
The Study of Saxophone Year 4

First Higher Cycle (Years 4 to 7). A Nine-Year Course of Study for the Modern Saxophonist-Doubler —
Saxophone, Flute & Clarinet.

What Year 4 asks

EXAM REQUIREMENTS

1. Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords
2. Performance of selected piece for Saxophone and Piano
3. Performance of Etudes from selected method book(s)

THE YEAR

October to July, in two semesters.

Mid-term exam: early March.

Final exam: early July.

Daily practice: 4 to 5 hours a day (from the Fourth Year on, 3 to 6 hours a day; at least three hours on a bad day).

"This is a serious course in a serious conservatory, and unless you're gonna seriously engage, the conservatory is really not very impressed, and ... the backing and support and the endorsement of that student on the part of the conservatory is contingent upon their reciprocal engagement, following the recommendations of their teachers."

Saxophone students are required to complete the listed methods and satisfactorily present the required scale and arpeggio materials during each school year. Ten compositions will be chosen from each repertoire list and developed to a performance level. Repertoire for the jury examination should be selected in consultation with the student's teacher. Pieces not listed may be studied and performed with the permission of the teacher. Extensive participation in a saxophone quartet and with other instruments in the performance of chamber music and large wind ensemble is requisite for students who have attained an acceptable performance level.

Scales in the app

Exam: Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords. Each link opens in The Whole Horn, written for the student's own saxophone.

1

Exam requirement 1 · Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords

Scales: all 12 Major and Harmonic minor · $\text{♩} = 60$ · full range · Full Studio; two octaves on the free app

Open in the app

2

Exam requirement 1 · Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords

Arpeggios in the Major keys: Tonic, then Dominant 7th · $\text{♩} = 60$ · full range · Full Studio; two octaves on the free app

Open in the app

3

Exam requirement 1 · Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords

Arpeggios in the Harmonic minor keys: Tonic, then Dominant 7th · $\text{♩} = 60$ · full range · Full Studio; two octaves on the free app

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4

Exam requirement 1 · Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords

Diatonic 4ths: all 12 Major and Harmonic minor scales · $\text{♩} = 60$

Open in the app

Scales in the app

Exam: Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords. Each link opens in The Whole Horn, written for the student's own saxophone.

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Exam requirement 1 · Performance of all Major and Harmonic minor scales to include diatonic 4ths, 5ths, arpeggiated Tonic and Dominant 7th chords
Diatonic 5ths: all 12 Major and Harmonic minor scales · ♩ =60

Open in the app

6

All Major and Harmonic minor scales, with Tonic and Dominant 7th arpeggios
all 12 keys · two octaves · ♩ =60 · arpeggios in the app: major keys (tonic and V7)

Open in the app

7

Diatonic 4ths: all Major and Harmonic minor scales
all 12 keys · two octaves · ♩ =60

Open in the app

8

Diatonic 5ths: all Major and Harmonic minor scales
all 12 keys · two octaves · ♩ =60

Open in the app

9

Watch the video · 24 s
thewholehorn.com/curriculum/study-of-saxophone/year-4/

Watch the video

Methods

The Study of Saxophone · Year 4

Core Methods

Meriot, 12 Etudes Atonales
Berbiguier, 18 Etudes Mélodiques
Busser, 12 Etudes Mélodiques
Decouais, 35 Etudes Techniques
Salviani-Iasilli, Exercises in All Practical Keys
Charlie Parker Omnibook

Additional Methods

Mintzer, 15 Easy Jazz Blues and Funk Etudes (Bb)
Rossari, 53 Melodious Etudes for Saxophone or Oboe
Niehaus, Developing Jazz Concepts
Ferling, 48 Etudes
Niehaus, Intermediate Jazz Conception for Saxophone
Niehaus, Jazz Conception for Saxophone Duets
Hite, Melodious Progressive Studies for Saxophone
Niehaus, Basic Jazz Conception, Vol. 2
Voxman, Selected Advanced Studies for Saxophone
Voxman, Selected Studies for Saxophone
Teal, Solos for the Alto Saxophone Player
Haerle, The Jazz Language Method

Repertoire

The Study of Saxophone · Year 4

Core Repertoire

Koechlin, 15 Etudes for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Bach, Suite d'Orchestre en Ut for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Ibert, Histoires for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Jolivet, Fantasia Impromptu for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Lacour, Noctilienne for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Alessandrini, Piazzolino for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Additional Repertoire

Bitsch, Villageoise for SOLO Alto Saxophone

Bozza, Aria for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Debussy, Saxophone Album for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Debussy, Syrinx for SOLO Saxophone

Eccles, Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Françaix, Cinq Danses Exotiques — Baião for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Ibert, Aria for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Ibert, Histoires for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Ravel, Pièce en forme de Habanera for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Tomasi, Introduction et Danse for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Whitney, Rumba for Alto Saxophone and Piano

The Doubler's Path

Start flute in Years 3–4. Start clarinet in Years 4–5. Both instruments are lifelong companions, not temporary hurdles.

