorder.*

Display the first Monster Mantra poster. Ask the students what they think the phrase means. Teach the fingerings for B, A, and G.



## Model Mastery

When fingering B, A, and G, some students may cover only the first or second or third hole rather than adding fingers. They may also lift the correct finger instead of putting it down. Demonstrate these mistakes so that the class will see and hear that their notes will sound wrong if they do not cover the correct holes. Don't forget to model the correct way to play the new pitches too.

As students are developing their early skills, be sure you are modeling a good sound with proper tonguing. Students will try to copy what they hear from adults.

## Spot Check

- Choose one pitch (B, A, or G) and ask the students to squeeze the fingering for thirty seconds. If they have the right fingering, there will be little bumps on the corresponding fingers.
- You may want to include a Spot Check for low C in the first few classes of recorder instruction. This will help the children realize why it is important to keep the left hand on top and prepare them to be able to seal all the holes.

## Echo Location

Either use the Echo Location exercises below or improvise four-beat phrases for the class to echo. Start with one pitch only, then try two pitches, and finally all three pitches.



## Staff Meeting

1. Display a treble clef staff. You can have students use the one on the back cover of the student book, draw one on the board, or use a digital version, like the Staff Meeting activity on the *Recorder Monster Interactive* software.
2. Introduce the staff and highlight its five lines and four spaces.
3. Introduce the treble clef. Explain that it is also known as the G clef because the treble clef wraps around the second line, which is called G.
4. Place a note head on G and ask the class to play G. Move the note head up to B and ask the class to play B.
5. Ask the students to figure out what note is in the space between B and G. Have them play A.
6. Place the note head randomly on B, A, and G and ask students to either name or play the note you've indicated on the staff. You could ask individual students or the whole class.
7. See page 8 for more ideas about introducing lines and spaces.

## Fancy Fingers

Each day, choose one or two of the Fancy Fingers exercises to the right and have students say the pitch names, say the finger numbers, and play the patterns. Each exercise should be repeated multiple times.

## Know It & Show It

Use a combination of informal assessments, formative assessments (which show where students are right now) and summative assessments (which show how much students learned overall). Blank Staff Assessment exercises, solo-playing of Fancy Finger exercises, and the Pitch Worksheet are all good options.

Down by the Mansion

Play 2 times

Down by the man-sion, where the track is fan-cy.

hear the flies all buzz-ing 'round and then hear a SWAT!

Goals★★

Did you meet your personal goals? ○ ○ ○ ○

Describe something you did very well on this unit.

10

## Fancy Fingers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

# Quarter Notes, Quarter Rests, and Eighth Notes

*Learning Target: I can read and play quarter notes, quarter rests, and eighth notes.*

## Rockin' Rhythms

1. Introduce and explain the following symbols and concepts:
  - Quarter note = one beat of sound
  - Quarter rest = one beat of silence
  - Measure—how we divide time in music
  - Time signature—top number tells you how many beats are in a measure
2. Display the Rockin' Rhythms on page 18, or have students turn to them in the student book.
3. Practice clapping and counting the first Rockin' Rhythm line in each time signature using these Body Rhythms:
  - Quarter note = clap
  - Quarter rest = palms up gesture.The first line of each meter uses only quarter notes and quarter rests, so it is a great place to begin.
4. Introduce beamed eighth notes, showing the notation and explaining the concept.
5. Return to the Rockin' Rhythms, this time counting the lines with eighth notes. Use this Body Rhythm:
  - beamed eighth notes = two chest thumps with alternating hands
6. As a class, perform the Rockin' Rhythms with Body Rhythms, using the Make It Rock tracks as an accompaniment. Choose a tempo at which your students can be successful. Performing Rockin' Rhythms with recorded music and Body Rhythms will help develop fluent readers.



## Make It Rock Tracks

- |   |               |                |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | $\frac{2}{4}$ | Slow (65 bpm)  |
| 2 | $\frac{2}{4}$ | Fast (100 bpm) |
| 3 | $\frac{3}{4}$ | Slow (65 bpm)  |
| 4 | $\frac{3}{4}$ | Fast (100 bpm) |
| 5 | $\frac{4}{4}$ | Slow (65 bpm)  |
| 6 | $\frac{4}{4}$ | Fast (100 bpm) |

## Know It & Show It

- Listen to each student perform one of the Rockin' Rhythms using Body Rhythms or playing a neutral pitch on the recorder.
- Assign the Unit 1 Rhythm Worksheet to help your students identify, count, and write the rhythm symbols they have learned.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Rhythm Reading

Clap and count the rhythms below. Then circle all of the quarter rests.

Clap and count the rhythms below. Then circle all of the beamed eighth notes.

Draw each symbol on the line above its name.

$\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter note      Quarter note      Quarter rest      Quarter note

$\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_

Eighth notes      Quarter note      Eighth notes      Quarter rest

$\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter rest      Eighth notes      Eighth notes      Quarter note

**UNIT 1**

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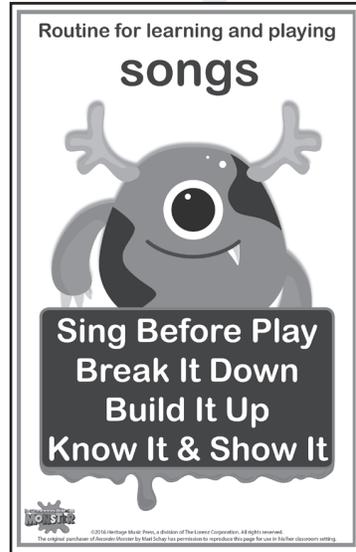
## Playing a Song

**Learning Goal:** I can read and play a song on my recorder.

Display the New Songs Routine Poster and refer to each step as you work through “Big Gross Bugs/Hot Cross Buns.”

## Sing Before Play

1. Choose the lyrics you prefer and project the music for “Big Gross Bugs” or “Hot Cross Buns.” (You will find PDFs of both versions on the CD.)
2. Lead the class in singing the song.



## Break It Down

1. Guide students through the following process:
  - a. Use Body Rhythms to clap and count the rhythms.
  - b. Finger and sing the note names.
  - c. Finger and sing the finger numbers.
  - d. Look for patterns and variations.

In the long run, the most important aspect of Break It Down is to look for patterns and variations within a song and between known songs. Model this process with “Big Gross Bugs” so that your students understand the process.

2. Ask the class to play the first measure of “Big Gross Bugs”.
3. Ask the class to identify how many times they see the same measure (3 times.)
4. Ask the class to identify what changes in measure 3. (Start on G instead of B; eighth notes instead of quarter notes and quarter rests.)

# Big Gross Bugs/Hot Cross Buns

*Play 2 times*

Big gross bugs. Big gross bugs.  
Hot cross buns. Hot cross buns.

Eat a red one, eat a green one, big gross bugs.  
One a pen - ny, two a pen - ny, hot cross buns.

## Song Notes

CD tracks: Perf. 7, Acc. 8  
Student page 8

Intro: 2 measures  
Interlude: 2 measures

## Build It Up

1. Play the song together.
2. Repeat the song several times, fixing mistakes as they arise.

**Remember, in order to progress, the students need to know both when they are right and when they are wrong. Common mistakes for “Big Gross Bugs” include:**

