Musical Instruments to Play

By: Sue Peterson

A musical instrument is a device created to make musical sounds. Anything that makes a sound can be used as a musical instrument.

The history of musical instruments goes back to the beginning of culture. People first used instruments as ritual: a hunter might use a trumpet to signal a successful hunt; a drum might be used in a religious ceremony.
Cultures later composed and performed a set of sounds called a melody for entertainment. Musical instruments were needed. Some historians report that the earliest musical instrument was a simple flute. Many of the earliest musical instruments were made from animal skins, bone, wood, and other non-durable materials.

Musical instruments were developed separately in the different countries and regions of the world, but when civilizations shared information amongst themselves, the development of instruments spread. For example, cultures of North America, South America, and Central America used similar instruments and shared these ideas of making instruments that were alike in some way.

Many different ways have been used to classify instruments over the years. One way to classify instruments is to put them in groups by the range of music the instruments can play. Another classification is to put them together by what they are made out of. However, the most common method of grouping instruments is by how they
produce sounds. The academic study of musical instruments is called organology.

Woodwinds and brass (sometimes called the “wind” instruments), string, percussion, electric, and keyboard are types of instruments grouped according to how they are made and the range of music and sounds they play.

Woodwind and brass instruments include the trumpet, clarinet, flute, oboe, trombone, tuba, and harmonica. Stringed instruments include the banjo, guitar, harp, violin, and viola. Percussion instruments include the cymbal, chime, timpani, drum, and tambourine. Electronic instruments are the keyboard and the synthesizer. Keyboard instruments include the accordion, organ, and piano.

Maybe you will play an instrument someday. Will it be a woodwind or brass, stringed, percussion, electronic or a keyboard instrument?
Practice

Language Work

A. Write the words.

composed _______________________________________

performed _______________________________________

historians _______________________________________

range of music ___________________________________

religious ceremony _________________________________

B. Use each word in a sentence. Underline the word used.

device ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

signal ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

melody ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

classify __________________________________________

_________________________________________________
C. Matching. Draw a line to connect which musical instruments belong to the categories listed in the story.

1. woodwind and brass  a) banjo, guitar, harp
2. stringed b) trumpet, clarinet, flute
3. percussion c) keyboard, synthesizer
4. keyboard d) accordion, organ, piano
5. electronic e) cymbal, chime, drum

D. Phonics work. The word “electronic” in the story ends in the letters “ic” that make a short “i” sound followed by a “k” sound. Write another word that has the “ic” letters to make the “ik” sound (a short i followed by the k sound).

________________________________________

The letter “y” in the word “history” is changed to “i” when adding the suffix “an”, which means “of”. So a “historian” is someone “of history”, an “Italian” is someone “of Italy”, etc. Write another word that has the “an” suffix. Write what the word means.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
E. Crossword. Use these words to solve the musical clues: device, signal, ceremony, composed, performed, melody, classify, range

Across
1. formed; made up of
5. something invented, devised, fitted
6. sweet music
7. played

Down
1. to group according to some system
2. a sign giving warning or notice
3. the distance between; extent
4. a special act done on special occasions

© Sue Peterson 2012
Multiple-Choice Questions (Put an X in front of the correct answer.)

1. The text mentions that musical instruments are made out of all of these materials **except** ________________.
   - [ ] a. animal skin
   - [ ] b. bone
   - [ ] c. rock
   - [ ] d. wood

2. According to the text, what is the **most common** way of grouping instruments?
   - [ ] a. by range of music played
   - [ ] b. what they are made out of
   - [ ] c. how they look
   - [ ] d. how they produce sounds

3. According to the text, what was the **earliest** reported instrument?
   - [ ] a. a simple piano
   - [ ] b. a simple flute
   - [ ] c. a simple guitar
   - [ ] d. a simple harp

Definitions (Write the meaning of each word as it is used in the text.)

1. device

2. signal

3. composed
Extended Response (Answer in complete sentences.)

1. How does the text define “musical instrument”?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________.

2. Explain at least two ways early instruments were used.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________.

3. What did early cultures of people do to foster and encourage music?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________.
4. If you could play any instrument, what would it be? Why?
Musical Instruments to Play

Matching
1(b); 2(a); 3(e); 4(d); 5(c)

Crossword Puzzle
Across 1 (composed), 5 (device), 6 (melody), 7 (performed)
Down 1 (classify), 2 (signal), 3 (range), 4 (ceremony)

Multiple-Choice Questions
1. c
2. d
3. b

Extended Response (Accept reasonable answers.)
1. Anything that produces sound can be used as an instrument.
2. Free expression – See text for examples of the use of early instruments.
   Must have 2 uses.
3. Music was shared and ideas for instruments.
4. Free expression.