



FUN WITH DRUMS



Rhythms of Celebration LESSON PLAN

This video introduces two common West African rhythms and breaks these down into percussion parts that can be played by groups of students in a classroom. West African culture is also introduced while connecting various musical rhythms of community events and personal celebration. The video also provides information of various West African drums that are commonly used in cultural celebrations.

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/r4BZb-J6Hfk>

Materials Needed/Special Instructions

Students will need access to specific drums:

- Djembe
- Djun djun set (with both kenkeni and sangban)
- Alternatively, two drums that make different tones can be used ie: conga and/or a hand held drum

Objectives / Music Standards Achieved:

Objective:

Through this lesson, students will learn the names of three drums commonly found in music originating in some West African countries: djembe, kenkeni, sangban. Students will also explore the cultural context of the mengiani and funga rhythms while also learning and applying the individual rhythms that make up these complex layered patterns.

Music Standards:

1. Connecting: Connect #11:

Relate musical ideas and works with varied context to deepen understanding.

2. Responding: Analyze: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.

Key Vocabulary

Djembe: A goblet-shaped drum with a wider head and narrower barrel, most commonly found in countries within West Africa including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal as well as others.

Dun duns: A set of percussion instruments consisting of three different drums, the *kenkeni*, *sangban*, and *dununba*. Each drum produces a different tone, and when played together drummers can play complex rhythms.

Kenkeni: A tall, cylindrical drum that is played with wooden sticks. It produces the highest pitch of all the dundun drums.

Sangban: A tall, cylindrical drum that produces a middle-range tone within the dun dun set.

Break: A rhythmic "call" coming from a lead percussion instrument that signals to a percussion ensemble that it is time to begin playing

Rhythms of Celebration Lesson Sequence

Opener

We are being introduced to a set of drums called the “*dun duns*”. This set of drums is common to countries within various areas of West Africa, like Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, and other neighboring countries. The *dun dun* set consists of three separate drums, the *kenkeni* (highest pitch), *sangban* (mid-range pitch) and *dununba* (lowest pitch). When these drums play together, they create complex rhythms that are used during life celebrations.

Guided Practice -- Sequence

- Watch the video [Rhythms of Celebration](#), hosted by Julia Kamanda and taught by Chinua McFarlane.
- Break the class into three groups, each group with access to a different drum listed above. Students can also use body percussion if there are no drums available.
- First, the “break” is introduced, the musical cue that tells us when to play and when to stop playing. Try playing along to the break a few times as a large group so everyone knows when to start playing.
- Follow the prompts in the video and play the new rhythms on each instrument.
- Feel free to slow the tempo to ensure all understand and can play. If students are challenged, create syllables that students can speak while playing the patterns.
- Practice these rhythms separately and as an ensemble. Eventually, the group will be able to play each rhythm simultaneously and have the ability to play without the video playing.

Independent Practice and Application

Invite each student to compose their own celebration rhythm, piece, or song. This music can be either melodic or rhythmic in nature, should be very short and easily repeated. Have each student demonstrate their piece, rhythm, or song, and explain the celebration that they would use this for.

Informal or Formal Assessment

Group assessment is based on the class’s ability to learn and play back the rhythms that are introduced during the video, as well as applying the skills to create additional celebration music.