



A **percussion instrument** is any object which makes a sound by being hit, shaken, rubbed, scraped, or by any other action that causes a vibration.

Shake, Rattle or Thump?

Life Skill:

Critical thinking-categorizing instruments

Educational Standard:

NA-M.K-4.2 & 5-8 Performing on Instruments

Success Indicator:

Youth will identify percussion instruments based on how they are played.

Time: 30 minutes

Suggested Group Size:

Classroom or less

Supplies:

Instruments from your club kit
Colored pencils or crayons

This lesson will introduce students to the percussion family. The percussion family is composed of several different instruments. Some of the most common are the snare drum, tambourine, timpani, cymbals, and xylophone. Instruments in the Percussion Family create sound when they are hit, shaken, or touched by anything else that causes vibration.

Do the Activity:

Disperse instruments around the room.

Divide the students into groups of four.

Tell youth that they are to travel around the room in groups and determine how each instrument is played. See what kinds of different sounds each instrument can make.

Talking it Over

Share What You Did

What did you like about this activity?
How did you discover how to play each instrument?

Which instruments were hard for you to play? Easiest?

Have students demonstrate the different ways that the instruments make sound.

Process What's Important

How were the instruments different?
How were the sounds of the instruments different?

Generalize to Your Life

How is listening to sound a part of your everyday life?

What sounds cause you to smile?

What sounds make you hungry?

What sounds warn you of danger?

Apply What You Have Learned

How can you use sound to communicate?

How can you use music to communicate how you feel?

Background Information:

The first musical instruments were anything hit together to produce sound. Drums are a percussion instrument that you hit or touch with something else. Through time, drums have been used by civilizations throughout the world. Certain drums symbolize and protect tribal royalty in Africa. Drums have also been used to transmit messages over long distances. In Europe, the snare drum and its relatives were used in the infantry to send instructions to the soldiers.

A percussion instrument is defined as an instrument that is made of a material that makes a vibrating sound when touched in some way. A vibration produces sounds of **definite** or **indefinite pitch** when shaken or struck. The pitch is determined in many different ways. It is done through the tightness of the stretched material for indefinite pitch instruments. The pitch is determined by the size of the objects in definite pitch instruments. Notes are produced by striking the instrument in certain places.

Vocabulary:

Pitch: the property of sound that changes with changes in the speed of vibration.

Definite pitch: The vibration creates basically only one tone (like a drum that plays just one note).

Indefinite pitch: The vibration can create a variety of tones (like a guitar or xylophone whose vibrating strings play many notes).

