

Global Rhythms: An Adventure with Finn

Learning objective: To identify and describe the characteristics of musical traditions from around the world and understand how instruments reflect their geographical origins.

Finn the dolphin has travelled across the world's oceans to discover unique musical sounds. Look at the characteristics provided below. Match each description to the correct world region or instrument group. Then, use your knowledge to justify why certain instruments are made from the materials found in their specific environments.

Word bank: Djembe drum · Steel pans · Gamelan orchestra · Didgeridoo · Pentatonic scale · Polyrhythm · Resonance · Percussion

1. Finn finds a large, goblet-shaped drum made from carved wood and animal skin in West Africa. Explain why this instrument is a vital part of storytelling and community gatherings. (2 marks)

2. In the Caribbean, musicians use repurposed metal oil barrels to create steel pans. Compare and contrast the sound of these metal pans to a wooden instrument. Why does the material change the 'timbre' or quality of the sound? (2 marks)

3. The Gamelan orchestra from Indonesia uses bronze gongs and metallophones. Justify why a large ensemble might use a specific scale, such as the pentatonic scale, to ensure all instruments sound harmonious together. (2 marks)

4. A didgeridoo is crafted from a hollowed-out eucalyptus branch. What might happen to the sound of this instrument if a different material, like plastic, were used instead? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

5. Many world music traditions rely on 'polyrhythm' (playing multiple rhythms at once). How does this help a large group of people participate in a musical performance without needing to read written sheet music? (2 marks)

6. If you were to create a new musical instrument using only items found in a British woodland, what materials would you choose and how would you generate sound from them? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw an imaginary musical instrument that combines features from two different world cultures (e.g., a drum with strings, or a wind instrument made from shells). Label the parts of your instrument and describe the sound it would make.



Extension challenge: Research a musical tradition from a country you have never visited. Write a short paragraph explaining how the local geography (climate, available plants, or landscape) influenced the construction of their traditional instruments.