

Instrument Families: String

All string instruments have something in common: they all make sound when their strings wiggle/vibrate. This can be done by plucking, using a bow, or striking the string. These strings can be made of gut (animal intestine- not as frequent now), metal, silk, or nylon.

Types of String Instruments

Lutes



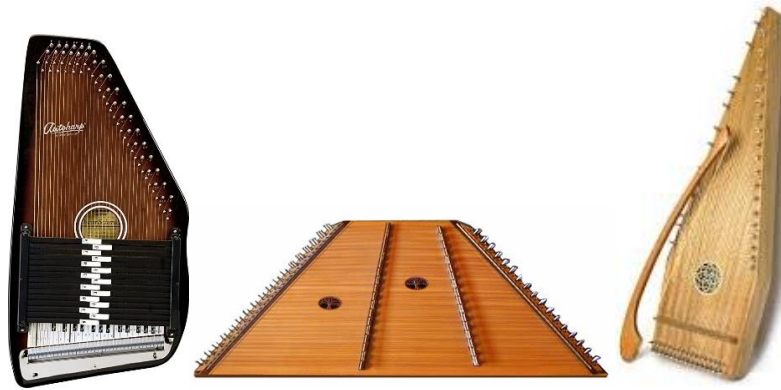
Instruments in this category feature an enclosed space for the sound to bounce around/resonate in, strings that go across it, and a neck that the strings are attached to. Someone who plays this kind of instrument moves their fingers up and down the neck. When they change the size of the string, they change the pitch/sound the string makes. They are usually plucked or bowed. Some instruments in the category are the guitar, banjo, violin, and a double bass.

Harps



Instruments in this category have strings that are contained within a frame. Some have levers and pedals to change their notes. They are usually plucked. Some harps include the concert harp, Celtic lever harp, and the Welsh triple harp (which has three sets of strings).

Zithers



Instruments in this category typically have many strings stretched over a flat sounding board. They are laid flat and are either played by strumming, with a pick, a bow, have keys (like a piano), or in some cases “hammers.” Some instruments in this category are the autoharp, hammered dulcimer, or bowed psaltery.

Activities for Your Child

How is a Violin Made?



Below are two videos from the show How It's Made: one about making violins and the other is about making electric violins. Before watching, do some brainstorming. What do you think violins are made out of? What is the same or different about each violin? What is missing on an electric violin? Watch the videos and see!



Traditional Violin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ4rXpbxqDo>

Electric Violin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hF9nF5FS88>

Listen to Different Kinds of String Instruments

The link below contains a large variety of string instruments. Watch how they're played and listen to how they sound. *Which sound similar? Different? Which do you like the most- and why? Does it remind you of anything?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDfWTdwZlms>