



Bumble-Bee Exercise

It's called the bumble-bee exercise because the buzzing sound created by a room full of clarinetists performing this exercise sounds like a swarm of bees.

The bumble-bee exercise teaches students what part of the tongue to use to touch the reed (tip of tongue) and how it feels to touch the reed correctly.

If you could put a camera in someone's mouth while they articulate correctly, then play that video in slow-motion, this exercise would be that video.

Preparatory Activity:

1. Stick your tongue out and point it. Touch the tip of your tongue with your finger.
2. Put your finger in your mouth. Tap your fingertip with the tip of your tongue.
3. Stick your tongue out and point it. Touch just below the tip of your reed with the tip of your tongue.
4. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth. Tap just below the tip of your reed with the tip of your tongue.

Bumble-Bee Exercise:

Play "haaaaaa" with no articulation on an open G. While your holding this note, lightly touch the pointed tip of your tongue to just below the tip of the reed. Keep pushing air through the instrument. Lightly remove the tongue from the reed. Continue this several times in a slow, steady tempo. If it tickles your tongue, you're doing it correctly.

After mastering the exercise on an open G, try it with 4th line D, G above the staff, altissimo C, and altissimo F. The higher the note, the harder to master! (requires lighter tip of tongue)

Troubleshooting

If your instrument stops responding, one or more of the following things is going on:

- You're not physically pushing the air through the instrument. Push lots of air through the instrument.
- You're too far back on your tongue. Move to the tip of the tongue.
- You're using too much tongue. Only use the very pointed tip of your tongue.
- You're pressing the reed too hard. Approach the reed lightly, and hold your tongue on the reed lightly.
- You're 'rebounding' as you push off the reed, like jumping up on a trampoline. Rather than pushing off the reed, simply remove your tongue from the reed.