Oboe Progress Checklist

Sixth grade, second semester

**AIR:**

I breathe from the bottom of my lungs and play with strong, fast air.

I can hold a note for at least 20 seconds without breathing. I easily play four measures at a time without breathing, and can do six or eight when necessary.

I keep my air support consistent independent of tonguing and fingering. I play a slow, slurred scale as part of my daily warm-up, and I focus on keeping my air consistent between notes so that it sounds as smooth as possible.

I keep my air strong in different registers (octaves), and am beginning to feel the slight changes that are helpful for different registers (faster, more focused air for high notes; strong, low-feeling air for low notes). I play an octave slur as part of my daily warm-up to work on this.

**POSTURE:**

I play with a good posture and oboe angle. I am especially careful not to duck my head when playing.

I carefully avoid excess tension when I play, especially in my neck and shoulders.

**EMBOUCHURE:**

I play with a good, round embouchure, using the corners of my mouth and keeping my teeth far away.

I can play a C and a B on the reed alone by moving the corners of my mouth (NOT using my teeth).

I do not take in too much reed as I play. I understand that different reeds prefer slightly different locations, and can experiment with slight changes to find the best place for each reed.

**HAND POSITION:**

I keep my fingers close and curved (including my pinkies). I play only with my fingertips, except when I am going between low C and low C# or low Bb and low B. My fingers are not tense.

**DYNAMIC CONTROL:**

I play a long tone on the oboe as part of my daily warm up. I can play very loud and very soft on the oboe, and I can transition between them without changing pitch or tone.

I am beginning to be able to control this even in high and low registers, and I sometimes choose high and low notes for my daily long tone(s) to work on this.

**ARTICULATION:**

I start notes (gently) with the tongue, unless they are under a slur. I tongue using the tip of my tongue on the tip of reed, and keep my tongue close. I can tongue low notes legato.

I can tongue eighth notes at at least 120 bpm, even on lower notes, for at least one measure of 4/4 time.

When a note is followed by a rest or is the last note of a piece, I end it with the air. I try to end these notes with a slight taper, as if I were singing a word that ended with "m." These endings are smooth and well-controlled, with no change in pitch or tone as the note tapers.

**INTONATION:**

I am usually in tune with others in my class, at least when I am playing in the middle and low ranges of the oboe.

I can tell when I am not in tune with others in my class, and I know how to make small changes to my pitch without resorting to a bad embouchure, and while keeping strong air support. I can change pitch on the reed alone (at least B and C), and understand that the same method will allow me to change pitch on the oboe.

I play octave slurs as part of my daily warm-up to help me learn to play in tune in the high register while maintaining an embouchure and air support that will still allow the low note to speak afterwords.

I play slow, slurred scales with a tuner playing a drone as part of my daily warm-up to develop my ear and my pitch (among other things). I listen closely to how each note lines up with the tuner drone. I am beginning to understand that I will have to play the third note of the scale lower to make it sound in tune with the drone.

When I play my daily long tone, my pitch is consistent in spite of the dynamic changes. I understand that it will be important to be able to play in tune at both loud and soft dynamics.

**VIBRATO:**

I am beginning to learn to use vibrato. I use throat vibrato, and am careful to make sure that no other parts of my body appear to be moving when I practice vibrato.

I practice using vibrato a little bit every day as part of my daily warm-up.

I am beginning to add vibrato to my daily long tone and slow scale.

**OBOE-SPECIFIC FINGERING ISSUES:**

I understand when each octave key (or half hole) should be used. I always play notes with the correct octave mechanism, and can transition between the different octave mechanisms smoothly. I take extra care to make sure my half hole key is always correct, and that the action of opening or closing the half hole does not trail behind the movement of the other fingers, especially during scales.

I understand what all of the pinky keys are for, am very comfortable using them when necessary, and never mix them up when I play.

I am comfortable with all three F's, and always play the appropriate fingering (when possible, I use right F. I only use forked F when absolutely necessary).

My pinkies prepare for upcoming notes beforehand, and when left F and Ab appear in close proximity, it doesn't cause me any problems.

I understand both Eb fingerings and when the left Eb is necessary. I can use the left Eb smoothly, with a curved pinky and no burbles between it and surrounding notes. I am particularly good at transitioning between left Eb and Db or forked F.

I can play between low Bb and low B, and low C and low C#, fairly smoothly and easily.

I know the fingerings for high C#, D, and Eb, and always get them correct when I play them in scales.

I transition between notes smoothly, without any extra burbles. If any issues appear, I know to stop and work on the specific fingering combination that is causing me trouble.

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP:**

I play all notes, rhythms, and articulations correctly. Even when I am sightreading, I can play notes, rhythms, and most articulations correctly.

I notice dynamics, often even when sightreading, and follow them.

I understand and can play rhythms including eight notes, dotted eighth notes, and sixteenth notes (and rests).

I understand that a dot changes a note's rhythm by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I can play in common time (\_\_/\_\_), cut time (\_\_/\_\_), 2/4, 3/4, 3/8, and 6/8. I understand that in fast 3/8 or 6/8 time, there are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ eighth notes per beat.

**SCALES:**

I can play all my major scales and my chromatic scale comfortably and without music within the range of low Bb to high Eb. I play my scales without using music, especially during my daily warm-up, and am comfortable enough with how a major scale should sound to know if I made a mistake from the sound of it.

I have memorized \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ (the circle of fourths), and I know how to use it to figure out the sharps or flats in a major key or scale.

I understand that key signatures and scales are related, and can recognize major key signatures on sight. I sometimes play the concurrent major scale before working on a piece to help make sure I am prepared to play in the right key (and also to get a bit of extra scale practice).

**INSTRUMENT CARE:**

I continue to be careful with my oboe and my reeds. I almost never break reeds, and I swab my oboe out after every time I play.

I understand what to do if I get water in a key.

**LESSONS AND PRACTICE:**

I practice daily (6 or 7 days each week), usually for at least 25-30 minutes.

I begin with a warm-up including a long tone (1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1) on the oboe, an octave slur played while watching the tuner (for example, low G--high G--low G, all slurred, with focus on good pitch on the high note and a smooth response on the low note following it.), and a very slow, slurred scale with the tuner playing a drone note (C for a C scale, G for a G scale, etc., with focus on tone, consistent air and embouchure, smooth transitions between notes, and good pitch, as well as good hand position and fingers).

I work a little on vibrato daily, often in front of a mirror.

I practice both my band and my lesson music daily, budgeting my time so that I have time for both.

When I practice, I try to notice specifically where each issue is, and come up with a plan to fix it.

I have tried using my lesson teacher's practice journal for at least one week, and try to keep those principles in mind, even when I'm not actually filling in the paper.

I have successfully completed my oboe lesson book.