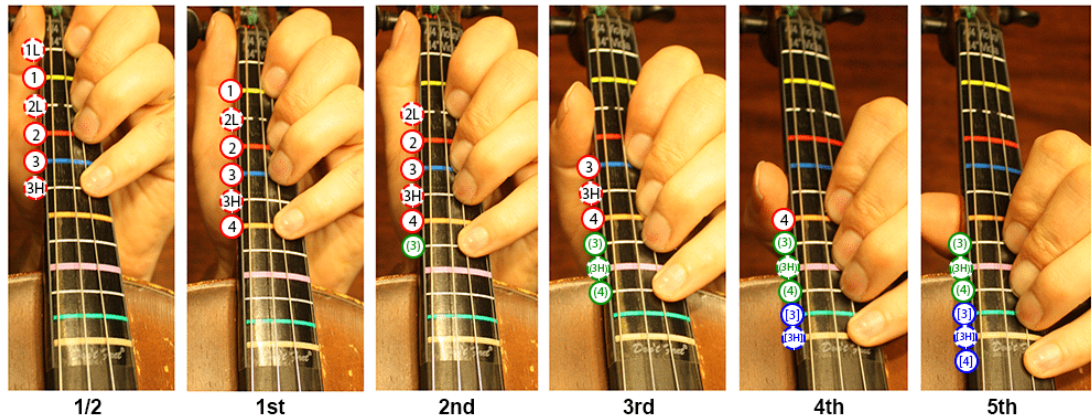


## String Reference Guide

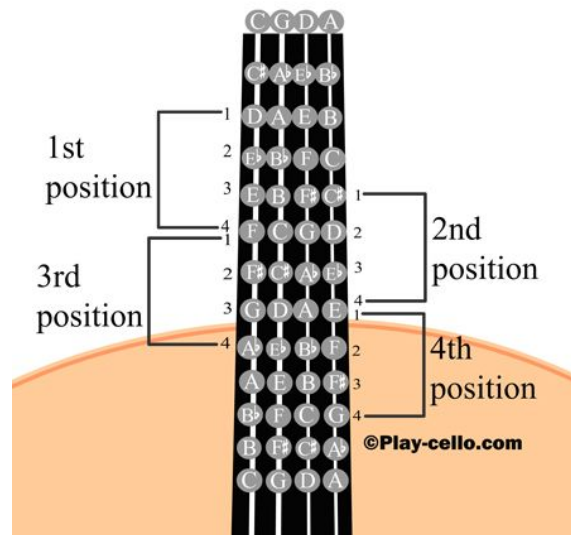
### Posture/position

- Violin/viola:
  - The instrument should rest on the collar bone, can use a shoulder pad if needed
  - Jaw/chin can rest on the chin rest **gently** – it is not intended to have a ton of pressure on it, just a point of stabilization
    - Students should be able to support the instrument with just these contact points – if too much of the weight is in the left hand they won't be able to move freely between notes/hand positions
  - Left hand position: The neck should rest on the first knuckle of the first finger of the left hand and be supported with the side of the thumb



- **Positions on the Violin** ©2015 BluegrassDaddy.com
- Right hand position: encourage students to start with a proper bow grip! French grip is a good standard grip to start with: Thumb and middle finger should provide the most support – think of the thumb connecting with the middle knuckle of the middle finger. Other fingers should gently rest on top. The tip of the pinky should rest on the top of the bow. Things that can help with this: “pinky houses” made of duct tape, corn pads for thumb placement
- Cello:
  - Cello players should sit on the front of their chair

- Body of the cello should rest on the chest, and the instrument should balance between the knees
  - Knees should steady the instrument but not squeeze it
- The neck should go to the left side of the head
- For a good estimate for height, the lowest tuning peg should line up with the ear (this doesn't work for every player, but is a good start – players can make adjustments as needed)
- Cello players will need an endpin rest so their instrument doesn't slip away from them – the easiest, most portable ones are a fabric strap and can be purchased at any music store
- Left hand position: similar to violin, needs more freedom of movement – fingers should be curved and relaxed, the neck should rest on the thumb but with very little pressure



