Brass grades: requirements & information

unable to help with page-turning. In a Grade 8 exam, a candidate’s accompanist is permitted to bring a page-turner to assist with page-turns in the piano part (prior permission is not required).

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Scales and arpeggios

Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each type of scale/arpeggio etc. required at each grade, as well as aiming to hear a balance of the specified articulations. They will also ask trombone, baritone, euphonium and tuba candidates if they are bass- or treble-clef readers.

When asking for requirements, examiners will specify only:

- the key (including minor form – harmonic or melodic – in the Grade 6–8 scales) or the starting note
- the articulation

All scales and arpeggios should:

- be played from memory
- be played from the lowest possible tonic/starting note, unless the syllabus indicates otherwise*
- ascend and descend according to the specified range
- be played without undue accentuation and at a pace that is consistent with accuracy and distinctness

The choice of breathing place is left to the candidate’s discretion, but taking a breath should not disturb the flow of the scale or arpeggio.

Arpeggios and dominant sevenths are required in root position only.

For transposing instruments, the naming of scales applies to the notation, not the concert pitch; for example, D major for trumpet in B♭ will sound in C, not D.

Books of the scale requirements are published for all brass instruments by ABRSM.

Below is the pattern for the whole-tone scale, set for all instruments at Grade 8:

* Disregarding additional lower notes available to trombones with a trigger or to baritones, euphoniums and tubas with a 4th valve