

African Music

1. Question & Research Task

Think of the ways you communicate and your reasons for doing so. We communicate in lots of ways and for many reasons. Performance of music is no different. In Africa, music is often used in storytelling and in the telling of history. Music is also used in spreading the components of a group's culture – the traditions, the musical style, the musical and lyrical content, the fashion and movement of the performers, and more. In Africa, many cultures often use music, specifically drumming, as a replacement for talking.

Watch the first two minutes of the video clip of the African talking drum. How do you think the instrument is possibly being used as a tool for communication?

SLIDE NAVIGATION

[1](#)

[2](#)

[3](#)

[4](#)

[5](#)

[6](#)

[Next](#)



Select the image above to watch a clip of Ayan Bisi Adeleke, an African talking drum player.

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

How is African music used as a form of communication?

2. Information Sources

Choose several of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.

Sending a Message with Sound – Talking Drum

[Drum Sounds And Their Meanings](#) from Smithsonian Folkways Museum; article by Mickey Hart, former drummer of the Grateful Dead

[Five Ways Drums are Used to Communicate Talking Drum](#) from Britannica Encyclopedia; article with video clip

Storytelling

[A Keeper of History](#) NBC Learn Video via YouTube

[A Continuing Tradition: The African Griot](#) (Gale database article)

[Griot](#) (Britannica article)

Representing Components of Culture

[Music as a Part of Every Day African Life](#) Discovery Education video

[African Music and Instruments](#) Discovery Education video

[African Music](#) – Scholastic GO database article

[The Music of Africa](#) - Scholastic GO database article



African Kora.

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

***If you are prompted to log in to access a database or digital content links, your teachers/librarian can provide login information.**

3. Student Activity

Use the resources on Slide 2 and this [graphic organizer](#) to take notes about the messages of the talking drum, traditional stories and history, and components of African culture (way of life), and how and why they are communicated through music.

You will then use this background information to create your own rhythmic or musical composition. Use available instruments* or digital music creation tools, and recording software, to create and record music or rhythmic patterns.

Follow this [rubric](#) for success criteria.

**You may make your own musical instruments if time permits (see Slide 5).*

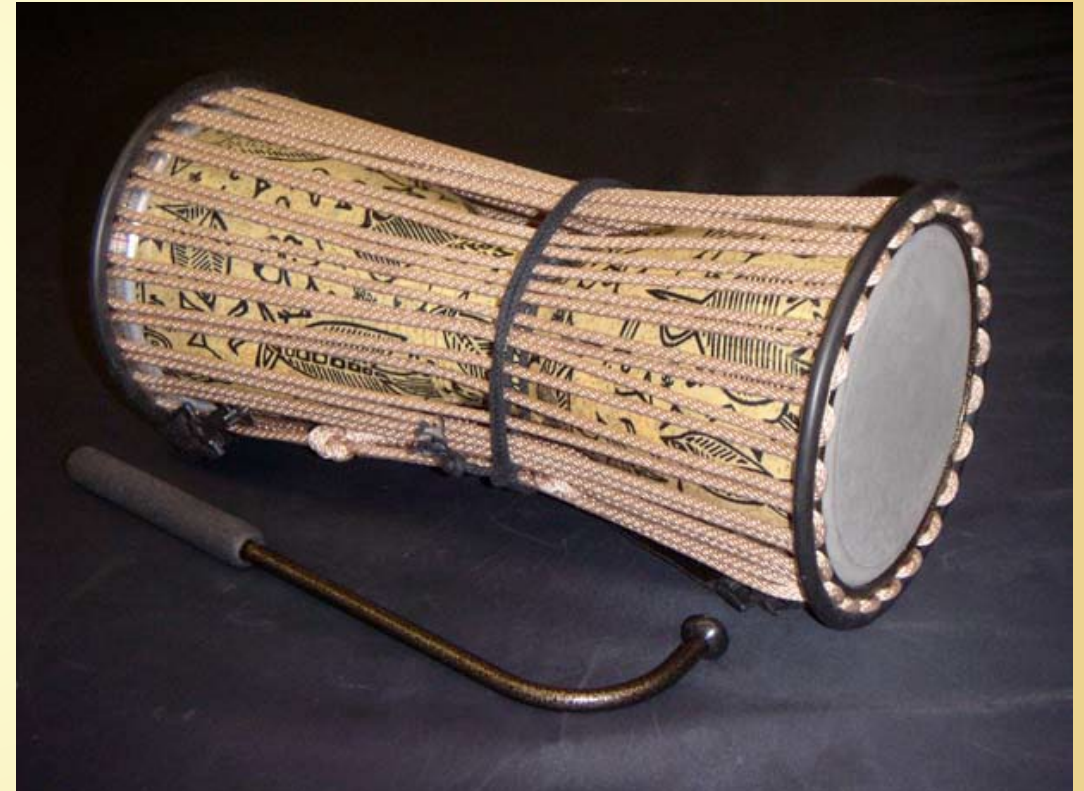


Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

4. Assessment Activity

How is African music used as a tool for communication?

