

## YEAR 8 - WEST AFRICAN MUSIC - KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER



### The Djembe

- A skin covered **hand drum**, shaped like large **goblet band** and meant to be played with **bare hands**.
- The name comes from the saying “*Anke die, anke be*” which translates as “**everyone gather together**”, and defines the purpose of the drum.

### DJEMBE PLAYING TECHNIQUES

BASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>deep, resonant sound</b> that can be felt low down in the body.</li> <li>• The hand strikes the centre of the drum</li> </ul>
TONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has a <b>high pitched</b> ringing tone</li> <li>• Played with the fingers together, hitting the top/periphery of the drum.</li> </ul>
SLAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a <b>short, sharp and loud</b> sound, but should not be a continuous sound.</li> <li>• The edge of the drum is struck with the fingers slightly apart.</li> </ul>



### WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING MUSIC - CONTEXT

Africa is a HUGE continent with a rich and diverse cultural and musical history. There are many types of musical styles and traditions to come from Africa. We are focusing on drumming styles popular in West Africa.

Here are two specific examples of different ethnic groups from West Africa. See if you can find more examples of their music:

#### Ewe People -

- West African group, with significant populations in Ghana, Togo & Benin.
- Speak the Ewe language and follow a variety of religions.
- Drumming traditions have influenced Afro-Caribbean music and jazz.
- Use of bells and shakers important, as well as drums
- Tradition of the master drummer.

#### Mandinka -

- West African ethnic group, with significant populations in The Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Ivory Coast.
- Islamic groups, diverse range of languages spoken
- The djembe believed to have originated with the Mandinka people, and forms a large part of their drumming tradition as well as the dun dun.
- The **Kora**, a melodic instrument, also plays a huge role in the musical life of the Mandinka.

### KEY FEATURES OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Ostinato	A repeated musical pattern
Improvisation	When music is made up on the spot
Polyrhythm	Two or more rhythmic patterns playing at the same time
Syncopation	Notes played on the off beat
Cross Rhythms	Effect when two conflicting rhythms are heard together
Call & Response	When a musical phrase is directly answered by another phrase
Oral Tradition	Music that is not written down but instead passed down by word of mouth

### TRADITIONAL AFRICAN INSTRUMENTS

**Drums** - Djembe, Dununs (*doundounba, sangban, kenkeni*), Talking Drum, Kpanlogo, Atsimevu, Fontomfrom (only played for Kings and Chiefs!) - There are LOTS of different types of African drums.

**Xylophone** - Balafon

**Bells** - dunun bell, gankogui bell

**Shakers** - caxixi, gourd rattles, djembe shakers, Shekere

**Thumb Pianos** - Mbira, Karimba

**String Instruments** - Kora, Ngoni