

# Tongue-Tied? A Guide to Flute Articulation for the Music Educator



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*p*

*sempre stacc.*

*P.*

*cresc.*

*dim.*

*pp*

He Geist! Wo geht  
die Reise hin?  
*attaca*

Moderately fast, with vigor (d 88-92)

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The first measure contains a half note chord with a slur over it. The second measure is a quarter rest. The third measure begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and contains a quarter note chord. The rest of the staff consists of eighth notes and chords.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Continues the eighth-note pattern from the previous staff.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Continues the eighth-note pattern.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Continues the eighth-note pattern.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Continues the eighth-note pattern. The final measure features a circled letter 'A' above a half note chord, followed by a slur over a half note chord. The piece concludes with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking.

# Inherent Challenges with Flute Articulation



- **Why is teaching flute articulation so...tricky?**
  - a. It's just HARD to make a sound on at the beginning
  - b. No air resistance
  - c. Students learn to move air first without the aid of the tongue
  - d. Trying on their own adds tension
  - e. Teachers default to consonant default

# Step 1: Correct Flute Breathing



- Placement and understanding of the spine and ribs
- Find your lungs!
- “HA-WAI-I” breath

# Step 2: Correct Flute Sound

## Three Pillars to Great Flute Tone

### a. Air Direction

- a. Placement of air column changes for range (down for low, across for middle, high for high, all supported by the "wet part" of the lip, the bottom especially)

