

Make a Rainstick



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Time Needed: 30 minutes

Arts Focus: Music
Math Focus: Shapes and Sizes

Age Range: 6-8

Mini-Lesson Description:

In this lesson, learners will explore shape, measurement, and sound by making a rainstick out of recycled materials.

Key Concepts:

Recycled Materials; Cylinders; Measurement; Instruments; Rainstick; Making Predictions; Volume; Culture; Percussion.

Materials Needed/Prep:

- Cardboard tube (wrapping paper, paper towel, etc.)
- 4 rubber bands
- 2 balloons
- Scissors
- A ruler or tape measurer
- Colorful masking tape or washi tape
- Pipe cleaners
- Filling: e.g., dried corn, beans, rice, seeds, or small plastic beads (at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per rainstick)
- Optional: paper, fabric, ribbon, or stickers to decorate the outside of the rainstick

Step-by-Step:

1. Have each learner describe the size, shape, and inside space (volume) of their cardboard tube.
2. Using the ruler, measure the tube's length and the distance across the open ends (diameter). Instrument makers use measurements and geometry to get specific materials to make specific sounds.
3. Decorate the tube:
 - It is easiest to decorate the tube before filling it. Cover the outside of the cardboard tube with masking tape, washi tape, paper, or other items in different colors, patterns, or textures. Secure decorations with tape.
4. Cover the end of the tube:
 - Cut the bottom of the two balloons. Stretch one of the cut balloons over one end of the tube and secure it to the tube with 2 rubber bands.
5. Fill the tube:
 - Place dried rice or beans, beads, or seeds inside the tube.
 - Add some bent pipe cleaners.
6. Cover the other end of the tube:
 - Cover the open end of the tube with the other balloon and secure with 2 rubber bands. This will prevent materials from falling out. Secure both ends of the tube with extra tape if necessary.
7. Flip it, shake it, and voilà—you have your very own rainstick!

Variations and Next Steps:

- Learn more about rain sticks here: <https://www.exploratorium.edu/snacks/make-your-own-rainstick>
- What different sounds can you make with your rainstick?
- Can you make a rhythm with your rainstick?
- Create multiple rainsticks using a variety of different fillings and different decorations. Compare the sounds.

Standards

WA State Music Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. **Performance Standard** (MU:Cn11.1.2) a. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Math Standard: ([CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.G.A.1](#)) Recognize and draw shapes having specified attributes, such as a given number of angles or a given number of equal faces

Watch a video of this Creative Start Mini-Lesson and find more at: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/creative-start-studio/>