



## Music Around the World

### Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading

Music is a wonderful part of life. It expresses how people feel. For our program called *Music Around the World*, we will talk about music from three different areas in the world.

#### **Africa**

The continent of Africa is home to many styles of music and many different types of instruments. The talking drum is one instrument from Africa. Known for its hourglass shape, the drum was designed to mimic human speech so that messages could be sent from one village to another. It was first used by traveling poets and storytellers, then later it was used during religious rites. It was also used to send messages. The talking drum is still used by musicians today.

A talking drum has a head on both ends. The drummer must beat the head with a stick in order to create sound. The tone of the drum sound is adjusted by tightening or loosening the strings attached to the instrument with the arm that holds the drum. The tone of the drum is adjusted in order to produce a detailed message.

Sources: Kivite, Titus. "The Talking Drum,"  
<http://streamafrica.com/culture/culture-of-africa/>.





## England



The second area we will learn about is the country of England, which is an island off the coast of Europe. Because it is an island, England gets enough rain to have many farms. England also has mountains that contain coal so there are many coal mines. Long ago, the farmers and coal-miners who lived in England made up dances about their lives. For example, the dancers who worked in the coal mines painted their faces black and carried sticks to represent their pick axes. These dances became known as Morris Dance and were performed to make extra money when they were not at work. Today, Morris Dancers dance for fun, as well as help people remember their past.

Source: Cawte, E. C. (1963). "The Morris Dance in Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire". *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*. 9 (4): 197–212. [JSTOR 4521671](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4521671).

The third area we will visit is the country of Argentina, which is located in South America. A dance as well as a type of music known as the tango originated in Argentina. Tango music is best played by an instrument known as the bandoneon. Although the bandoneon is part of the accordion family, it is different from an accordion. For example, instead of having piano keys on one side, a bandoneon has buttons that produce sounds when pushed. The player pushes the buttons in different combinations to make music. The bandoneon can be played two ways - fast or slow, loud or soft, and is always just right for dancing the tango.



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### Pre-visit Reading: Background Reading Activity

Use the information from the reading to complete the activities below.

- List three ways the talking drum has been used:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- The talking drum originated in \_\_\_\_\_ Africa.
- Why do you think this instrument is called a “talking” drum?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What do Border Morris dances represent? \_\_\_\_\_
- If you were going to create a Border Morris dance, what would your movements show? \_\_\_\_\_
- A bandoneon is from the same family of instruments as an \_\_\_\_\_.
- How are sounds produced on a bandoneon? \_\_\_\_\_.
- The style of dance and music that originated in Argentina is called the \_\_\_\_\_.





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### Pre-visit Reading: Background Reading Activity **KEY**

Use the information from the reading to complete the activities below.

1. List three ways the talking drum has been used:
  - a. Traveling poets and storytellers
  - b. Religious rites
  - c. Sending messages
2. The talking drum originated in West Africa.
3. Why do you think this instrument is called a "talking" drum? unique design allows it to mimic human speech
4. What do Border Morris dances represent? life in a particular village
5. If you were going to create a Border Morris dance, what would your movements show? Answers will vary, but hopefully will reflect the student's life today.
6. A bandoneon is from the same family of instruments as an accordion.
7. How are sounds produced on a bandoneon? By pressing buttons
8. The style of dance and music that originated in Argentina is called the tango.