

Violins – Making Music in Germany

TEACHER: *Look closely. Do you know what kind of instruments are in this photo? I'll give you a clue. They start with the letter V.*

STUDENTS: **Violins**

You guessed it! These instruments are called violins. They belong to the string family of instruments, because you use their strings to make music. Do you know any other instruments that have strings?

Guitars, cello, ukulele, viola, etc.

You know a lot of instruments with strings. But, the strings are only part of what makes the violin such a special instrument.

Today we will learn how violins are made. The violins in this photo were handmade in a small shop in Germany. Do you know what they are made from?

Trees/wood, plastic, metal, etc.

Besides the strings, violins are traditionally made from wood. Making a violin is not easy. Violinmakers have to go to a special school to learn how to shape the wood, so it makes the right sounds when played. Which tools do you think they use to change the shape of the wood?

Planes, chisels, sandpaper, etc.

Many different tools are used for shaping the violin. Chisels and planers are the most common tools used. Violinmakers have to be very careful when they are making cuts into the wood. Some of the tools they use are only as big as your thumb! It takes a lot of practice and patience to become a good violinmaker. Do you know how long it takes to make a violin?

One day, one week, one month, six months, etc.

It can take a violinmaker six months, or 400-500 working hours, to finish one violin! Each violin is unique in the sound it makes when it is played. Famous musicians from all over the world will come to small violin shops in Germany to buy an instrument. They can be very expensive, but some of the violins made here are the best in the world.

People have been making violins in Germany for hundreds of years. The first violins were probably made in Italy, but many countries have their own version of the instrument. Today, people all over Europe, and the rest of the world, enjoy playing the violin and listening to the beautiful music it makes.

Pretend you are going to play a violin. How would you hold it?

(Give the kids a chance to pretend to hold and play a violin. After a minute, give them instructions on how to properly hold it.)

In order to get the best sound out of a violin, you need to hold the neck (the thin part) with one hand and rest the body (the wide part) on your shoulder. There is a special place for you to rest your chin and help keep the violin in the proper position. The fingers you are using to hold the neck, you also use to play the strings. Do you know what you do with your other hand?

Hold the bow

Your other hand is used to hold the bow of the violin. The bow is moved back and forth along the strings. When the strings and bow rub together, music is made! How do you think you make different notes on the violin?

Hold down different strings; move the bow faster or slower; etc.

You can make different notes on the violin by pressing down with your fingers on different strings, as you slide the bow across. The music you play on the violin can be slow or fast, happy or sad. The choice is up to you! Playing the violin well takes many years of practice, but the music it makes is truly beautiful.

Now watch closely as I show a video of someone playing the violin. While you are watching and listening, pretend that you are the one making the music. Hold up your pretend violin. The music is ready to begin.

(Play violin videos from the webpage.) *You may also choose to play your own violin recordings.

Fantastic job! Trees sure do make beautiful music!



Kindergarten Standards:

NYS Common Core Kindergarten Social Studies Standards

- K.2.b Cultures include traditions, beliefs, and shared values and ideas generally accepted by a particular group of people.
- K.2.c Children, families, and communities from different cultures all share some common characteristics, but also have specific differences which make them unique.
- K.9.a Children, families, and communities of today can be compared with those in the past.
- K.10.a People use folktales, legends, oral histories, and music to teach values, ideas, traditions, and important events from the past.

Kindergarten ELA Power NYSCCLS (ICSD Power Standards in Bold)

Reading Standards for Informational Text: Kindergarten

- **Integration and Knowledge of Ideas**

7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

Speaking and Listening Standards: Kindergarten

- **Comprehension and Collaboration**
 - 1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
 - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).**
 - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.**
 - c. Seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.****
 - 2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.**
 - 3. Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.**
- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**
 - 6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.**

Language Standards: Kindergarten

- **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
 - 6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.**