

The Orchestra Explorers: A Guide to Musical Families

Join Max the Monkey on a symphony adventure—explore the instruments that make the music soar!

- **String instruments create sound when a player plucks or bows a string, causing it to vibrate. How does changing the length of the string affect the pitch of the note?**
- **Woodwind instruments, like the flute or clarinet, produce sound by splitting a stream of air against an edge or a reed. Why are these instruments traditionally grouped together even if they are made of metal?**
- **Brass instruments rely on the player buzzing their lips into a cup-shaped mouthpiece. Can you identify which brass instrument uses a sliding tube to change its pitch instead of valves?**
- **Percussion instruments are the most diverse family. Explain why some percussion instruments have a definite pitch, like a xylophone, while others, like the snare drum, are considered untuned.**
- **The conductor leads the orchestra to ensure all families play in harmony. What might happen to the music if the string section played at a different tempo than the percussion section?**

Did you know? Did you know that the longest instrument in the orchestra is the double bass? It stands over six feet tall and produces the deepest, lowest notes in the string family, providing the heartbeat for the entire orchestra!

Key vocabulary: vibration · percussion · woodwind · brass · strings · pitch · timbre · symphony