

# The Mighty Ukulele

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## Gemini (AI): Why Ukulele?

The ukulele is a fun and easy-to-learn instrument that opens up a whole world of music! In elementary school, we learn to play the ukulele because it helps us understand how music works. We learn to read simple music, understand chords, and develop our rhythm and timing. Playing the ukulele also boosts our confidence and creativity. It's like learning a secret code that lets us express ourselves through music. Plus, it's a great way to make friends and have fun with music together!

## 3 Approaches to Ukulele

- Ukulele as accompaniment
- Ukulele as recorder replacement
- Ukulele as solo instrument

Your end goal for ukulele will determine your approach!

## What is Needed for Ukulele:

- Ukuleles
  - Concert scale, school climate & use appropriate
  - Aquila KIDS strings (recommended)
  - Leather Picks (recommended)
  - Straps available (and strap buttons)
  - Labels
  - Storage

## What is Needed for Ukulele (continued):

- Tools (recommended)
  - Jovoom Smart Tuner T2 (also: Roadie and Enya)
  - String Winder/Clipper
  - Work Mat & Head Rest (e.g. Music Nomad)
  - Music Nomad Octopus Tool
  - 10mm Open End Wrench
  - Clip On Tuner (TC Electronics)
  - String Action Gauge
  - Laminate Ukulele Needs:
    - Sanding Sponge
    - 0000 Steel Wool
    - Fretboard Lemon Oil or Music Nomad F One
    - Titebond Original
    - JB Weld (Plastic Ukuleles)
    - Elmer's School Glue (Nuts)
- Skills
  - Changing strings (tie bar, slotted, pull through)
  - Dealing with sharp fret ends
  - How to adjust action (0.5mm @ 1st fret, generally 2.65mm @12th fret)
  - Cleaning (microfiber cloth)
  - String change maintenance (fretboard, frets, and bridge)
  - Be ahead of your students.
- Resources
  - Projector and Sound System
  - Chordette (Font: UkeFarm)
  - Assistive Devices
  - High G, Low G, Campanella
  - Strumming
    - Where to strum
    - How to strum
    - Strumming patterns
      - Play the right chord at the right time
      - Keep a steady tempo
      - Choose a pattern that fits the style of music

## What is Needed for Ukulele (continued):

- Resources (continued)
  - The tricky “G” Chord
    - Plant 2
    - Stress the frequent use of the chord
    - “Gateway” to harder chords
  - Left Handed Students
    - Right handed
    - Left handed
    - Right handed played left
  - Barre Chords
    - Pull, don’t pitch
    - Start at the 5th Fret
  - Which Chords?
    - One finger? (C, Am, F9, C7)
    - Key of C? (C, F, G7, Am)
    - Frequency of Use?
    - My Solution: Modified Frequency of Use
      - C, F, G, G7, Am, D, Em, etc.

## Teaching Ukulele

- Assign ukuleles to specific students
- Teach tuning, but do not allow K-8 to tune
- Noodling: know your level of tolerance
- Some students will only play Am7 (C6). They are still playing and participating
- Keep it fun
- Cater to the interests and musical tastes of your students, as well as their purposes for learning the instrument!
- If I were teaching music theory, I would teach harmonic analysis via ukulele
- Teach about the history of the instrument
- Teach the parts of the ukulele
- Make or find a rubric
  - Chords
  - Rhythm
  - Posture
  - Participation
  - Composition
  - Content
    - History of the Ukulele
    - Parts of the Ukulele
    - Expectations
    - Identifying Chords
  - Use AI to make rubrics!

## Dr. Russell’s Practices

- Assessments are in two areas
  - Performance: Use Skill Drills and let students choose level/score
  - Composition: Make a song or tutorial showing how to play the chords in a song, then play that song
  - Use of Video (Canva)
- Video Ukulele Method based on the Frequency of Chords
  - Available as Google Slides via [buymeacoffee.com/ukestuff](http://buymeacoffee.com/ukestuff)

## Want to Do Some Arranging?

- Use notation AND tablature
- Various music notation applications allow for this, some are better than others.
  - iPad: Notion or Dorico
  - Windows/Mac: Dorico, MuseScore, Notion
  - Multi-Platform: Flat.io, Music Snippet (Good Slides and Docs Add-on), Noteflight

## Christopher J. Russell, Ph.D.

- Blog, materials, method: [ukestuff.info](http://ukestuff.info)
- Play along videos: [YouTube.com/ukeplayalongs](https://www.youtube.com/ukeplayalongs)
- Other ukulele videos: [YouTube.com/ukestuff](https://www.youtube.com/ukestuff)
- Searchable index: [ukeability.org](http://ukeability.org)
- Technology in Music Education: [techinmusiced.com](http://techinmusiced.com).