### b. "Air Reed"

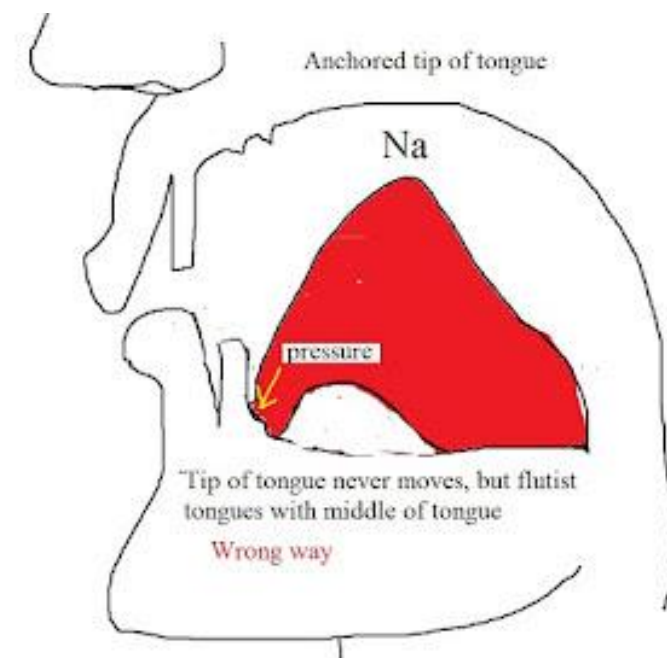
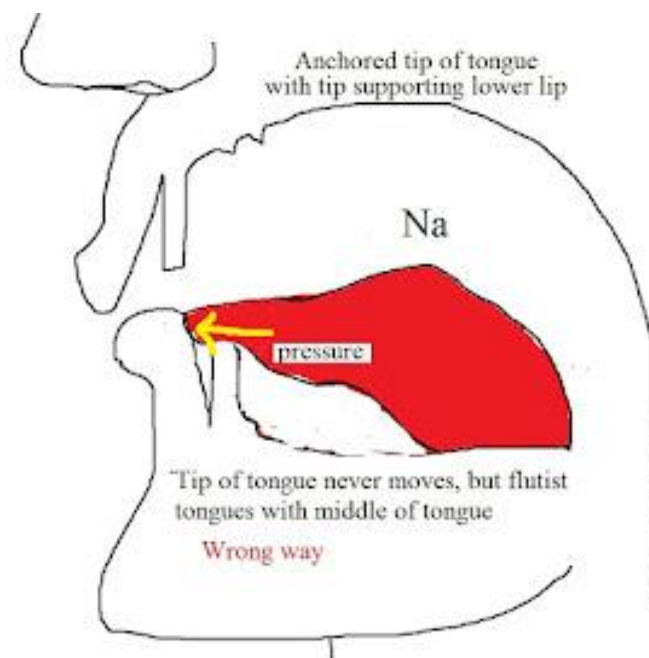
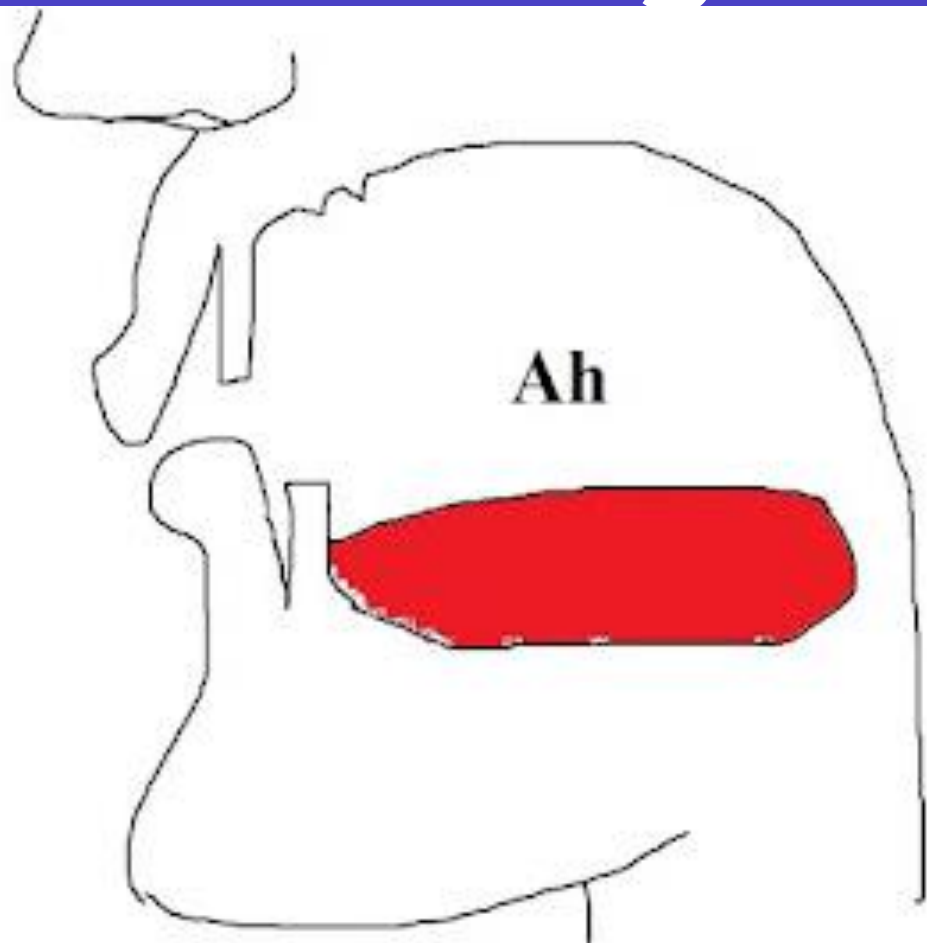
- a. The vibrative column that spins into the flute cannot be too short

