

SIAMA'S CONGO ROOTS

LESSON PLANS

CLASS NOTES®

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SIAMA'S CONGO ROOTS

KINDERGARTEN LESSON

LEARN about the Democratic Republic of Congo

- Siama's Congo Roots is a trio of musicians who perform Congolese music, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (also known as DR Congo) in Africa.
- Find DR Congo on a map.



[SOURCE LINK](#)

- Notice that it is a very large country—the 11th largest in the world!
- It is right in the middle of the African continent.
- Many languages are spoken in DR Congo, and most people there speak several languages.
- The equator runs through DR Congo. So does the Congo River, one of the world's longest rivers.
- There are many kinds of music in DR Congo. Three common types are:
 - › Traditional Bakongo music - for singing and dancing, with lots of homemade instruments made from wood or tin cans
 - › Congolese rumba - features guitar, and also for dancing Soukous - again, dance music! Usually uses a drum set instead of hand drums and features guitar and bass. Siama became famous performing this style of music.

LISTEN AND WATCH

- Siama's Congo Roots
 - › [“YeLe YeLe”](#)
 - › [“Ko Yimbi Ko”](#)
 - › [“Malembe”](#)
- [Congoese rumba](#) performed by Lucie Eyenga
- [Soukous](#) performed by Moni Mambo and his Orchestra Shika Shika (Siama wrote this song).
- Listen to any track on the [Siama's Congo Roots Playlist](#).

MOVE, DANCE, AND SHAKE!

- Choose a track from the [Siama's Congo Roots Playlist](#) and have a dance party!
- Siama's Congo Roots uses shakers in a lot of their music, and musicians from all over the world use them too. Explain that we can make our own shakers from everyday objects. Start by collecting containers such as Dixie cups, rinsed yogurt cups, and tin cans. Then look for a filling—the stuff that will shake around—such as dried beans, pasta, rice, pennies, safety pins, or toothpicks. Find a lid of some sort and seal it shut with thick layers of tape.
- Before using your shakers at your dance party, listen to and compare the different sounds, or *timbres*, each shaker makes. Notice the contrasts between loud and soft. Discuss and decide which shakers should be used for which song.
- Extend the dance party by listening, dancing, and shaking to more songs.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can move, sing, and play instruments with others.
- I can make musical choices by exploring the effects of musical elements, such as loud/soft or fast/slow.
- I can identify musical opposites while listening to and interacting with a variety of music.

KEY WORDS Democratic Republic of Congo, shakers, timbre

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FIRST GRADE LESSON

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- Try out your shakers by shaking along with a steady beat.
- Before using your shakers at your dance party, listen to and compare the different sounds, or *timbres*, each shaker makes. Notice the contrasts between loud and soft. Discuss and decide which shakers should be used for which song.
- Extend the dance party by listening, dancing, and shaking to more songs. Alternate between using your shakers to find a steady beat and “freestyling” or making your own rhythmic patterns that fit together with the music.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can move, sing, and play instruments with others.
- I can identify and play a steady beat.
- I can create and improvise rhythmic patterns.
- I can make musical choices by exploring the effects of musical elements, such as loud/soft or fast/slow.
- I can identify musical opposites while listening to and interacting with a variety of music.

KEY WORDS Democratic Republic of Congo, shaker, timbre, steady beat, improvise

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SECOND GRADE LESSON

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SING WITH ECHO & CALL AND RESPONSE PATTERNS

- Many of Siama's songs use call and response patterns, in which a leader sings something and the group echoes or sings it back.
- Try this with a famous call and response song called “[Kye Kye Kule](#).” This song comes from Ghana, another country in Africa. After learning the song and the actions, ask students to take turns as leader, or “caller.”

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can move, sing, and play instruments with others.
- I can identify and play a steady beat.
- I can create and improvise rhythmic patterns.
- I can make musical choices by exploring the effects of musical elements, such as loud/soft or fast/slow.
- I can identify musical opposites while listening to and interacting with a variety of music.
- I can sing call and response patterns.

KEY WORDS Democratic Republic of Congo, shakers, timbre, steady beat, call and response patterns

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THIRD GRADE LESSON

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- Before using your shakers at your dance party, listen to and compare the different sounds, or *timbres*, each shaker makes. Notice the contrasts between loud and soft. Discuss and decide which shakers should be used for which song.
- Ask each student to create or improvise a rhythmic pattern containing long sounds, short sounds, and rests. Integrate notation and symbols if appropriate.
- Use another track from the playlist or a favorite classroom song to perform shaker patterns. Ask students to perform their pattern in a call and response manner, where they play and other students echo back their pattern.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can move, sing, and play instruments with others.
- I can identify and play a steady beat.
- I can create and improvise rhythmic patterns.
- I can make musical choices by exploring the effects of musical elements, such as loud/soft or fast/slow.
- I can identify musical opposites while listening to and interacting with a variety of music.
- I can play call and response patterns on rhythmic instruments.
- I can create and improvise rhythmic patterns containing long sounds, short sounds, and rests.

KEY WORDS Democratic Republic of Congo, shakers, rhythm, rests, timbre, call and response

SIAMA'S CONGO ROOTS

FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GRADE LESSON

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CREATE ORIGINAL MUSIC ABOUT DAILY LIFE

- In DR Congo, a lot of music tells stories about daily life. Many songs were created to help make a chore, task, or job more pleasant.
- Ask students to free-write a few sentences about a daily task, such as walking to the bus stop, cleaning up at home, or doing homework.
- Ask them to revise lyrics to have a repeated sentence or refrain. Simplify if necessary.
- Once the lyrics are finalized, ask students to create a melody for their lyrics. Use melodic notation if appropriate, or simply a line indicating a rough idea of high, low, skips, steps, etc.
- Improvise a simple rhythmic ostinato and ask students to sing their melodies over the top of the rhythmic pattern.
- Adjust the level of difficulty according to grade level and/or level of skill and experience. Possible modifications include incorporating verse/chorus structure, adding a harmonic ostinato, or adding layers of rhythmic patterns/instrumentation. Bonus points if a student can integrate a call and response singing pattern into his or her chorus/refrain.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can create musical ideas that can be combined into a melody.
- I can create a song about daily life.
- I understand that many songs reflect daily tasks and people's way of life.
- I can create music with multiple layers.

• **KEY WORDS** Democratic Republic of Congo, melody, harmonic, ostinato, rhythm