Write or record a reflection where you explain what your musical composition is communicating, as well as how and why this is being communicated.

Include details and examples from your research about African music as a form of communication, as well as information about what you're communicating from your own culture.

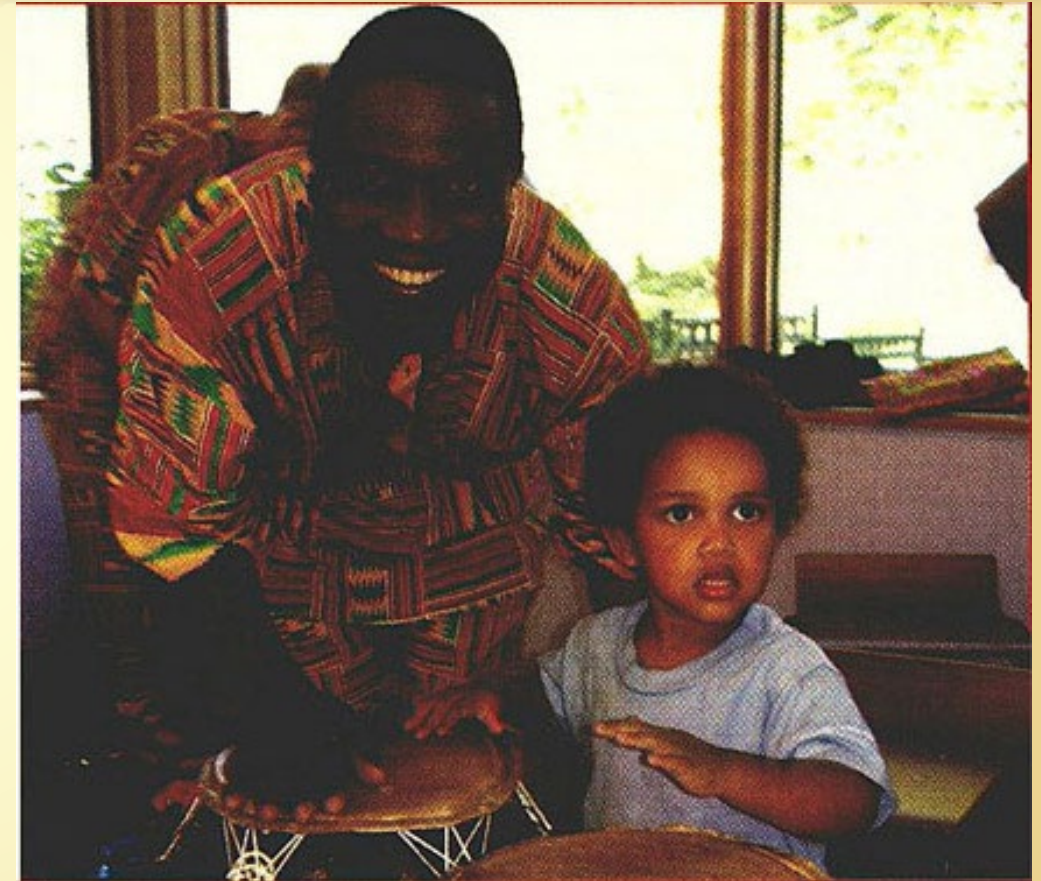


Image Source: Gale General One File

5. Enrichment Activities

SLIDE NAVIGATION

1

2

3

4

5

6

Next



Image Source: Squidoo.com

If you'd like more of a challenge, you can make your own instrument inspired by the African instruments you have read about and seen during this research. You could make a Kora, a talking drum, or another instrument you've learned about.

You could then use your instrument to play the rhythmic or musical composition you create for the Student Activity on Slide 3.

6. Teacher Resources

SLIDE NAVIGATION

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

Learning Standards Alignment

Maryland Music State Standards

E:6-8:1: Working both independently and in collaboration with others, create musical works that clearly communicate personal, cultural, or historical experience, using appropriate t

I:6-8:1: Use a variety of media and methods, including available technology, to select, present, explain, and document musical ideas with connections to context and artistic purpose

I:6-8:2: Demonstrate, describe, and compare the structure, use of musical elements, and context (social, cultural, and historical) in a variety of musical pieces.

I:6-8:1: Describe and support personal interpretations of music and analyze how use of musical elements, attention to context, and artistic qualities convey intent

I:6-8:1: Describe and justify how music is a form of personal, societal, cultural, and historical communication

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.

Objective: Students will be conducting brief, focused research in order to determine how African music is used as a tool for communication.

Time Frame: One or two ninety-minute class periods.

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

Have students use learning supports provided in any BCPS-licensed Digital Content in the [Apps Portal](#) included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for guidance as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- If students are going to do the extension piece on slide 5, you will need to gather maker materials, or have students bring them in ahead of time.
- Consider [using the Schoology Assignment Apps feature](#) to assign Microsoft and Google documents and files for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.