

STRING CHARADES

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

Here's a simple, movement-based activity geared for younger students to help reinforce basic string techniques.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will correctly identify violin, viola, and cello by both sight and sound.
2. Students will recognize special string instrument techniques, specifically *pizzicato* and *arco*.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Explain that string instruments can perform a special technique—*pizzicato*—which means that they *pluck* their strings instead of using the bow. Watch a few examples so that students understand what *pizzicato* looks and sounds like.

Here's "Allegro Pizzicato" from Béla Bartók's *String Quartet No. 4*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBs53SIEkso>

2. Note that when string players use the bow, it's referred to as *arco*. Watch a contrasting example, the "*American*" *Quartet*, by Antonín Dvořák.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV-kbAydckw>
3. Create two index cards, labeled *pizzicato* and *arco*, respectively. Use them as a prompt for students to act out playing each technique.
4. Ask students to volunteer to come up and pretend/pantomime playing *pizzicato* or *arco* while other students guess.

STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota Standards for the Arts:

1. K–3. Artistic Foundations 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2. Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm, and expressive intent.



2. Grades 4–5. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 4.1.2.3.2. Sing and play alone and in a group demonstrating proper posture, breathing, technique, age-appropriate tone quality and expressive intent.



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