

Key Stage 1: Music of Africa

The final page of these notes can be copied and given to students who you think may need additional support during the session, or to adult helpers.

About this session

This session takes place in the Samsung Digital Discovery Centre and Room 25 (the Africa gallery). Students explore the gallery using digital cameras, then handle and play traditional African instruments. They finish by recording their own piece of music using digital sound recording equipment.

Session outline

The session consists of two parts.

- In the first part students discuss their current understanding of African music, listen to examples of music from different countries in Africa, and consider how African musical traditions have influenced the music we listen to today.
- In the second part, students have the opportunity to handle and play some African instruments themselves, and are asked to compose a short piece of music in small groups. This piece of music is recorded using digital sound recording equipment.
- All finished work from the session will be sent back to school.

- **Key themes** of the session are celebration, tradition, materials, performance, diversity, Africa as a continent
- **Key vocabulary** includes North, South, East, West and Central Africa, masquerade, celebration, rhythm, call and response, pitch

Preparing for your session

- Look at Africa on a map and familiarise children with some of the different regions and countries.
- Familiarise children with natural and man-made materials.
- Look for objects from Africa under the Explore section of the British Museum website at www.britishmuseum.org. Show them to your students on the interactive whiteboard and discuss them.
- Ask your students to browse African objects on 'Museum Explorer' in the Discover section of our children's website Young Explorers www.britishmuseum.org/youngexplorers.
- Discuss celebrations and the types of music they might hear or sing at celebrations, e.g. Christmas, birthdays or religious festivals.

Following up your session

- You may like to use the pieces of music recorded in the session further. The files will be sent back to school as mp3s on a CD, where you can then go on to use them in other work. You could ask children to write short poems or stories in Literacy, then combine them with their music to create podcasts.
- Find out more about modern-day African music, as well as traditional. Ask children to discuss their favourite artists and whether they think there are any African influences in their music.
- In Design and Technology or Science (materials), children could create their own instruments using materials found in their local environment. This would also link well to a PSHCE topic about recycling and the environment.
- Try looking at traditional African movement and dance in PE lessons. Children could use their recorded pieces of music from the session, and develop a short movement or dance sequence to accompany it.
- You may like to continue looking at objects from Africa in the Explore section of the British Museum website:
www.britishmuseum.org/explore/introduction.aspx
- In Literacy, you could look at traditional African stories. If you have African instruments in school, they could be used for storytelling sessions.

Galleries with related objects

Room 25: Africa

Curriculum links

KS1 Music – Creating musical patterns, Responding to talking points

KS1 ICT – Gathering information

KS1 Science – Materials

Key Stage 1: Music of Africa summary sheet

In this workshop you will learn about:

- music from different countries in Africa
- instruments from Africa
- traditional African masquerades (performances).

Key words

North , South, East, West and Central Africa
celebration
call and response
Masquerade
pitch
rhythm

Talking about Africa and listening to music

- We will talk about Africa.
- Next we will listen to music from different parts of Africa.
- Then we will look at different instruments from Africa and learn their names.

Making a piece of music

- You will get into small groups and make your own piece of music using African instruments.
- Then you will record your music using special software and microphones.