

## CLARINET

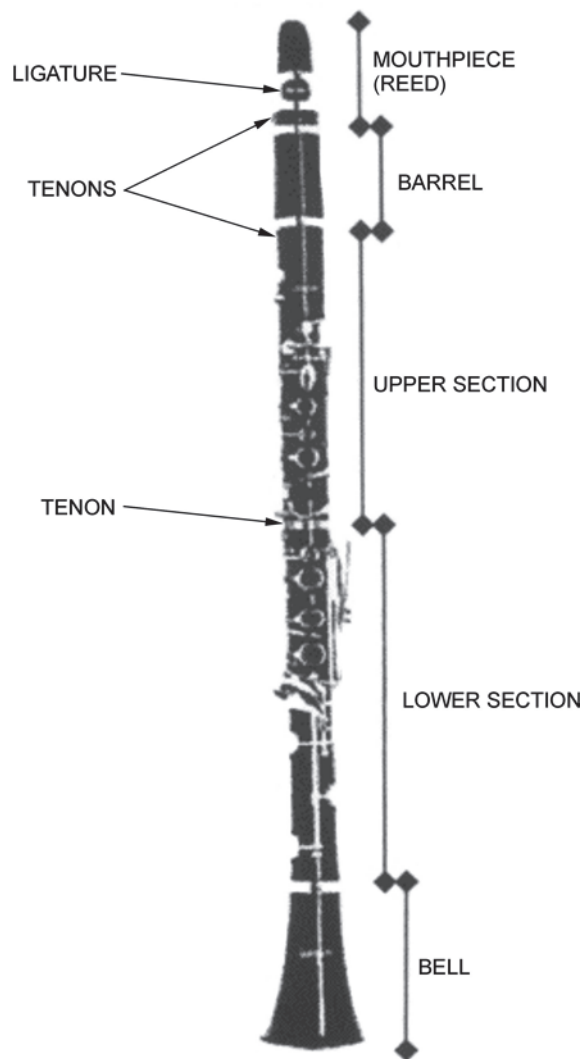


Figure 8 The Parts of the Clarinet

*Note.* Created by Director Cadets 3, 2004, Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence.

The clarinet must be held carefully so undue pressure is not put on the key mechanisms.

### Assembly

To assemble the clarinet, use the following steps:

1. Set the instrument case on a flat and stable surface. Make sure the case is facing up. The case latches are the best indication to verify this. Open the case.
2. Apply cork grease to the cork tenons.
3. Hold the bell with the right hand and the lower section with the left hand.
4. Gently push the bell and the lower section together in a twisting motion.

5. Hold the lower section with the right hand and the upper section with the left hand.
6. Press down on the rings on the upper section to raise the bridge key. Gently push both sections together in a twisting motion while paying attention to the bridge key. Line up both parts using the bridge key.
7. Hold the upper section with the right hand and the barrel with the left hand.
8. Gently push the upper section and the barrel together in a twisting motion. Remove the ligature and the cap from the mouthpiece.
9. Hold the barrel with the right hand and the mouthpiece with the left hand.
10. Gently push the barrel and the mouthpiece together in a twisting motion.
11. Line up the centre of the flat side of the mouthpiece with the register key on the bottom of the clarinet.
12. Loosen the screws on the ligature.
13. Place the ligature on the mouthpiece.
14. Moisten the reed by putting the thin end in the mouth or a container of water.
15. Holding the reed with the thumb and forefinger, place the reed, stock first, between the mouthpiece and the ligature.
16. Slide the ligature down so the top edge of the ligature is in line with etched guidelines on the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece does not have guidelines, line up the top edge of the ligature with the bottom of the reed's cut.
17. Align the reed so both the bottom and the top are in line with the mouthpiece.
18. Align the tip of the reed with the end of the mouthpiece so a black hairline is visible behind the reed.
19. Tighten the screws on the ligature to hold the reed firmly in place. Do not tighten the ligature.



Many types of ligatures exist for clarinets. Most are metal with two screws on the bottom of the mouthpiece but some ligatures have their screws on the top of the mouthpiece while others have only one screw or are made of synthetic or real leather. Before the invention of the modern ligature, clarinet reeds were held in place with a piece of string wound around the mouthpiece.



It is very common for clarinet players to break their reeds by placing the reed on the mouthpiece before placing the ligature on the mouthpiece. The tip of the reed is fragile and it will break if it is out of place as the ligature is placed on the mouthpiece.

### Disassembly

The disassembly process is the reverse of the assembly process.

## Storage

Most clarinet cases are designed to fit only the instrument, a few reeds and maintenance supplies. Storing anything else in the case may cause damage to the instrument.



Never try to pull a stuck swab out. Further attempts to pull out the swab will eventually wedge it further into the bore. A stuck swab should be removed by moving it in the direction it entered the instrument with a thin stick made of wood or plastic to avoid scratching the interior of the instrument.

## Maintenance

Steps to swab a clarinet:

1. Blow air in through the wide end of the reed to remove moisture and place the reed in the storage case.
2. Remove the mouthpiece and wipe the inside dry with a piece of soft cloth.



Figure 9 Swabbing the Mouthpiece

*Note.* From *Guide to Teaching Woodwinds* (5th ed.) (p. 157), by F. Westphal: McGraw-Hill, 1990, Sacramento, CA: McGraw-Hill. Copyright 1962 by Frederick W. Westphal.

3. Drop the weighted end of the swab into one end of the barrel and pull it through.
4. Drop the weighted end of the swab into the bottom of the upper section and pull it through.
5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4, two or three times.
6. Drop the weighted end of the swab into the bottom of the lower section and pull it through.
7. Repeat Step 6, two or three times.
8. Wipe the bell with a clean cloth.

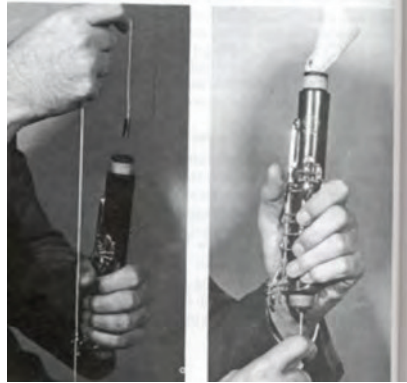


Figure 10 Swabbing Clarinet Joints

*Note.* From *Guide to Teaching Woodwinds* (5th ed.), (p. 108), by F. Westphal, 1990, Sacramento, CA: McGraw-Hill.  
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