

















## Classroom Instrument Glossary






Hand percussion should generally be held in the weaker hand with the beater held in the other.







| <b>Untuned Percussion: Wooden Sounds</b> |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Agogo block                              |    | Tap or scrape to produce 2 different tones. Tap with the ball end of the beater or scrape with the thin end.  |
| Castanets                                |   | Traditional type: loop elastic over middle finger and squeeze between fingers and palms. Handle castanets should be held vertically and shaken back and forth or horizontally and played like drum sticks on an imaginary drum. |
| Wooden block                             |  | Hold the block in the open palm of your hand and tap.   |
| Tulip block                              |  | Hold and tap with the beater on the side of the tulip.  |






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|----------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Maracas</p>             |    | <p>Hold with thumbs resting on the back of the handle (thumbs up!) Shake back and forth, keeping your wrists straight and moving from the elbows. Movements should be small and controlled.</p> |
| <p>Egg shakers</p>         |    | <p>Same basic technique as maracas. Hold between thumb and first and middle fingers ideally.</p>  |
| <p>Claves</p>              |    | <p>Tap together. For a resonant sound do not grip one clave, but rest it between your upturned curled fingers and heel of your (weaker) hand. Tap in the middle with the other clave.</p>       |
| <p>Two tone wood block</p> |  | <p>Held like a lollipop and tapped on either side to produce 2 separate tones.</p>  |
| <p>Guiro</p>               |  | <p>Hold the tail and scrape away AND towards the player with a thin stick or the handle of a beater. Discourage pupils from putting their fingers into the tone holes.</p>                      |
| <p>Rainstick</p>           |  | <p>Not a shaker – mainly for sound effects. Alternately raise each end SLOWLY and rotate to sustain sound.</p>  |

## Untuned Percussion: Metal Sounds

|              |   |  |
|--------------|---|--|
| Cow bells    |    | Hold in the open palm of your hand with the open end pointing away from your body. Some are too large for smaller players. Discourage pupils from playing them on the floor.           |
| Sleigh bells |    | Shake or hold inverted and tap fists together (one potato, two potato etc.) This gives a more defined sound for playing rhythms or along with a beat.                                  |
| Jingle bells |   | Hold like a letter D with one hand at the top of the handle and beat fists together as for sleigh bells.   |
| Agogo bells  |  | Hold horizontally with smaller (high-pitched) bell at the top. Use a small wooden stick or a rubber-tipped beater.   |
| Tambourine   |  | Hold vertically and tap with stronger hand or lay in the lap and tap with both hands on the side away from the body.   |
| Triangle     |  | Hold the string or suspend on outstretched index finger. The gap should not be at the top. 2 tones are available by gripping the triangle (damped) or allowing the instrument to ring. |

|                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Indian bells   |    | <p>Hold the string in both hands just above each bell and let them hang. Play by moving the bells up and down, catching the edge of the other as they pass. <b>DON'T BASH TOGETHER!</b></p>  |
| Finger cymbals |    | <p>Loop over index finger and thumb. Tap together.</p>   |
| Cymbals        |    | <p>Put each hand through the loop and grip between the thumb and 1<sup>st</sup> 2 fingers where it passes through the cymbal. Strike them together by alternately raising and lowering, catching the opposite cymbal as they pass. Alternatively, suspend one cymbal and hit with a soft beater.</p> |
| Chime tree     |  | <p>Play with finger or a beater. A 'glissando' is the sound made by playing all the bells in sequence from one side or the other.</p>  |
| Cabasa         |  | <p>Hold the handle with the strong hand and REST the beads on the opposite cupped hand. Do not grip the beads. Play by twisting in short, sharp movements one way then the other – like turning a door handle.</p>   |

| Tuned Percussion |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Boomwhackers     |    | Best played by hitting onto the hand or knee. Keep the gripping hand away from the end of the tube. These can also be used to hit the floor like drumsticks, but this will shorten the life of the instrument. |
| Chime bars       |    | Bars can be held or placed on the floor or table. Hit with a soft or rubber-tipped beater in the middle of the key.  |
| Glockenspiel     |   | Encourage pupils to use both beaters and discourage them from pressing down with their index fingers. The grip should be loose and the beater should be able to bounce off the keys after each hit.            |
| Metallophone     |  | Same as glockenspiel. Felt or rubber beaters sound best on larger keys.  |
| Xylophone        |  | 'Xylophone' means 'wood sound' in Greek. It is commonly confused with 'glockenspiel' which has metal keys. The basic playing technique is the same as other keyed percussion instruments.                      |
| Hand bells       |  | The colours of these bells normally correspond with boomwhackers. They are played inverted like hand bells and some can be placed on a hard surface and sounded by pressing down on the top of the handles.    |

| Drums      |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| Tambour    |    | Played with the hand or a felt beater. NEVER use a wooden or plastic stick as these can damage the skin and do not produce a good sound.  |
| Djembe     |    | A West African hand drum, held between the knees and slightly angled away from the body. A range of sizes are available.  |
| Bongos     |    | A South American hand drum pair. Each drum should be tuned to a different tone. Bongos are normally held between the players knees, but they tend to have rubber feet which allow them to be played on a flat surface by smaller players.                 |
| Conga      |  | A Cuban hand drum, normally played in pairs or groups by one percussionist. Pictured is a child-friendly light-weight version, slung from one shoulder and rested on the hip. These can also be played on the floor, but the sound will be less resonant. |
| Ocean drum |  | A Sound effect instrument. Hit with the hand or a soft stick, or hold horizontally and let the ball-bearings roll around for the sound of surf on a beach!  |

Snare drum



Play with 2 wooden drumsticks. Full-size instruments should be placed on a stand. The snare is made from wires or a metal brush which produces a buzzing sound when the drum is hit. Normally it is possible to release the snare for a softer sound.