



Walton Band

Uniform (and other) Quick Facts from A to Z

(i.e. everything we wish someone had told us
when we were rookie parents!)

A is for *annual trip*

Each year, the band travels to a performance or competition. Recent trips have included the Tournament of Roses Parade in CA (i.e., the Rose Bowl Parade), competitions in FL, and BOA Grand Nationals in Indianapolis, IN. This year, they will be going to St. Louis for a BOA Super Regional competition. Our marching uniforms, including shakos, are packed and travel with the band.

B is for *BOA and bibbers*

BOA stands for Bands of America. This is the biggest competition we compete in every year. BOA has regional, super-regional, and grand national level competitions. This competition is the capstone of WHS's marching season and so our uniforms must look good for this competition. B is also for bibbers which are the pants part of the marching uniform. They look like black overalls and are worn over the band's dri-fit shirts and under the marching jackets.

C is for *color guard*

These students use flags, wooden rifles, and other props to help enhance the visual appeal of our show. Their uniform changes every year to reflect the new show's theme. Band uniforms are worn for 8-10 years.

D is for *drum majors*

These four students (1 junior and 3 seniors) are responsible for keeping our band in time musically while on the field. Drum majors are selected each spring for the next year after all candidates have gone through Mr. Back's leadership classes. Drum majors wear white gloves and special jackets. They also have silver cords that go over one shoulder.

E is for *each part of the uniform*

While each student is responsible for purchasing and then bringing their own marching shoes, black socks, shako (or beret for tuba players), and dri-fit shirt to all games, competitions and performances, the band program lends each student pants (they look like black overalls and are called bibbers), a marching jacket and gauntlets.

F is for *fittings*

Before marching season starts, all students are fitted for a jacket, bibber, and gauntlets. If needed, students may also be fitted for shakos, berets, shoes, and gloves. During concert band season, students are fitted with either tuxedo pants, jacket, bowtie and cummerbund or a concert dress. We always need lots of volunteers for fittings and it is a great way to get to know people and help our students.

G is for *gauntlets*

Gauntlets are the uniform part that goes around each player's wrists and forearms. Percussion gauntlets are shorter in length than the gauntlets used for other sections.

H is for *help needed*

Each week, volunteer opportunities are posted in the weekly band eblast. Each performance requires roadies (the folks that move the big equipment and load the trucks), uniform volunteers to make sure the students look their best before performance time and to make sure all uniform parts are turned in correctly after shows, and away games and annual trips require chaperones. Every home football game also needs volunteers to sell raffle tickets in the stands and every practice



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requires parent helpers. Special events like the annual band party also require parent involvement. Volunteering with the band is fun and a great way to get to know people. There are so many different options, everyone can find something that will fit into their schedule.

I is for *items for sale*

Before each game or competition, the uniform room sells students new gloves, dri-fits, socks, etc. if needed. These items may be paid for with cash or be deducted from a student's account provided there are funds available to cover the cost of the items purchased. Students can earn money for their account through fundraisers such as selling Walton Band Business Directory ads.

J is for *Jack (of course!)*

Each year our marching program has a theme. Two years ago, it was "Superstitions", last year was "J is for Jack", and this year's theme is "Into that Good Night". The show's music, props and color guard uniforms change each year to reflect the annual theme.

K is for *kamp (if you can't spell)*

All students attend two weeks of summer camp each year - week one is held at Walton HS and week two takes place at LaGrange College. Both these weeks are a lot of work for students with new music and marching routines to learn but also a ton of fun and a chance for band members to make new friends and bond with the other students in their section.

L is for *leaders*

Our band has director John Palmer, assistant director Chris Johns and two percussion leaders - Scott Brown and James Pluth. Our color guard is headed up by Pepe Ochoa.

M is for *marching shoes*

Everyone wears the same black marching shoes for every performance. These rubber-soled marching shoes have also made appearances as part of tuxedo outfits during concert season. The occasional soul who forgets to pack sneakers for a trip has been known to wear them around theme parks and other non-band venues.

