Grade 6 Creative Arts

Terms 1, 2 and 3 - notes for 14 topics

IN EVERY TOPIC

- What you will learn and the key words.
- Short, clear notes with worked examples.
- Questions to try and a topic test, with the answers at the back.

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Strand 1.0 Creating and Executing | Term 1

1.1 String Musical Instruments and Drawing

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- identify string instruments from different indigenous communities in Kenya
- describe the functions of the parts of a string instrument
- make a fiddle using recyclable materials
- identify pictures drawn using stippling technique
- draw a picture of a musical instrument using stippling technique

KEY WORDS

string instrument, plucked, bowed, resonator, bridge, bow, fiddle, stippling, tone, texture, overlapping, still life.

1. Indigenous string instruments of Kenya

Kenyan string instruments

String instruments make sound when a stretched string vibrates. Examples from Kenyan communities: the nyatiti (an eight-string lyre of the Luo), the orutu (a one-string fiddle of the Luo), the obokano (a large lyre of the Abagusii), the litungu (a lyre of the Abaluhya), the wandindi (a one-string fiddle of the Abaluhya), and the chepkong' (a lyre of the Kalenjin).

Teacher: add any string instrument played in your own locality and, where possible, invite a player as a resource person.

2. Methods of playing string instruments

Plucking and bowing

Plucked instruments are played by pulling the strings with the fingers or a plectrum and letting go: the nyatiti, obokano, litungu and chepkong'. The nyatiti player often also wears a toe ring and beats a rhythm.

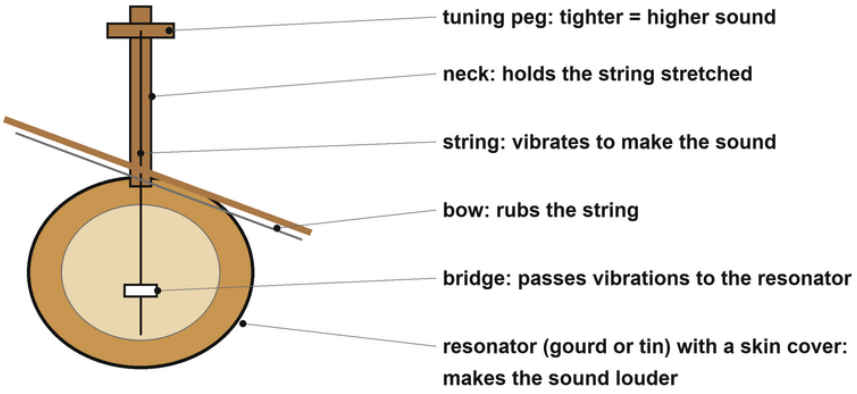
Bowed instruments are played by rubbing a bow across the string: the orutu and wandindi. The player's fingers press the string to change the pitch. Many instruments are played seated, held against the body or the lap.

3. Parts of a string instrument and their functions

Parts and functions

Strings: vibrate to make the sound. Resonator (sound box, gourd or tin): makes the sound louder and richer. Neck or arms: hold the strings stretched. Bridge: lifts the strings off the resonator and passes the vibrations to it.

Tuning pegs or rings: tighten or loosen the strings to tune them (tighter gives a higher sound). Bow (for fiddles): a stick with fibres that rub the string. The skin or cover on some resonators (cow or goat skin) also vibrates.



The parts of a one-string fiddle

4. String instruments in our music

Listening and valuing

Listen to two recordings (or a live player): describe the instrument, how it is played, the mood of the music, and what the song is about. Many players sing while they play, telling stories, praising people or teaching lessons. String instruments matter because they carry the history and stories of communities, are played at ceremonies and festivals, give jobs to musicians and makers, and are part of Kenya's heritage. A visit to a cultural centre or a virtual museum tour shows more.

5. Planning a fiddle from recyclable materials

Practical: planning the fiddle

Materials: sample recyclable items, paper and pencils; group work.

A simple one-string fiddle has: a resonator (a clean tin, small gourd or plastic container), a neck (a straight stick about 60 cm long passing through or fixed onto the resonator), a string (strong nylon fishing line) tied from the bottom of the neck to the top, a small wooden bridge, and a bow (a thin curved stick with nylon or sisal fibre tied tightly between its ends).

Each group draws and labels its design, lists the materials and who will bring each. Safety: tins must have no sharp edges; only the teacher makes holes with a drill, awl or hot nail.

