

## **Elementary 8**

### **Balloon Drums!**

#### **Naarah Callender**

#### **Grade Level/Class**

Early Elementary Grades

50 Minute Music Class (Or divided between two classes: One focused on history and a second on creating drums)

Cross-Curricular: STEAM

#### **Overall Theme**

How percussionists can find their “voice” using the drums.

#### **Essential Questions**

1. What is a percussionist and what types of instruments/products can they use?
2. What makes drums sound different?
3. How can drummers have control over the sound their instrument makes?
4. How can we explore sound possibilities on the drums?

#### **National Standards**

##### **Create**

MU:Cr1.1.3 Improve rhythmic and melodic ideas and describe connection to specific purpose and context (such as personal and social).

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the meaning of “percussionist” and some of the products they can use.
2. Understand the difference between animal skin and synthetic drumheads.
3. Create unique timbres by using a balloon and tin canister to make their own drums.
4. Use their drums to create a beat alone or with a partner.

#### **Materials Needed**

1. E8 Presentation
2. Materials for Drums (Balloons, Tin Canisters, Drum Sticks or Rhythm Sticks, and Rubber Bands)

#### **Procedure**

##### **Lesson Introduction (5 Min):**

- Teacher (T) will lay the foundation for students (S) to discover that percussionists have access to a wide variety of instruments to create their own unique sound.

- T asks S: “When you think of a percussion player, what sounds do you think of?” (ask S to imitate the sounds out loud)
- T asks S: “Do all percussion instruments have their own unique sound?”

### **History of Drums and Cymbals (10 Min):**

- Using the lesson [Google Slides](#), T will explain that drums have been used for centuries using animal skin that was dried and stretched over a drum body.
- T will explain that the amount of stretch changes the pitch of the drum.
- As S watches videos of different natural drum types, T will invite S to make observations about what they hear.
- T will share a video of drum heads being made today.
- T will explain that the cymbal is another instrument that percussionists use in their sonic palette.
- T will share a video of cymbals being made in a factory.

### **Lesson Activity (25 Min):**

Using the recycled and donated materials listed above, students will create their own drums! There should be enough materials so that every student can make a choice about which canister they use. Try to have 3 more canisters of varying sizes than there are students. Use this Video Tutorial, included in Google Slides (0:00 - 1:16 for time’s sake, students may not be able to decorate during this lesson. That is explained in the second half of the video).

- T will show the video tutorial to S, while also demonstrating what to do along with the video.
- T will display materials in front of the class.
- T will ask S to think about which canisters might produce a lower/higher sound depending on size.
- T will explain that S will have 10 minutes to experiment with stretching their balloon over their canister to create different sounds (the balloon may break, so encourage students to be careful not to stretch too far, but have extras on hand). Using T’s discretion, T will invite S up in groups to select the canister and balloon they want to use. T may prep this in advance.
- T will set a 10-minute timer and facilitate S working on their drums.
- Once S appears largely finished, T will ask some students to play their drums to demonstrate the sound (everyone will sound a bit different).

## **Assessment Strategies**

### **Wrap-up and Assessment (10 Min):**

- T will prepare and show this video (included in Google Slides) to students, asking S to play along with the steady beat.
- After playing along with the video T will ask S to look closely at the drum the drummer is playing and ask “Do the drumheads look like they are stretched?” (they are not)
- T will explain that these are synthetic drum heads. Further definition of “synthetic” may also be offered.

- T will explain the difference between synthetic and natural drumheads “Animal skin heads that are stretched over the drum body can change their sound completely based on the weather, humidity, heat, and cold. Drummers of modern music wanted to be able to have more control over the sound their drums made. So synthetic drum heads were created.”
- T will show photos of different drum heads from the museum artifacts.
- T will explain that every drum head has a different thickness that changes the sound “so instead of having to stretch the drum like you did with your balloon, the drumhead is made to sound a specific way.”
- Wrap up the lesson by having the students work in pairs or solo to create a drum beat on their balloon drums.
- As an exit ticket, students must play their beat for the teacher. They must also quickly state something they learned about drum heads in that lesson.

## Extensions/Adaptations

- This lesson could be split into two. The first would explore the differences between animal skin heads being stretched over the drum body - using the balloon drums as an example - and synthetic drumheads - using a real drum set to explore.
- More time could be spent on the creation and development of the balloon drums, eventually allowing students to compose their own rhythms to go with their drums.
- This lesson may work better as an introduction to drumheads and drum sounds rather than a lesson with an expectation of mastery with an assessment at the end.

### **Adaptations**

- Allow students to use text-to-speech software to listen along to stories from the NAMM archives.
- Used closed captions for any videos.
- Provide the student a sentence stem for the exit ticket, such as “*Today, I learned that drumheads \_\_\_\_.*” Consider providing a word bank for topics students can share as the exit ticket.
- Rather than having students state what they learned, allow them to write it down and put it in an exit ticket box.

## Spotlight on Careers in Music

This lesson plan can be tied to specific careers in music:

- Drum manufacturing
- Traditional drum performance
- Percussionist
- Music Therapy
- Retailer
- Teacher

For comprehensive information on careers in the music industry, please visit [Consider a Career in Music](#)