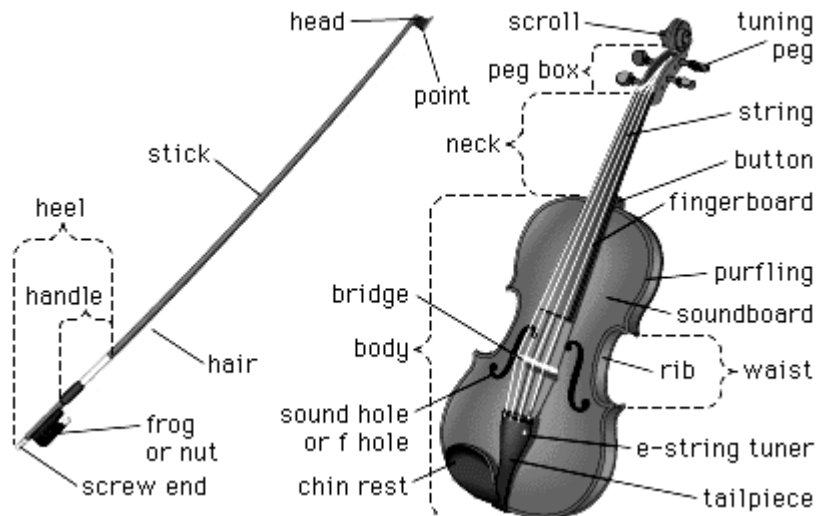


The Viola

What the parts are called:



Fun Facts:

- The viola (pronounced "vee-oh-luh") is the second highest string instrument!
 - It is played just like a violin, but it is a little bigger!
- The viola makes a rich, warm sound that is lower in pitch than a violin!
 - There is only one viola in a string quartet!
 - In an orchestra, the viola section has 8 - 10 players!
- The body of a viola averages between 14.5 and 16.5 inches long (some are even bigger)!

How the sound is made:

The musician, called a "violinist" or "vee-oh-list", can make sounds in two ways. The first way is to push or pull a "bow" (a separate piece of wood-and-horse-tail-hair) across the strings of the viola, making the strings vibrate! The second way to make sound is to use a finger on the right hand to pluck the string (like a guitar player). This causes the strings to vibrate, which creates a very different kind of sound! Since the main body of the viola is hollow, it helps to make the sound loud enough for everyone to hear!

How the pitch changes:

The pitch (how high or low the viola sounds) depends on the length of the

strings. The violist uses the fingers of his or her left hand to change the length of the string. When the string gets shorter by putting more fingers down, then the pitch is higher; when the string gets longer by lifting fingers up, then the pitch gets lower. The violist can shift his or her left hand into multiple positions along the fingerboard on the viola to change the pitch of the string. The four strings are each tuned to a different pitch, allowing the violist to play a lot of different notes!

Music featuring the viola:

Johannes Brahms: Excerpt from Hidden Longing (song for viola, mezzo soprano & piano)
(cd track 14)

The Viola



Tucson Symphony Orchestra