

History of Steel Pan

1. Question & Research Task

Modern steel bands originated in the late 1930's on the island of Trinidad to accompany carnival celebrations.

Winston "Spree" Simon of Trinidad is generally given credit for making the first pan. [Steel bands](#) were made the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago in 1992.

The pans are sections of 55-gallon oil drums cut to different sizes. The inner surface of each pan is marked out into separate areas called keys. A player produces music by striking the keys with rubber-tipped sticks or beaters.



Discovery Education, 2004. *Calypso: The Steel Drum Sounds of Trinidad and the Caribbean*. [Video Segment]. Available from <http://www.discoveryeducation.com>

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How has the invention of the steel drum changed cultures and the music world?

2. Information Sources

Choose several of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3. (To access Discovery Education articles, you need to be logged in through Schoology before clicking the links.)

- [Steel Pan and Carnival](#) (Discovery): Steel bands and steel drums dominate Caribbean music. For Carnival on St. Thomas, the Rising Star Steel Band will play all of the major events.
- [How Steel Pans are Made](#) (Discovery): Originating in Trinidad, steel drums happened by accident when people realized that dents in sheets of steel resulted in different tones. Today it takes one hundred and twenty hours of manual labor to perfect a steel drum.
- [Ellie Mannette: Father of the Modern Steel Drum](#) (YouTube Link): Ellie Mannette, born in Trinidad in 1927, is considered "the father of the modern steel drum." Mannette has worked for 75 years to develop and popularize the steel drum, creating seven of the ten instruments used in steel drum bands today. ([Text alternative](#))
- [1956 Film: Historical Moment of Steel Pan Creating and Tuning](#) (YouTube Link): Documentary from 1956 goes in depth about the historical moments in steel pan creation and tuning in Trinidad and Tobago.
- [A Brief History of the Steel Pan](#) (BBC News): Amid the electronica of 20th Century music one new instrument stands out for its simplicity. The steel pan, possibly the only instrument made out of industrial waste, has become an icon of Trinidadian culture.
- [How a Steel Pan is Made](#) (YouTube): Michael Perkins crafts steel drums in Oregon.
- [The Steel Pan Story](#) (article)
- [Steel Pan origins & growth](#) (Google Arts & Culture multimedia)



Ellie Mannette: Father of the Modern Steel Drum
Image Source: YouTube

3. Student Activity

As you examine the resources on slide 2, use this [worksheet](#) to take notes and organize your research.

Once completed, go to Slide 4 to see what you are going to do with your new knowledge.



Watch the video for an overview of the different sticks that can be used on steel drums.

Image source: YouTube

4. Assessment Activity

How has the invention of the steel drum changed cultures and the world of music?

You are going to create an interactive presentation which demonstrates what you have learned from your research. The presentation should be able to teach other viewers of your presentation about steel drum.

You can create an interactive presentation using:

- [VoiceThread](#) (How to use VoiceThread, [click here](#))
- [Microsoft PowerPoint](#) (part of Office 365, how to use PowerPoint, [click here](#))
- [Microsoft Stream](#)
- [Google Slides](#)

Be sure to check your project against the [success criteria](#).



Steel drum music is a tradition on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. This video was made for the "Recycled: Re-Seen exhibit at the Museum of International Folk Art.

Image Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReNbZFKKX7c>

5. Enrichment Activities

SLIDE NAVIGATION

[1](#)

[2](#)

[3](#)

[4](#)

[5](#)

[6](#)

[Next](#)



Above: Catonsville Steel Drum Band playing at concert
Below: Close up of students playing steel drums.

Image Source: Catonsville High School Steel Drum Band



Extension Activity: Think about your own cultural heritage and its role in your life. Watch the two videos on the left of Catonsville High School students playing steel pans.

Create a song or make an instrument

1. Write some song lyrics that describe the role of culture in your life.
2. Use common, everyday items or materials to create an instrument which reflects your culture. See the steel pan examples on the left.
3. Record your song and share it with your classmates!

6. Teacher Resources

Learning Standards Alignment

Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Music

Anchor standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences wo make art.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

SLIDE NAVIGATION

1	2	3	4	5	6
-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

High School Music

Objective: Students will conduct brief, focused research in order to discover the history of the steel drum and its cultural influence.

Time Frame: 1 90-minute class period

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Have students use learning supports provided in any BCPS-licensed Digital Content from the [Apps Portal](#) included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for guidance as needed.
- Consider [using the Schoology Assignment Apps feature](#) to assign Microsoft and Google documents and files for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.
- You will need to view the videos prior to giving to students, to verify the links fit your unit, are still working, and are appropriate for your specific class or student.
- Remind students to access digital content from the [Apps Portal](#).