

Solo & Ensemble Contest

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Solo & Ensemble Contest?

Solo & Ensemble Contest is an annual event that takes place throughout the country in which students prepare their own performances either by themselves or with a small group of friends. These performances are evaluated by a judge and scored against a rating system. At the middle school level, students are given a rating and comments, but not ranked against other students. At the high school level, the top players in each instrument category qualify to perform at the State Solo Contest.

What are the benefits of Solo & Ensemble Contest?

Your individual musical abilities will improve because you are now solely responsible for your part. Your rhythmic precision, note accuracy, and tone quality will all improve from playing alone on your part. You will be critiqued by an expert on your instrument who will give you specific feedback on how you can improve your playing. Your experience playing at solo contest will help you become a musical leader within your band. Thus, the more students we have at Fowler who participate in Solo & Ensemble Contest, the better our band will sound!

Are private lessons required to participate in Solo & Ensemble Contest?

No, but they are **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED**. A private instructor can both help you select a solo that best suits your current ability level, and then help you prepare that solo for the contest. The one-on-one guidance a private instructor offers simply cannot be matched working on your own or with occasional help from your band director. As a side note, private lessons are **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** for everyone in band anyway. One-on-one instruction with an expert on your instrument is the most effective way to learn to play your instrument well. If you are not taking private lessons now, but would like to, see Mr. VanDyke for a list of recommended instructors for your instrument. Private lessons are good!

Do I need a piano accompanist to participate at Solo & Ensemble Contest?

Yes. If your solo has a piano accompaniment part, it should be played. Some solos (usually percussion) do not use piano accompaniment. Most solos, however, are truly duets between the soloist and the accompanist. Without the accompaniment, vital harmony parts will be missing that will prevent your solo from sounding its best and make it less interesting for you to play. In addition, a good accompanist can help you keep in time and play more in tune as well. In short, a good accompanist makes you sound better.

Should I participate in Solo & Ensemble Contest?

Yes! Talk to your private instructor for assistance in selecting and preparing a piece for this year's contest!