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- Right hand position: same French grip and tools as violin, just held at a different angle
- Bass:
  - Bass players should play standing and will need to rotate the instrument slightly to the right in order to reach all the strings – instrument should rest on the left hip
    - Players can sit/lean on a stool if needed, but a chair won't work

- A good estimate for height is to have the top of the fingerboard lined up with the eyebrows (this will be different for different students – they can adjust as needed)
- Left hand position: bass players have to shift **a lot** – left hand should be relaxed and freely moving, neck should be supported by thumb



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- Right hand position: generally, bass players use German bow hold instead of the French bow hold previously mentioned. To create a German bow hold:
  - Have the student create a “hand shake” position and place the frog in the palm of their hand
  - Turn the bow sideways keeping this position, curve the fingers around, and have the index finger touch the thumb
  - Middle finger should rest against the index finger
  - Pinky should rest underneath the frog, touching the silver part of the bow (where the hairs are held in)

### String-specific musical terms

- Arco: bow on string
- Pizzicato (pizz): strings are plucked. A + indicates that left hand plucks the strings

- Upbow: bowing that starts at the tip and moves to the frog, indicated with a V
- Downbow: bowing that starts at the frog and moves to the tip, downbow symbol looks like an upside down U/eighth notes without the note heads
- Tremolo: one note is repeated over and over
- Trill: two alternating notes are repeated over and over
- Martele: hammered, sharp accent at start
- Spiccato: an off string, bouncing bow stroke
- Bow lift: breath mark for string players
- Colle: a very short, on string, pinched bow stroke (colle = glued)
- Detache: smooth but separated bow strokes
- Detache lance: detache with a slight accent at the beginning
- Flautando: bow slightly over the finger board (creates a flute-like sound)
- Jete: bow is “thrown” on the string and allowed to bounce in one direction
- Loure/Portato: gently pulsed legato notes in one bow stroke
- Multiple stops: notes are played on several strings (e.g. “double stop” means two strings are being played at once)
- Muted: play with a mute that clamps onto the bridge
- Portamento: a slide from one note to another
- Punta d’arco: to bow at the tip of the bow
- Ricochet: bow is allowed to bounce on the string
- Sautille: a light, bouncing bow stroke that is less percussive than spiccato
- Sul: “on the” or “near the”
- WB: whole bow
- LH: lower half
- UH: upper half
- MB: middle of bow

**Important concepts to teach (includes, but is not limited to the following)**

- TONE
- Differences between articulations

- Musical terms
- Transitioning between pizz and arco
- Transitions between left hand positions
- Bowing, bow direction
- Instrument care
- How to tune

### **Things to look out for**

- Long notes with a good sound are **hard** on string instruments – this will take a lot of time and attention
- It may take a while to move on to actual note reading and playing sheet music – it is advisable to begin with rote playing so students can focus on getting comfortable with posture, position, bow movement and creating sounds
- Instruments will break, sometimes during class – it’s important to know what things can be fixed in class and what things need to go to the repair shop
  - Examples:
    - Bridge pops off of a violin: can be fixed in class. Tuning peg is loose/comes out of an instrument: can be fixed in class. String breaks: can be fixed in class.
    - Any body damage (cracks in wood): needs to go to the repair shop
- Students will watch their fingers instead of looking at the conductor/the music – be sure to address this and use exercises that help them develop muscle memory
- Tapes for finger placements can be very helpful for beginner players, but work towards not relying on them and being able to remove them after a few years of study
- Students will want to “bear claw” grip the bow – they are capable of having a proper bow grip from the start! Give them the tools to have proper bow grip, because re-learning how to hold the instrument after they’ve established the fundamentals of the instrument is only going to hold them back
- Bass players will benefit greatly from a masterclass with an actual bass player – the bass involves the most left hand movement and shifting, and learning to do this in a

masterclass style from a professional will prevent your bass players from falling behind

- Some say it is beneficial to leave out dynamics until tone production becomes more comfortable – focusing on dynamics too early can sacrifice good tone production, which is one of the more complex parts of playing a string instrument