From the 1600s to the 1800s, millions of West Africans were transported to North America as enslaved people. Many were forced to work on crop plantations or as house servants. Playing music, singing, dancing and telling stories helped to keep their memories of Africa alive.

Find the Akan drum in Case 2. The Akan drum was found in Virginia but was probably made in what is now Ghana and taken on a slaving ship to North America. It was known as a ‘talking drum’. Drums played a vital role in Akan culture – not only as musical instruments at celebrations but also as a form of communication.

What do you think the Akan drum would say today about the journey it has been on since the 1700s?

Imagine what the Akan drum would have sounded like when it was being played.

Use your hands to clap out your imagined rhythm.