

# Music Lesson

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**Lesson Name:** African Drumming (Building, Playing, Creating)

**For Grades:** 4 - 8

**Time required:** several class periods (6 to 10)

## National Standard Goals:

### 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

- Perform on pitch, in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo.
- Perform easy rhythmic, melodic, and chordal patterns accurately and independently on rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic classroom instruments.
- Perform expressively a varied repertoire of music representing diverse genres and styles.
- Perform in groups, blending instrumental timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of the conductor.
- Perform independent instrumental parts while other students sing or play contrasting parts.

### 3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

- Improvise short songs and instrumental pieces, using a variety of sound sources, including traditional sounds, nontraditional sounds available in the classroom, body sounds, and sounds produced by electronic means.

### 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.

- Create and arrange short songs and instrumental pieces within specified guidelines.
- Use a variety of sound sources when composing.

### 5. Reading and notating music.

- Use standard symbols to notate meter, rhythm, pitch, and dynamics in simple patterns presented by the teacher.

### 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

- Respond through purposeful movement to selected prominent music characteristics or to specific music events while listening to music.

### 7. Evaluating music and music performances.

- Devise criteria for evaluating performances and compositions.
- Explain, using appropriate music terminology, their personal preferences for specific musical works and styles.

### 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

- Identify similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms used in the various arts.
- Identify ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music.

### 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

- Describe in simple terms how elements of music are used in music examples from various cultures of the world.
- Identify various uses of music in their daily experiences and describe characteristics that make certain music suitable for each use.
- Identify and describe roles of musicians in various music settings and cultures.

## Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements [EALR] Goals:

1.2 Develops arts skills and techniques.

Grade 3: Plays various unpitched percussion instruments.

2.1 Applies a creative process in the arts.

Grade 3/4/5: Applies previously learned arts concepts, vocabulary, skills, and techniques through a creative process.

4.4 Understands that the arts shape and reflect culture and history.

Grade 3: Recognizes that artworks reflect culture.

Grade 5: Identifies specific attributes of artworks that reflect culture.

## Materials Needed:

- Drum building materials — see attached directions. Cutting work done ahead of time.
- Videotape: Silver Burdett Ginn Music Magic Library: *Rhythm*.
- Drum Talk* CD and *The New Conga Joy* book [Bill Matthews, [www.congajoy.com](http://www.congajoy.com)]
- Enlarged charts from *Conga Joy of Shiko* and *West African Polyrythms*
- Multiple copies of 'Rhythm Grid for African Rhythms' — see attached template & color tiles (1" squares of wood colored blue, red, green, yellow; used for elementary math)
- Construction paper cut in strips 5" x 18" (enough for one per child + extra), sets of pencils & marker pens, yardsticks, rulers.
- Color printouts of African fabric from the Internet or book/catalogue.

8. Extra hand drums and African percussion instruments: shekeres, afuches, kalangus, etc. enough for every student in the class to play something.

**Procedure:**

**Quadrant 1: Why?**

1. Play drum rhythms from the CD as students enter the room. Teacher models clapping, snapping, & moving to the rhythms. Have several drum shells in view and printouts of African fabric patterns.

**Quadrant 2: What?**

2. Today we begin a unit in which we will make conga drums, learn to play authentic African rhythms, and create our own drum patterns. You will learn to play such drum patterns as this . . . [demonstrate some conga drum patterns from *Shiko*].
3. To begin, we need to make the drums and decorate them. Each group will get the following:
  - \* one box containing 8 marker pens and two pencils — captains will get the box and return them at the end of the class.
  - \* as many pieces of construction paper as people in your group needs (no more than one per person); you may work alone, with a partner, or two others — 2<sup>nd</sup> captains will get the papers and gather them together at the end of the class.
  - \* one yardstick and two rulers per group — 3<sup>rd</sup> person will get these and return them at the end of the period.

Students may look at the designs of African fabric for inspiration to design their own original pattern. You may not copy any of the African fabric patterns. Create your own in the African style. It's best to start with pencil, then add color later. The finished panels will be *decopáged* onto the sides of the drum. You may work alone, or with one or two partners. Everyone must be actively involved in making the design — sitting watching someone else do the work does not qualify as 'actively involved.'

4. While most students are working on their designs, I will work with two groups at a time putting their drums together.

**Quadrant 3: How?**

5. [Give each group time to make their art work and build their drums. This may take one or two full class sessions.]

**Quadrant 2: What?**

6. [Watch video of African drummers.]
7. We are finally ready to play our own African drum patterns and will start with the patterns of the song, *Shiko*. Each group play the patterns together, taking turns to share the drum we built and playing hand drum otherwise, or play other congas, if a class set is available.
8. Distribute Rhythm grids and color tiles, one set per group. Have each group place color tiles in the squares to correspond to the first pattern of *Shiko*. Teacher checks each pattern, then groups play the pattern looking at their grids. Go on to other rhythms in the same way so students become familiar with the grid system and its relationship to rhythms played on drums.

