

Making Music with Our Bodies — Hambone



Introduction

Many cultures around the world use hand-clapping, finger-snapping, chest-thumping, toe-tapping, and more to create rhythms. Hamboning is a style of singing and body percussion created by enslaved Africans in North America. Not allowed to use their traditional drums, the people found ways to make rhythms with their bodies.

Supplies

- No special supplies needed!
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Prepare

Viewing the videos listed in this lesson can help you feel comfortable leading the activities. See Step 2 on the next page.

Get kids thinking

WRITE THE WORDS “CREATING OUR OWN” ON THE MUSIC MURAL.

ASK: Imagine you want to make music without using any instrument. What could you do to make a sound? The kids might sing, clap their hands, snap their fingers, etc.





Start with a Book: Tune In! Toolkit

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John Dee Holeman and Dom Flemons — Hambone

Let's get started

STEP 1

Explain that you'll be learning about and practicing hamboning, which is a tradition of "playing the body" as an instrument. Talk about why most enslaved people didn't have access to musical instruments.

STEP 2

VIEW ANY OR ALL OF THE VIDEOS BELOW:

"CHRISTYLEZ BACON AND STEVE HICKMAN — BEATBOX MEETS HAMBONE 2013"

youtu.be/jBW9IWHkDRw

"JOHN DEE HOLEMAN AND DOM FLEMONS — HAMBONE"

youtu.be/6mOd4PheLTA

"THE STORY OF HAMBONE" BY DIANE FERLATTE

youtu.be/VIC469NOqbw





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STEP 3

Sit or stand in a circle. Make up one simple four-count rhythm. For example, to an even rhythm, clap your hands together twice and then tap your chest with your palm twice.

1 2 3 4

clap clap tap tap

Ask the kids to repeat it. Then, ask for a volunteer to come up with a different four-count rhythm for the group to repeat. Encourage them to make sounds with different parts of the body — tapping knees, tapping feet, etc. Go around the circle, giving each kid a chance to create and teach a rhythm.

STEP 4

Try hamboning a name song. First decide on a four-count rhythm (knee tap, knee tap, clap, clap). Then chant the words of this simple name song as you do the rhythm:

I am Kiera I am here.

Tap Tap Clap Clap

Ask the kids to repeat it.

Encourage each kid to hambone their own name song. Younger kids can use the same structure — I am (name) and I am here. Older kids can make up their own rhythmic chant to announce their presence.

NOTE: What you're doing when you demonstrate a rhythm or a melody and then ask the group to repeat it back to you is a technique called call and response.

