

# Year 8 - African Drumming Knowledge Organiser

## Musical Context

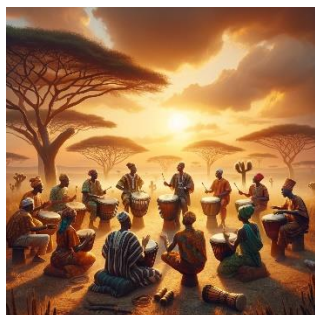
West Africa has a strong tradition of drumming.



Originally used as a form of **signal** or **communication**.

Drummers were often posted on the outskirts of the village.

Used to accompany **singing** and **dancing**, and as a form of **entertainment**.



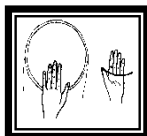
Passed down through generations without writing anything down. This is called an **oral tradition**.



## Drumming Techniques

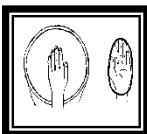
### The Tone

The open stroke has a high-pitched ringing tone. It is played with the fingers straight and together, hitting the edge of the drum in a bouncy motion.



### The Bass

This is a deep, resonant sound which can be felt low down in the body. The hand is cupped and strikes the centre of the drum firmly before bouncing back again.



## Musical Conventions and Keywords

**Djembe:** goblet-shaped drum from West Africa.

**Dun-Dun:** cylindrical pulse-keeping drums.

**Tone** (drum sound): striking the drum near the edge.

**Bass** (drum sound): striking the drum in the middle.

**Call and Response:** one rhythm is answered by another.

**Solo:** a single drummer will show off their performing talent by improvising.

**Ostinato:** a repeating pattern.

**Cue/Signal:** a signal to move to another section.

**Polyrhythm:** a texture made up from different rhythms.

**Texture:** the musical layers.

**Dynamic:** changes of volume in the music.

**Structure:** the way you order your performance into clear sections.

**Unison:** all drums perform the same rhythm.

## Useful Links

Check out some **amazing** African drumming performances using these links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dFtlcqGW50>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZHfmg1b4mc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE51NhwsQgs>

Learn more about African drumming and **expand your knowledge:**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zhsny4j/revision/2>

## Test Yourself

- Which region of Africa has a strong tradition of drumming?
- What was drumming originally used for?
- What might drumming be used for today?
- What are the 2 main types of drum called?
- How is African music passed on from one generation to another?
- How do you create the 2 main drum sounds?

## Notation – Note Duration

Note Name	Note Symbol	Note Value
Semibreve		4 beats
Minim		2 beats
Crotchet		1 beat
Quaver		½ of a beat
Pair of Quavers		2 x ½ beats = 1



## The Drums



Djembe



Dun-Dun