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6. Making the resonator and neck

Practical: resonator and neck

Materials: tins or gourds, sticks, sandpaper, string, glue; the teacher makes holes; group work.

Sand the stick smooth. The teacher makes two holes opposite each other near the top of the tin or gourd. Push the stick through so that a short piece sticks out at the bottom (to tie the string) and the long part forms the neck.

Fix the stick firmly with glue or by binding with string so it does not turn. Smooth or tape any rough edges of the resonator.

7. Fixing the string and bridge and making the bow

Practical: string, bridge and bow

Materials: nylon fishing line, a small piece of wood, a thin curved stick, nylon or sisal fibre; group work.

Tie the nylon line to the short end of the stick at the bottom, stretch it up along the neck and wind it round the top of the neck several times, tying it tightly. Slide the small wooden bridge under the string where it passes over the resonator.

For the bow, tie nylon or sisal fibre tightly between the two ends of a thin curved stick, so the stick stays bent like a hunting bow. Rubbing a little candle wax on the fibre gives a better grip on the string.

8. Playing and caring for the fiddle

Practical: playing and care

Materials: the finished fiddles; group work.

Hold the fiddle upright with the resonator against the body or on the lap. Draw the bow slowly across the string near the bridge; press the string lightly with a finger at different points to make higher and lower notes. Play a short rhythm for the class.

Care: handle gently and never use it as a toy weapon; wipe dust off with a dry cloth; loosen the string a little when not in use; store hanging up or in a bag, away from rain and direct sun; repair loose parts at once.

9. The stippling technique

Stippling

Stippling is a drawing technique that uses many small dots to make tone (light and dark) and texture. Dots close together look dark; dots far apart look light. No lines are used for shading.

Look at pictures drawn by stippling and describe where the dots are crowded (shadows, dark parts) and where they are spread out (light parts). Compare them with pictures shaded with lines or smudging.

10. Making tone and texture with dots

Practical: tonal scale

Materials: paper, black felt pens or fine markers; individual work.

Draw a strip of five squares. Leave the first almost empty, then add more and more dots in each square until the last is very dark. This is a tonal scale from light to dark.

Then try textures: rough wood (dots in lines and clusters), a smooth gourd (even dots getting closer towards the shadow side), and a skin cover (scattered dots of different sizes).

11. Overlapping and balance in still life

Overlapping and balance

A still life is a drawing or painting of objects that do not move, arranged on a surface. Overlapping is placing one object partly in front of another; the object in front is drawn complete, and only the visible part of the one behind is drawn. Overlapping shows depth and ties the objects together.

Balance means arranging the objects so that the picture does not look heavier on one side: for example, a tall instrument on one side balanced by a wider one on the other, with space around them.

12. Arranging and outlining the still life

Practical: outline drawing

Materials: two string instruments or the class fiddles, drawing paper, pencils; individual work.

Arrange two fiddles or instruments on a table so that one overlaps the other, with light from one side.

Lightly sketch the main shapes with a pencil, filling most of the paper. Draw the front instrument complete and only the visible part of the back one. Mark lightly where the shadows fall.

13. Stippling the tone

Practical: adding tone

Materials: the outline drawings, black felt pens; individual work.

Start with the darkest parts (shadows and the inside of the resonator), crowding the dots there. Work out towards the lighter parts with the dots further and further apart. Leave the brightest parts (where the light hits) almost white.

Keep the dots small and evenly made. Turn the paper as you work so your hand does not smudge finished parts.

14. Showing texture and finishing the drawing

Practical: texture and finishing

Materials: drawings, felt pens, an eraser; individual work.

Add texture with different dot patterns: grain lines of small dots along the wooden neck, even graded dots on a smooth tin or gourd, and a light row of dots for the thin string. Add a light tone on the table surface and a shadow under each instrument so they do not float.

When the ink is dry, gently rub out any pencil lines. Write your name and a title on the back.

15. Displaying and appreciating the work

Display and appraisal

Set up a class display: the fiddles with name cards, and the stippled drawings with titles. Each learner walks round and writes one kind comment and one suggestion on a slip for two classmates' work.

Discuss: what did we learn about our communities' string instruments? Why should they be kept alive (heritage, identity, ceremonies, jobs)? How can young people help (learning to play, recording elders, making instruments)?

