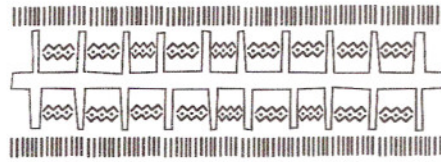


# Xylophone

Music and dance are combined in symbolic rituals and cultural occasions throughout Africa. In addition to drums, percussion instruments such as bells, the xylophone, and the "thumb piano" (*likembe*) are also used to make sounds and rhythms. The thumb piano seems to come from Lower Zaire but has spread south to Angola, Zambia, and South Africa. A portable xylophone, originating in the Congo, was often taken by a chief when traveling.

Zambian dancers form two lines, men in one row, women in another. Bells and rattles worn on their wrists and ankles add to the melodic sounds created by drums, flutes, xylophones, and thumb pianos.



## Project

Construct a portable xylophone and participate in a Zambian line dance.

## Materials

- wood dowel or drumming stick
- large lightweight gift box (lid or base)
- clean, empty soup cans with both ends removed
- blocks of wood in varying sizes
- scissors
- hole punch
- markers
- tacky glue

## Directions

1. Use markers to draw African designs around the edge of the box lid or base.
2. Punch a hole at opposite ends of the box sides, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (1.27 cm) from the top edge.
3. Cut a length of yarn long enough to go around your neck and reach your waist. Thread a yarn end through opposite holes and tie a knot to hold them in place.
4. Select a combination of three or more cans and blocks. The number and size will depend on the size of the box.
5. Arrange the cans and blocks in the box. The cans

should be on their sides. Glue them in place in the box. When dry, wear the xylophone around your neck and strike the cans and blocks with a dowel or drumming stick to create different tones and sounds.

