

How to be a Good Section Leader

- 1. Understand what being section leader means.** Being a section leader is harder than being a non-section leader; not only do you have to worry about your music, but you have to worry about the music of your section. It also doesn't mean you get to be some dictator; you have to help your section. It's a lot like being an administrator on a website; you're a regular editor, but with a mop. You are there to serve the people in your section, not to rule over them.
- 2. Lead by example.** Not only will this let your section know what to do, but it is also a very kind method of leadership. You were most likely chosen because of your **playing** or **marching** skills; now is your time to pass these on.
- 3. Get on friendly terms with your section.** When you become friends with your section, they'll be more likely to listen to you, and you'll get a better feel of their playing ability.
- 4. Learn your music.** As section leader, you're expected to know it before everyone else. If you don't know your music, how can you help others with their music?
- 5. Hold sectionals.** Sectionals are time when your section is the focus, not the entire band. Find the difficult passages and go over them with your section. Make sure your section knows exactly what they're trying to fix; if they don't know what they're trying to fix, it probably won't get fixed.
- 6. Help your section when they need it.** Let them practice, but if you see someone struggling with a part or playing it wrong without realizing it, go and help them.
- 7. Hold your section to their promises.** If someone said they'll learn a passage by next Tuesday, they better have it down when next Tuesday comes rolling by. If they don't, ask them why they didn't.
- 8. Be understanding.** If someone can't make it to the sectional because their grandma died, don't hold that to him. People have lives outside of marching band.
- 9. Don't be afraid to goof around with your section, as long as they're behaving themselves.** You're still a member of your section, and your extra authority doesn't mean you can't take part in the rest of the section's festivities. In fact, spending more time with your section only makes you a better leader.

- 10. Keep your section under control.** This doesn't mean order them around, but when they get out of hand, let them know. If necessary, seek help from another section leader or the band teacher. Remember, rehearsal time is limited and essential to the success of the whole band. Keep your section quiet and focused so they don't miss important instruction.
- 11. Listen to both sides of a conflict.** If there's a conflict between two sides, you will probably have to be the third party to step in and solve it. If it starts to get physical, keep them apart and tell someone to get help from an adult as soon as possible.
- 12. Be on the same page as your co-section leader, if you have one.** If you're telling your section something completely different than the other section leader, it will only confuse your section.
- 13. Remember the team.** No matter what goals you may have for your section, don't lose sight of what is best for the entire band. Each section must work together to achieve what is best for the entire ensemble. Your band directors and drum majors goals should take priority over your own. Also, being a section leader is a privilege, not a right. Remember... with great power comes great responsibility, as said by Uncle Ben.
- 14. Always think about what you could do to improve yourself, you are not perfect.** Make yourself approachable and ask what you need to do to improve your skills, or how you handle situations.
- 15. Admit that you are in the wrong sometimes.** There is nothing more irritating than having a leader that thinks they are right about everything. You are human you make mistakes be a big enough person to admit your wrongs and move on.
- 16. Do not dwell on mistakes your section makes, address the issue quickly then move on.** You know how teachers rant about how we are wasting time by talking, but the teacher rants for 20 minutes wasting everyone's time? Don't be that leader; say what you have to say quickly.
- 17. Stay positive if you have a bad attitude the whole section will follow your lead.** If you're having a bad day, tell your section and then push yourself to be positive. This will increase productivity and will keep your director happy.