

# Embouchure

Embouchure is a French word which means "opening into." Embouchure is the word used to describe what your lips and face muscles are doing when playing any type of wind instrument.

## From Wikipedia

While performing on a brass instrument, the sound is produced by the player buzzing his or her lips into a mouthpiece. Pitches are changed in part through altering the amount of muscular contraction in the lip formation. The performer's use of the air, tightening of cheek and jaw muscles, as well as tongue manipulation can affect how the embouchure works.

The embouchure for single reed woodwinds like the clarinet and saxophone is formed by resting the reed upon the bottom lip, which is placed on top of the bottom teeth. The top teeth are then used to bite down on the mouthpiece, and the top lips are wrapped around them in order to create a seal. With the less common double-lip embouchure, the top lip is placed under (around) the top teeth. In both instances, the position of the tongue in the mouth plays a vital role in focusing and accelerating the air stream blown by the player. This results in a more mature and full sound, rich in overtones.

That being said ...

You need to place your two front teeth on the top of the mouthpiece about ½ inch from the end of the tip but do not let your bottom teeth touch the reed! You will anchor most of the weight of your head on the tip of the mouthpiece. This will keep the stream of air blown into the mouthpiece consistent.

Next tuck your lower lip over your lower teeth just a little - this will keep your teeth from touching the reed and allow the reed to vibrate freely. You will breathe through your mouth when playing by dropping your lower jaw and inhaling quickly.

To start a note you will articulate the notes using the word "tah." You don't need to actually say it just mouth it although you will hear a slight "t" sound at the beginning of each note played. Breathe from deep within your diaphragm and push the air through the horn.

Practice your embouchure technique using only the mouthpiece. You will find that after a while you will be able to play songs without the horn.