New student,

Welcome to your first year as an oboist! The oboe is a great instrument (I think it's the best instrument, but I admit I may be slightly biased), but it can also be a very challenging one, especially at the beginning. Most students find that there is at least one aspect of the oboe they struggle to master in their first year. My job is primarily to help and guide you in meeting these sorts of challenges, and if you face them with determination, and continue to work at them, you will overcome them.

About a year from now, when you're a seventh grader, you will be a performer. You will be auditioning with many other young oboists for a place in the selective region bands, you will be preparing a high-level solo for a solo contest, and you will be performing with a full band in performances and contests throughout the year. This is your year to learn how to play your instrument, and, because the habits you form this year, good or bad, will stay with you for some time, this will be in many ways the most important year of all for your oboe playing. If you work hard this year to master the fundamentals of playing the oboe (breathing and air support, embouchure, posture, hand position and technique, and reading and understanding music), you will reap the benefits in the years to come.

Included is a list of things you can do to help prepare before you get your oboe and start lessons, and the tools you need to do so. I recommend doing these, as I think they will help, particularly listening to the CD and the exercises with the pencil.

Also included is a list of goals for the end of your first semester of playing, around next December. I hope these will help you have a good idea of what you’re aiming for in the next few months, in all areas of playing. Please let me know if you have any questions!

I wish you the best of luck on this first step of your journey as a young oboist, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Ashley Rollins