**Using the same fingering pattern in measure 3 as in 1, 2, and 4.**

**Playing eighth notes with quarter note value.**

**Rushing eighth notes.**

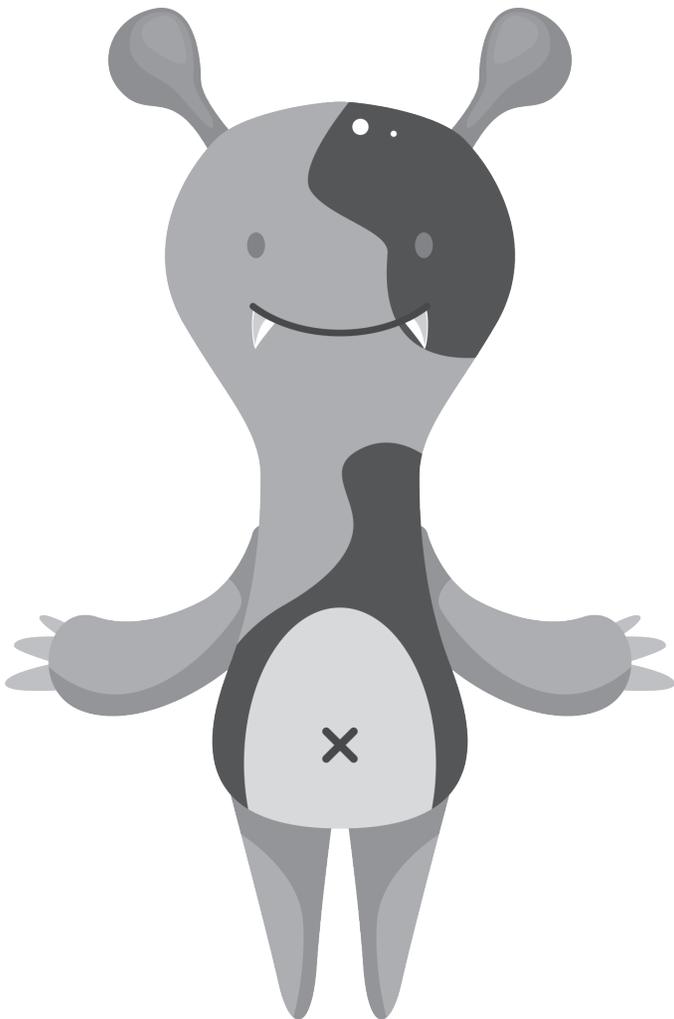
**Playing eighth notes in the final measure.**

## Know It & Show It

Have the class play the song again and then ask volunteers to determine what went well and what needs more work. Have them rate their skills using the Group Performance Reflection slip (located in the CD files).

## Moving On

Continue working with the other songs in Unit 1, on the next several pages. Once your class has learned all of the Unit 1 songs, it will be time to begin individual assessments for Monster Cards. Remember, a consort (for recorders only) and an ensemble (for recorders and classroom instruments) are also included in each unit. These can be taught as a culminating activity or can be prepared any time of year for performance. They are intended as supplemental material and do not introduce any new skills. You’ll find the scores for the consorts and ensembles in the last section of this book, and printable student parts on the CD.



# Monsters in the Moonlight/ Au Clair de la Lune

*Play 2 times*



Mon - sters in the moon - light, star - ing at the sky.  
Au clair de la lu - ne, mon a - mi Pier - rot.



They think that the moon is made of piz - za pie.  
Prê - te moi ta plu - me, pour é - crire en mot.

## Song Notes

CD tracks: Perf. 9, Acc. 10

Student page 8

Intro: 2 measures

Interlude: 2 measures

# Eating Garbage/Merrily We Roll Along

*Play 2 times*



Eat - ing gar - bage makes me burp, makes me burp, makes me burp.  
Mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, roll a - long, roll a - long.



Eat - ing gar - bage makes me burp, but it tastes so good!  
Mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, O'er the deep blue sea.

## Song Notes

CD tracks: Perf. 11, Acc. 12

Student page 9

Intro: 2 measures

Interlude: 2 measures

## Teacher to Teacher

### Structuring Lessons

There are many ways to structure teaching and learning the songs in *Recorder Monster*. Regardless of how you teach the songs, each lesson should begin with the warm-up routines and exercises for the first two Learning Targets in each unit. You should also devote some time to teaching the class how to sing each of the songs. From there, you can decide to continue in a whole-class format or let students work on their own or in small groups.

