

MUSIC · GRADES 2–5

# Instrument Families

Strings, brass, woodwind & percussion

## The four families

Family	How they make sound	Examples
Strings	Vibrating strings	Violin, guitar, piano, harp
Brass	Buzzing lips into metal tubes	Trumpet, trombone, tuba, french horn
Woodwind	Air through reeds or holes	Flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe
Percussion	Hitting, shaking, or scraping	Drums, xylophone, triangle, tambourine

## Listen for these sounds

<p><b>String instruments</b></p> <p>Often smooth and flowing. Can play melodies and harmonies together. Listen for: violin solos in classical music, guitar in folk songs.</p>	<p><b>Brass instruments</b></p> <p>Bold and powerful. Often play fanfares or strong melodies. Listen for: trumpet in jazz, brass sections in marching bands.</p>
<p><b>Woodwind instruments</b></p> <p>Can be breathy and gentle or bright and chirpy. Listen for: flute in gentle melodies, clarinet in folk music.</p>	<p><b>Percussion instruments</b></p> <p>Keep the beat and add excitement. Listen for: drums in rock music, xylophone in children's songs.</p>

## Instrument detective



1. Listen to a piece of music. Can you hear strings, brass, woodwind, or percussion? Which family is loudest?
2. Which instrument family do you think sounds the most exciting? Why?
3. If you could learn to play an instrument from any family, which would you choose?