**Quadrant 3: How?**

9. Assign different parts of *Shiko* to different groups & perform. Shift parts and perform until everyone has had a chance to perform each rhythm.

**Quadrant 2: What?**

10. Repeat lesson sequence above with West African Polyrhythms.

**Quadrant 3: How?**

11. Assign different parts of WA Polyrhythms to different groups & perform. Shift parts and

perform until everyone has had a chance to perform each rhythm.

**Quadrant 4: What if?**

12. Now that you know rhythms for two different African drum songs, what if you composed your own rhythms into your own song? For this part of the assignment, your group must invent at least one new rhythm for the grade of C, two new rhythms that sound good together for a grade of B, and three or more rhythms that sound good together for a grade of A. Each rhythm must be played by a different kind of percussion instrument (for example: high drum, medium drum, low drum, stick on drum side, shekere, afuche, kalangu, etc.) Use your rhythm grids to experiment with rhythms, then, when you are happy with your rhythm, call the teacher over to listen and give approval. Then color in the squares with marking pens, replacing the temporary color tiles with permanent color.
13. Each group perform your drum song and the class votes on one to represent the class in the program on creativity. [Alternatively, have each group perform for a younger class or classes.]

**Method of Evaluation:**

Teacher continuously observes students as they make art works, build drums, play patterns, and work together to invent new rhythms. Award grades based on criteria explained in section 12 and being actively involved in all processes of the lesson.

## Rhythm Grid for African Rhythms

Name of song/pattern: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Group: Happy Dopey Bashful Grumpy Sleepy Doc  
 (Circle one name)

Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>1</b>	e	&	a	<b>2</b>	e	&	a
⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗

<b>3</b>	e	&	a	<b>4</b>	e	&	a
⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗

**Blue** squares for Bass

**Red** squares for Open

**Green** squares for Slap

**Yellow** squares for Side Stick

Blank squares for Silence

## Drum Building Directions

### Materials and Tools Needed:

- 1) PVC sewer pipe 6" or 8" in diameter without drain holes (available at plumbing contractor supply stores – or – call plumbing contractors and ask for donation of leftover lengths at least 30" long).
- 2) Router and ½ inch dado bit, router table, two clamps, and two metal Ls (such as shelf supports).
- 3) Sawsall with extra long blade.
- 4) Belt sander with 80 grit sandpaper. Sanding sponge, medium grit.
- 5) Goat skin(s), either whole skin (yields 13-17 drum rounds) or pre-cut drum rounds. Whole skins cost about \$35 from leather supply stores.
- 6) Drum head template (2" larger than exterior diameter of pipe), pencil, scissors.
- 7) Large bucket big enough to soak drum head rounds in water. Towel or paper towels.
- 8) Plumber's pipe bands large enough to fit over pipe.
- 9) Screwdriver or nut driver fitting screw head on pipe band.
- 10) Paper drum panels decorated with African fabric-inspired original patterns. Alternatively, you may purchase genuine African cloth in local fabric stores or through the Internet.
- 11) Polyurethane and throw-away brush.
- 12) Colored duct tape (optional).

### Building process:

- 1) Cut pipe into lengths of 30" with the sawsall, making sure that the cut is perpendicular.
- 2) Sand all edges with belt sander, being sure to remove all sharp edges and splinters.
- 3) Set up router and table with the fence ½ inch from the closest part of the bit. Use clamps to hold metal Ls onto the router table to create a slot to lay the pipe in. Set the bit to 1/4 inch deep.
- 4) Cut a dado ½ inch from one end and 1/4 inch deep. Use sanding sponge to remove sharp edges and splinters.
- 5) If making several drums, use a template two inches larger than the outside diameter of the pipe to draw circles on the goat skin and cut out drum head rounds with scissors. If making only one or a few drums, use pre-cut drum rounds.
- 6) Soak drum head skin rounds in water for 15-30 minutes.
- 7) Remove rounds from water and pat dry in towel or paper towels.
- 8) Place drum round on sewer pipe, making sure it is centered.
- 9) Extend plumber's band to maximum circumference and slide over drum head. Position band over the dado area and tighten band slightly with screwdriver or nut driver. When band is just barely snug, stretch the head down tight, working opposite sides simultaneously around circumference. Make sure there are no wrinkles in the head, then tighten the band as much as possible. Smooth and flatten the edges of the drum head extending below the band.
- 10) Allow drum head to dry, shrink, and tighten for at least 12 hours.
- 11) Decopage decoration panels on the sides of the drum and seal with polyurethane. Or glue African cloth onto the pipe and seal.
- 12) Cover plumber's band and edges of drum head with colored duct tape.