**Whole-Class Instruction:** Work through the songs sequentially all together. In this way, the students learn the songs and progress together. This strategy is best for classroom management, but it means that those who need more time to solidify basic skills may not be successful and those who are able to progress faster may not be challenged.

**Small Group or Individual Progress:** Allow individual students or small groups to choose which song or songs to master. This allows each child to progress at a pace that suits their learning style, but it can be chaotic and noisy. If you choose this strategy, be sure to have clear expectations about what is and is not an acceptable use of time.

Be sure to leave time for assessment at the end of each lesson.



## Assessment Strategies

### Monster Card Assessments

Ask students to perform for you, either individually or in small groups. It is usually possible to assess three or four students at a time. Since the songs are quite short, five to ten minutes should be plenty of time. When a student performs the song accurately, including rhythm, pitch, tone, and left hand on top, give that student a Monster Card to acknowledge his or her progress.

### Performance Rubric

You should also use a rubric. Rubrics allow both you and your students to break the big job of playing an instrument into small, manageable steps. In addition, they take the emotion out of performance assessments. Instead of saying, “That was wrong, try again,” you can tell the student which aspect of the rubric was not yet in place. Teach and post your performance rubric, then refer to it as you assess students’ performances.

A performance rubric can be found on the CD, and it has five points because my school’s report cards use a five-point system. These are the five criteria on which I evaluate my students (each is worth one point):

- Left hand on top
- Controlled sound
- Correct rhythms
- Correct melody
- Play fluently (without stopping)

You could adapt this rubric to match your report card.

### Classroom Management during Assessment

While you are assessing some students, those who are not playing for you will need clear guidelines as to what they can and cannot do. This could include allowing them to continue to practice, handing out a rhythm or pitch-reading worksheet, or some other activity that fits within your curriculum.

### Assessment Slips

You can also print Assessment Slips from the CD data files and give them to the students as they perform for you. This is another way to keep track of which skills each student needs to work on.

## Self-Assessment

Use the Group Performance Assessment (found on the CD) as a class. Then encourage your students to analyze their strengths and weaknesses using the Goal-Setting Sheet (available in the student book and separately on the CD).

## Managing Behavior

The recorder really can make a horrible sound. It is essential that students not be permitted to play disrespectfully. Keep your high expectations consistent, positive, and challenging.

When students don't follow expectations, there are typically three reasons:

- They don't know how to do what we are asking (inability).
- They don't care about doing what we are asking (ambivalence).
- They want to do the opposite of what we are asking (defiance).

When you hear a student consistently overblowing, before you issue a reprimand, do your best to determine the reason: inability, ambivalence, or defiance.

A student who is unable to do what you expect needs more individual attention. Re-teach the same material with different language; repeat the steps more slowly; or ask another student to help teach.

A student who is ambivalent probably lacks intrinsic motivation or feels incompetent. Sometimes the best way to develop intrinsic motivation is through extrinsic motivation. This is where the Monster Cards and silly lyrics come in. If everyone else is having fun, this child will be drawn in.

A student who is defiant needs quick, consistent, and non-confrontational consequences. I am not a fan of taking away instruments because it encourages work-avoidance; however, if possible, it is perfectly reasonable to remove the mouthpiece. If you are willing, you can prepare a practice recorder by using an inexpensive recorder and covering the mouthpiece with duct tape or adhesive Velcro. Using this strategy, the student is still expected to participate, but is unable to cause the same level of disruption.

### **“I don't know”**

**When calling on individual students, some will make a mistake or say they don't know the answer. When this happens, don't let the student avoid answering. Instead, ask for volunteers to help answer the question and have the student choose a classmate to answer. Then, have the student who did not know the answer repeat the right answer with a complete sentence: “The note on the bottom line is E.”**