TRY THESE

1. How does a string instrument make sound?
2. Which community plays the nyatiti?
3. Name the two main ways of playing string instruments.
4. Is the orutu plucked or bowed?
5. What is the function of the resonator?
6. What does the bridge do?
7. What mood did the first recording have?
8. Give one occasion where string instruments are played.
9. Name three parts your fiddle will have.
10. What can be used as a resonator?
11. Why is the stick sanded?
12. Why must the stick stick out at the bottom?
13. Where is the bridge placed?
14. How is the string kept tight?
15. Where is the bow drawn across the string?
16. How do you play a higher note?
17. What is stippling?
18. How are dark areas shown in stippling?
19. What is a tonal scale?
20. How many squares are in your tonal scale?
21. What is a still life?
22. What is overlapping?
23. How have you arranged the instruments?
24. Why sketch lightly first?
25. Where did you start the stippling?
26. What do you leave almost white?
27. How did you show the wooden texture?
28. Why add a shadow under each instrument?
29. Give one kind comment you wrote.

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30. Give one way young people can keep string instruments alive.

TOPIC TEST

T1. Find out the name of one string instrument from a community not listed here.
T2. Why do you think a bowed note can last longer than a plucked note?
T3. Why does a bigger resonator usually give a deeper sound?
T4. Ask an elder about a string instrument once played in your community.
T5. How could you make your fiddle louder?
T6. Decorate your resonator with a pattern from your community.
T7. How could you add a tuning peg to your fiddle?
T8. Play a short tune of three notes and teach it to a partner.
T9. Why does stippling take a long time?
T10. Make a tonal scale of seven squares.
T11. How does overlapping make a drawing look more real?
T12. Add a cloth or gourd to the still life to improve the balance.
T13. Make the overlapping part look clearly behind by darkening the shadow cast by the front instrument.
T14. Write two sentences about the hardest part of stippling and how you managed it.
T15. Write a short label for the display explaining what a fiddle is and how it is played.

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1.2 Painting and Collage

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

- classify colour categories on the colour wheel for familiarity
- paint a still life composition using brush stroke technique
- mount the painting using mat technique for display
- create a collage composition to apply the characteristics

KEY WORDS

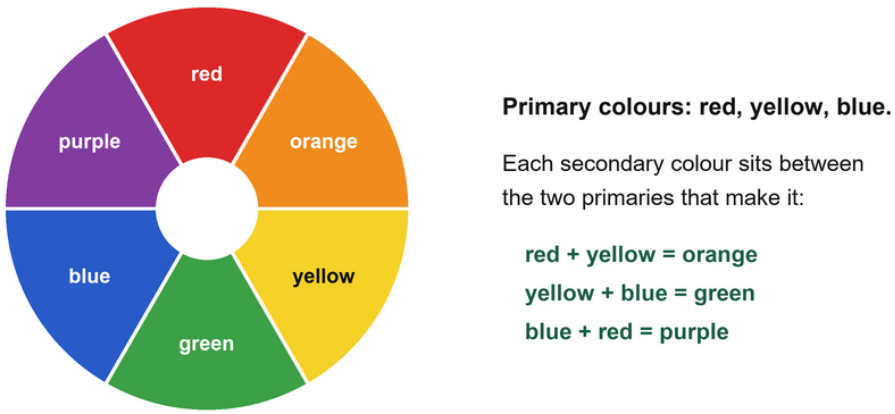
colour wheel, primary colour, secondary colour, tertiary colour, tonal gradation, brush stroke, brush load, still life, mount, mat, collage, mixed media.

1. The colour wheel

Colour categories

Primary colours cannot be made by mixing others: red, yellow and blue. Secondary colours are made by mixing two primary colours in equal amounts: orange (red and yellow), green (yellow and blue) and violet or purple (blue and red).

Tertiary colours are made by mixing a primary colour with the secondary colour next to it on the wheel, for example yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, red-violet, red-orange and yellow-orange. The colour wheel arranges all twelve in a circle.



The colour wheel

2. Mixing and painting a colour wheel

Practical: colour wheel

Materials: paints, brushes, water pots, palettes, paper with a circle divided into twelve parts; individual work.

Paint the three primary colours first, spaced evenly round the wheel (every fourth part). Mix and paint the secondary colours halfway between them, then the tertiary colours in the remaining spaces.

Rinse and dry the brush between colours, mix on the palette, not on the paper, and label each colour.

3. Tonal gradation