

## Starting a Ukulele Program in Your Classroom Part 1 of 6

# Why Teach Ukulele?

by [Sam Marchuk](#) | Oct 10, 2017 | [Ukulele](#)



Are you looking to start a [ukulele program](#) in your school but not sure where to start? You don't need to be an accomplished guitar/ukulele player or have a big budget to add ukulele to your curriculum. Here is what you need to know if you are considering starting ukulele with your students:

## Ukuleles are Educational

Many skills are developed that are essential not only for creating music, but in learning other subjects while building character, and responsibility, too!

***Musicianship:*** Students will learn tuning, strumming/rhythm, accompaniment, melody, singing, hand coordination, sight-reading, and many other skills while learning the ukulele.

***Mathematics:*** Students can see the string becoming shorter in length to create a higher pitch. As another example, the open A string makes the note because it vibrates at a frequency of 440 Hertz. If you fret this same string exactly halfway up the fretboard, it results in the string vibrating twice as much at the frequency of 880 hertz, the A note an octave above.

***History:*** Students learn about history with the development of the instrument, how it is made, how sound is produced, and what events were occurring at the time.

***Culture:*** Students can learn about the origins of the instrument, its history, and the culture of the music being experienced.



*Social Skills:* Students assist classmates with learning, develop teamwork in playing together, and creativity in making their own songs!

*Responsibility:* Students learn how to care for their instrument, track their practice time, and monitor their progress.

## Ukuleles are Affordable

Ukuleles for your classroom do not require a significant investment to start and can cost a fraction of the amount you could spend on a set of guitars. With excellent quality instruments beginning at just under \$40 each, a full classroom set of 25 instruments can be purchased for under \$1000.

West Music offers discounts for classroom sets and can create a custom package to meet your specific requirements and budget needs. On leaner budgets, some teachers may have students share a ukulele, making ten ukuleles sufficient for use among 20 students, for example. This can be an excellent opportunity for the students to work on movement or rhythm skills while awaiting their turn on the ukulele.

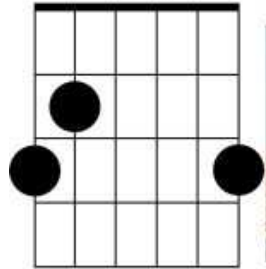

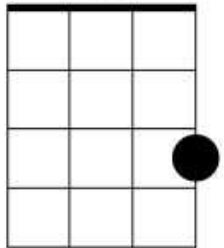

Many educational grants and other funding opportunities are available to help teachers fund instruments for their classroom. Be sure to check out West Music's Funding Resource page for ways to expand your classroom materials: [edufund.westmusic.com](http://edufund.westmusic.com).



## Ukuleles are Easy to Learn...and the Perfect Lead-in to Guitar

Because of its smaller size, the ukulele is more comfortable to hold than a guitar. The ukulele uses the same fingerings as guitar, but with only 4 strings instead of the guitar's 6 strings. This makes learning how to play chords much simpler, allowing the student to focus on individual skills such as strumming, than combining chord changes with more complex finger positions on a guitar.

For example, the major C chord on the ukulele requires one finger to be positioned on a single string, whereas the same chord would require three fingers, all on separate strings, on a guitar. Here is an example, showing 3 fingers to make the same chord shape on guitar, versus only 1 finger on ukulele:

<p><b>G</b></p>  	<p><b>C</b></p>  
<p><b>Open G Chord on Guitar Requires Three Fingers</b></p>	<p><b>Open C Chord on Ukulele Requires Only One Finger to Play</b></p>



Plus, the ukulele's softer, all-nylon strings are much easier on the tips of beginner's fingers than guitar's steel strings. All of the skills learned are transferable too...if you can play the ukulele, you can use the same techniques to play guitar!

## **Ukuleles are Versatile**

The ukulele is an instrument students can play alone or with a group, regardless of the skill level or genre. Plus, it can be used to accompany while singing or with other instruments, songwriting, or alone with instrumental arrangements.

## **Ukuleles are Portable**

With all of the fun, your students will have, they will want to take it everywhere – which is easy to do with the convenient size of ukulele!

## **Ukuleles are Fun...for Life!**

Students are enthusiastic to learn such a diverse instrument that can be used to express and discover themselves through music. Because of its versatility and similarity to guitar, ukulele players can use their skills to enjoy making music outside of the classroom and throughout the rest of their lives.

With so many benefits, it is easy to see why ukulele is becoming a staple in classrooms across the nation. Time and time again I have heard from many of our classroom teachers, informing us the ukulele class is the highlight not only for them but for their students as well. This level of enthusiasm has helped spawn after-school ukulele groups and other extra-curricular activities.

**Don't be left out — Let us know what we can do to assist with a ukulele program in your school! Contact a West Music Education Consultant at 800-397-9378, and we can help you equip your classroom.**