

Script for leaders

Follow along with the video session for 'Djembe drums'.



Pronunciation guide: Djembe: jem-bey

Explain what you're doing today, give everyone a bit of background information, and make sure they have what they need. You could say something like:

Today we're going to try something new that reminds us that we're all international citizens: we're going to make our own djembe drums. Everyone make sure you're on mute then practise saying djembe with me? Djembe.

To make your own djembe drum, all you'll need is a pair of scissors, elastic bands, string, wool, or thread, sticky tape, pots or cups, and an old plastic bag. Everyone got that? Show the camera... great, let's go!

Talk everyone through the first few steps of sticking their cups/pots together and adding an elastic band. You could say something like:

First off, use some of the tape to stick the bottom of the cups or pots together. Got it? Let's add an elastic band over the top where the cups or pots join.

Explain that everyone needs to draw around their drum on the plastic bag, then draw a bigger circle. You could say something like:

Next you need to lay your plastic bag out flat and draw around the top of your cup or pot. Don't do it too close to the edge – once you're done, you need to draw a bigger circle around it. It's OK if it's a bit wobbly – I don't think mine would be as neat as the person in the video's.

Tell everyone that the next step is to carefully cut around the bigger circle with scissors and attach it to the top of the drum. While the video's showing everyone again, tell people a bit about where djembe drums come from. You could say something like:

Carefully cut around the bigger circle with scissors, then pop it on top of the drum, pull it tight, and put another elastic band to hold it in position.

Djembe drums come from west Africa – you may have heard of some countries in west African like Ghana or Nigeria.

Explain how people can weave a piece of wool, thread, or string between the two elastic bands to make a pattern on the side of their drum. As they're concentrating, tell them a bit more about what djembe drums are traditionally used for. You could say something like:

Next, you'll need to cut a pretty long piece of wool, thread, or string. Tie it onto the rubber band in the middle of your drum then bring it up and loop it under the elastic band at the top – be careful not to pop the band off the top. Keep zig-zagging the wool up and down, tucking it under the elastic bands, until you get all the way around the drum.

According to the Bambara people in Mali, the name djembe comes from a saying that means 'everyone gather together in peace' – I think that explains a bit about the purpose of the drum too.

If you want to, you could add a handle by attaching the piece of string to the elastic bands.

Finally, ask everyone to hold up their djembe drums so everyone can see.

This is a great chance to boost everyone's confidence by telling people what they did well in the activity. Once you've seen everyone's drums, have a go at playing along to (and repeating) the rhythm in the video, then try playing some rhythms of your own.