Flute — Introduced Years 3–4

Method books:

Trevor Wye, Practice Books for the Flute, Vols. 1–5

Marcel Moyse, De la Sonorité

Taffanel & Gaubert, 17 Daily Exercises

Repertoire entry points:

Bach, Flute Sonatas BWV 1030–1035

Telemann, Fantasias for Solo Flute

Hindemith, Sonata for Flute and Piano

Fauré, Fantasia for Flute and Piano

The flute is where classical technique is refined and a second embouchure vocabulary is built. The crossover with saxophone breathing and support is significant. Do not treat flute as a shortcut — it is a separate discipline that demands separate daily practice.

Clarinet — Introduced Years 4–5

Method books:

Klosé, Celebrated Method for Clarinet

Baermann, Complete Method, Vol. 3

Rose, 32 Etudes and 40 Studies

Cavallini, Caprices

Repertoire entry points:

Weber, Concerto No. 1 and Concerto No. 2

Mozart, Clarinet Concerto K. 622

Brahms, Sonatas Op. 120

Stravinsky, Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo

Clarinet demands a fundamentally different embouchure, a single-reed response that is more exposed than saxophone, and a tone production philosophy that is its own. The saxophonist who plays clarinet with saxophone habits sounds like a saxophonist pretending. Study it right: from the ground up, with a clarinet teacher if possible, at least in the early stages.

Desired Competency

Years 4 to 8

Deepening skills acquired in the Preparatory Cycle

air column / breathing
development of a personal, mature sound
articulation
rhythmic, digital and timbral homogeneity
accuracy
flexibility
nuance
intonation
vibrato

And

Fluidity of technique as well as knowledge of alternative fingerings.
Ability to play "extreme" nuance, to tune alone, to control and correct intonation.
Ability to memorize music.
Sight-reading at the level of "working musicians."
Knowledge, technical facility, and musical maturity in contemporary music.
Understanding and application of the wide variety of music notation in contemporary music.
Knowledge and practice of chord-scale relationships; Jazz improvisation.
Listening skills, Jazz phrasing, memorization of easy jazz standards, and the ability to transcribe solos.
The history of the saxophone, the different epochs and styles, and important figures.
Understanding and application of descriptive and analytical vocabulary.
Ensemble performance — piano accompaniment — chamber music — ensemble of saxophones — orchestra, Jazz combos and Jazz ensembles — knowing how to conduct a set and a rehearsal.
Perform in public as a soloist.
Participate on a stage.
Promote general musical culture by listening to and performing music of all kinds.

Desired Competency in the app

Years 4 to 8. Each link opens in The Whole Horn, written for the student's own saxophone.

1

air column / breathing
Long tones: breathing and one steady note

Open in the app

2

development of a personal, mature sound
Long tones, then Overtones & voicing

Open in the app

3

articulation
The Milestone (articulation) · ♩ =60

Open in the app

4

rhythmic, digital and timbral homogeneity
All 12 Major scales in quarters, eighths, triplets and 16ths · ♩ =60 · full range · Full Studio; two octaves on the free app

Open in the app

Desired Competency in the app

Years 4 to 8. Each link opens in The Whole Horn, written for the student's own saxophone.

5

flexibility
Overtones & voicing

Open in the app

6

nuance
Long tones: soft → full → soft (messa di voce)

Open in the app

7

intonation
Long tones, then Lock-On (tune two tones until the beating stops), level 1

Open in the app

8

vibrato
Vibrato

Open in the app

Desired Competency in the app

Years 4 to 8. Each link opens in The Whole Horn, written for the student's own saxophone.

9

Ability to play "extreme" nuance, to tune alone, to control and correct intonation.
Long tones (nuance), then Lock-On (tuning alone), level 1

[Open in the app](#)

10

Knowledge and practice of chord-scale relationships; Jazz improvisation.
Chord-scale: the ii-V-I, then its scales: Dorian (ii), Mixolydian (V), Major (I), all 12 keys · ♩ =60 · full range · Full Studio; two octaves on the free app on the scales

[Open in the app](#)

11

Listening skills, Jazz phrasing, memorization of easy jazz standards, and the ability to transcribe solos.
Listening: Name It (hear two notes or a chord, name it), level 1

[Open in the app](#)

12

Listening skills, Jazz phrasing, memorization of easy jazz standards, and the ability to transcribe solos.
Listening: Chord Colors (hear a chord, name its color), level 1

[Open in the app](#)

Make it yours

Every link here is a starting point. To change one, open For Teachers in The Whole Horn, set the key, tempo or hours, add your own sentence, make the link, and paste it over ours. This is one year of The Study of Saxophone. The whole course, from the Preparatory Year to Year 9, is on thewholehorn.com.

This is a living framework. Use it as a foundation, adapt it to your context, and revise it as new resources emerge.

thewholehorn.com/study-of-saxophone