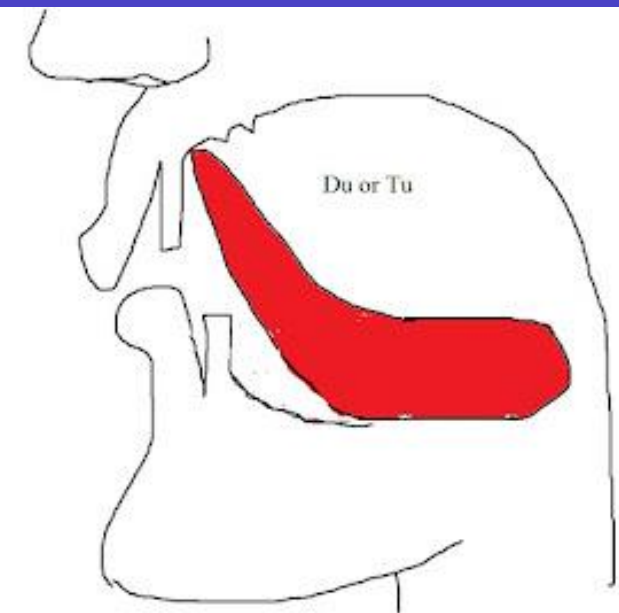
### c. Contact

- a. Three points of contact on the flute



# Step 3: Body Mapping the Face/Tongue





## Step 4: Isolating the Air Attack

### Tongue in the right place...but now where do we strike?

- Where does the tongue strike? (alveolar ridge)
- How does the tongue strike? (As little tongue area as possible)

### “Hah” Air Attacks to “Tah”

Say first, then play...

hah hah hah hah tah tah tah tah

**Step 4B:  
Diagnosing  
the Air  
behind the  
Tongue**

The image displays three staves of musical notation in a single system, all in treble clef and B-flat major. The first staff, starting at measure 9, features a red slur over a sequence of notes: B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, and C4. The second staff, starting at measure 13, repeats the same note sequence with the syllable 'hah' written below each note. The third staff, starting at measure 17, repeats the same note sequence with the syllable 'tah' written below each note. Each staff concludes with a whole rest in the final measure.

# Educator Aside: Stop Consonants, Glottal Consonants, and Resultant Vowels

- Oral Stop Consonants: "T" & "D"
- Velar Stop Consonants: "K" & "G"
- Resultant Vowels: "T-oo" or "T-ah"

The screenshot shows the OhioLINK ETD Center website. The header includes the OhioLINK logo, the text "OhioLINK ETD Center", and links for "Frequently Asked Questions", "Submit an ETD", and "Ohio.gov". A search bar is present with the placeholder text "Search by title, author, keywords, etc." and a red search icon. Below the search bar are links for "Need Help?", "Participating Institutions", and "Advanced Search". The main content area displays a search result for a PDF document. The document title is "Flute Articulation Pedagogy: The Effect of Language-Specific Consonant Pronunciation on a Flutist's Articulation within the French and English Languages". The author is listed as "Torres, Erin Helgeson". The permalink is "http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc\_num=osu1338398069". The document is dated "2012, Doctor of Musical Arts, Ohio State University, Music." and includes an abstract.

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**Flute Articulation Pedagogy: The Effect of Language-Specific Consonant Pronunciation on a Flutist's Articulation within the French and English Languages**

Torres, Erin Helgeson

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**Year and Degree**  
2012, Doctor of Musical Arts, Ohio State University, Music.

**Abstract**  
The major linguistic differences between the various stop-burst consonants found within the vast multitude of languages of the world have an extensive impact on the articulation employed by the modern flutist. French and English alone have contradictory linguistic features that may largely impact articulation on the instrument. It has been shown that these syllables are produced by fast changes in the vocal tract muscles and movements of the tongue, lips and jaws and thus may have an impact on the way flutists of both the French and English languages have learned and applied their articulative practices. Additionally, the amassing

# Step 5: Advancement

- Double Tonguing - Combination of oral stop and velar stop consonants
- ("T" and "K" or "D" and "G")



A musical exercise on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The exercise consists of four measures. The first measure contains three eighth notes: G4, A4, and Bb4, followed by a quarter rest. The second measure contains three eighth notes: Bb4, C5, and Bb4, followed by a quarter rest. The third measure contains six eighth notes: Bb4, C5, Bb4, C5, Bb4, and C5, followed by a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains six eighth notes: C5, Bb4, C5, Bb4, C5, and Bb4, followed by a quarter rest. The syllables 'tah' and 'kah' are written below the notes to indicate the articulation points for double tonguing.

tah tah tah kah kah kah kah tah kah tah kah tah tah kah tah |



**THANK YOU!**

**Please feel  
free to reach  
out!**

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