N is for *no stray hair or jewelry*

All girls and boys in band must have their hair neatly slicked back and pulled up into the shako if needed. No ponytails should hang down a student's back and long hair should not hang down in the eyes. All earrings and nose rings should be removed or covered up with band aids before a show and nail polish should be removed for those that wear no or fingerless gloves.

O is for *only*

As in only drum majors wear white marching gloves. Everyone else uses black fingered gloves, fingerless gloves, or gloves with a gripper texture on the fingers. What gloves you need depends in part on personal preference and in part upon which section you are in.

P is for *plumes*

These are the feathers that stick out of the shakos. Uniform volunteers put the plumes in the shakos before a performance and collect them after a performance because



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handling them requires that gloves be worn to protect the feathers from oil found in hands so they will keep looking good for the long term.

Q is for quads

Quads, also called tenors, are a percussion instrument included in the percussion section called the battery. The battery section has all the drums in the band and includes flubs, bass drums, quads, and snare drums.

R is for racks

There is a rack in the pit which holds auxiliary percussion instruments, but there are also uniform racks where students should always hang up their jackets and bibbers after games, parades, competitions, etc. Each student has their own hanger that is color coded to their section. Gauntlets go in Rubbermaid tubs that are color coded by section. Each section (flute, clarinet, saxophone, low reed, trumpets, mellophone, trombones, baritones, tubas, front ensemble, and battery) has its own rack for hanging up their uniforms. The drum major uniforms are hung in the uniform room.

S is for shakos

Shakos are the hat worn by all but pit and tuba players. Tuba, or sousaphone, players wear berets and pit members do not wear anything on their heads

T is for tuba

Actually, sousaphones, not tubas, are used during marching season. Sousaphones are basically giant tubas that wrap around the player and over their shoulder.

U is for uniforms

Every band student has many pieces to their marching uniform: plumes and shakos for their heads (except for sousaphone players who wear berets and our pit, or front ensemble, players who do not wear anything on their heads); dri-fit shirts, black socks, black marching shoes, bibber, jacket, gauntlets, and gloves (except for percussion players - i.e., pit and battery players - who do not wear gloves). Many students also like to wear wrist bands to help keep their gauntlets from shifting.

V is for vibraphone

This instrument has metal keys and is found in the pit. It looks like a xylophone with large metal keys. Marimbas have a similar look but have wooden keys. The pit, also called the front ensemble, is a percussion section which does not march but stays put at the front of the football field and includes marimbas, vibraphones, xylophones, gongs, timpani, and any other percussion instrument that can't be marched around the field.

W is for washing

Our marching uniforms are polyester, and they are hot. Especially during the first part of the season, temperatures can soar and sweat can pour. Parent volunteers wash our uniforms several times throughout the season to keep them looking and smelling fresh. Regular washing helps protect the investment made in uniforms and washing by the full load helps save water. This is another great volunteer opportunity that can be done easily around your schedule. In fact, some claim that this is the easiest volunteer gig you can get since your washing machine does all the work and you can even get the job done while you sleep!



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X is for
xylophone

This instrument can be found in the pit. The pit section also goes by the name front ensemble. Xylophones have metal keys but no pedals like a vibraphone has. Marimbas have pedals and have wooden keys.

Y is for
*youth
section
leaders*

Each band section has at least one upper class student that serves as the leader for their section. These positions are filled after a series of leadership training classes taught by Mr. Palmer. Section leaders make sure their section mates are looking and sounding their best during shows.

Z is for
*The fact that
"Big Blue"
can fit
everything
from A to Z*

"Big Blue" can fit everything we need to perform - from A to Z. Big Blue is the semitrailer found at the far end of pride field (pride field is the parking lot turned band practice area where a bulk of marching band practices are held). Big Blue and the smaller white Walton Band truck transport everything needed for each show that is not going to take place at Walton HS. This includes all props, percussion instruments, sousaphones, and the rolling cart that holds the uniform plumes.

Want to know more?

***If you still have questions or need a great reference guide during the year, check out the
Walton Band 2018-2019 Handbook.***

If you are a rookie parent and still have uniform questions or want to volunteer to help with this year's uniform crew (we have easy volunteer opportunities at fitting time and before and after each performance), please contact:

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