

Boston Symphony Orchestra begins

1881 | Grade 2 · Read & notice

Words to know

culture — a community's shared ways, knowledge, and expressions

cooperate — work together

perform — present music, acting, or another skill

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert in 1881. Musicians worked together to make a large sound. Concerts became part of the city's cultural life. An orchestra includes many kinds of skilled work.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. What happened in this reading? Tell one fact.
2. Who or what is this reading mostly about?
3. Choose a word from the word bank. Explain it in your own words.
4. Look at the picture and its caption. What does it help you notice? Is it from the time of the event?

Follow-up reading: Basketball begins in Springfield

1891

James Naismith created basketball in Springfield. He wanted an indoor game for students during cold weather. The first version used peach baskets. The rules and equipment changed as more people played.

How are the two readings alike or different? Tell a partner one connection. Which event came first?

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.2.1: ask and answer questions; RI.2.2: identify a main topic; RI.2.7: use images and words; W.2.2 and SL.2.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert in 1881. Musicians worked together to make a large sound. Concerts became part of the city’s cultural life. An orchestra includes many kinds of skilled work. Henry Lee Higginson helped establish the orchestra. Institutions grow through performers, staff, supporters, and audiences. Ask whose music gets performed and who can participate as listeners or musicians.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event’s [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.