



# Elements of Music Pedagogy

This material is based on a sort of odd book by Victor Wooten (See [References](#)). In this book, Wooten's eccentric teacher talks about the elements (see [his list](#), below). I've been giving my students a sort of "laundry list" of elements that one works with, in studying music, for quite some time, so this caught my attention.

I'm fairly certain more able people than myself have already done this, and I would appreciate feedback from readers. Please [email me](#) if you would like to share your ideas, make corrections or comments. Currently, I have as the elements of music (alphabetized but in no particular order of importance):

1. **Articulation:** Shape of a note or phrase. Basically three marks (and combinations thereof). The dot ( . ) which is staccato (short); the line ( - ) which is tenuto (stretched); and the accent ( > ) which is like a little punch at the beginning of a note. (Accent marks are the chevron pointing to the right.) Sometimes in an otherwise more or less staccato passage, the articulation line ( - ) is meant to give the note full length, where it is equivalent to tenuto. Sometimes, in combination with a slur, it means the notes are detached although played without a change in bow direction. Sometimes the line implies that some sort of weight should be given to the note. Sometimes it's composer-defined.
2. See: [Terminology: Common String Articulations](#)
3. **Conventions of notation:** The way that music is written on the page is important, but according to Wooten, is often the main focus of teachers, and it should not be. It is only one element, and not the most important one.

See:

- [Clef Signs](#)
- [Ornaments](#)
- [Non-Traditional String Sound Resources](#)
- [Glossary of Musical Terminology](#)
- [160 Flashcards for Strings & Piano Students](#)
- [Notation Texts](#)

4. **Dynamics:** Gradations of loud and soft.
5. See: [Dynamics](#)

6. **Form:** Overall shape of a piece, including repeated sections and development techniques.

See:

- [Forms](#)
- [Baroque Dance Forms](#)

7. **Harmony:** Vertical organization of notes. See [Harmony](#), Wikipedia.

See:

- [Chord Structures & Cadential Formulas](#)
- [Evaluating Intervals](#)
- [Circle of Fifths](#), pdf
- [Modes](#)
- [Non-Harmonic Tones](#), pdf
- [Theory & Ear Training Texts](#)

8. **Intonation:** In string pedagogy, the issues of playing "in tune."

9. See: [What is the best way to achieve good intonation in string playing?](#) - Violin/Viola FAQ

10. **Melody:** The horizontal element or "tune" - more prominent in Romantic era music than Baroque (for example). See [Melody](#), Wikipedia

11. **Phrasing:** Like sentences and paragraphs, musical statements have shapes. Most frequently, four bar phrases, but also the organization of 8, 16, etc. The shape of these phrases. See [Phrasing](#), Wikipedia

12. **Rhythm:** The beat, with all its subdivisions and organizations. See [Rhythm](#), Wikipedia

13. See: [Time Signatures & Conducting Patterns](#)

14. **Style:** Performance practice as it relates to the commonalities in style periods: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Contemporary, Post-Modern. [Note that "musicology" is a very broad term, and includes just about everything, including subject areas such as acoustics; it's not just music history, in other words. See: [Musicology](#), Wikipedia]

See:

- [Discussion: Contemporary Musicology](#)
- [Musicology](#) (includes date chart)
- [Early History of the Violin \(1520-1650\)](#)
- [J.S. Bach](#)
- [Grout History of Western Music: Outlines and Time Lines](#)

- [Research Tools](#) - Standard texts in Musicology

15. **Technique:** Physical gymnastic and muscular discipline associated with playing well, facilitated by the study of scales, arpeggios, études, etc.

See:

- [Analysis of Carl Flesch Scale System](#)
- [Violin/Viola, Piano: 3 octave fingerings](#)
- [Public Domain Materials for Intermediate Violin/Viola Students:](#) Trott, Ševčík, Sitt, Schradieck & Whistler
- [Piano Pedals](#)
- [Violin/Viola FAQ - Learning & Techniques](#)
- [Violin/Viola Fingerboard Chart](#)
- [Sight Reading for Rehearsal & Auditions](#)

16. **Tone quality:** The issue of producing beautiful sound on one's instrument/voice.

17. See: [How do I develop good sound production on the violin?](#) - Violin/Viola FAQ

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My list contrasts with Wooten's teacher's list, which includes:

1. Notes
2. Articulation
3. Technique
4. Feel [Ed. note: He probably says "feel" because the teaching in this case is bass guitar, which is specific time era related, versus the many style periods classically trained musicians study; so this might be equivalent to "Style" in my list.]
5. Dynamics
6. Rhythm
7. Tone
8. Phrasing
9. Space
10. Listening

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## References

[\*The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music\*](#), Victor L. Wooten

[\*Psychology for Musicians: Understanding and Acquiring the Skills\*](#), Andreas C. Lehmann, John A. Sloboda, Robert H. Woody

Samples of both of these are available via Kindle for free.