

Art Exploration

HOMEMADE HARMONICA



Make some noise with a simple, homemade musical instrument! Decorate your popsicle sticks however you like, then assemble the pieces to make your harmonica sing.

Materials Provided:

Large popsicle sticks (2)
Small piece of paper
Rubber Bands
Straw

Materials Needed:

Makers, tape for decorating

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Start by decorating your popsicle sticks. You can use markers, stickers, jewels or washi tape to create a colorful design. Keep in mind that only one side of each stick will show once you put the instrument together.
2. Put the two sticks together (colored side out) and place a piece of paper between them –just as if you were making a cheese sandwich (with paper being the cheese). Tie with rubber bands on each end.



3. Take your straw and cut it into two small pieces, about two inches long. Slide these pieces into your instrument between the popsicle sticks, one on each end of your harmonica. You may need to undo one rubber band in order to make more space. It is okay if your straw pieces get a bit squashed during this process!

(Note: the sample project uses a toothpick instead of a straw. Both options should work, but we had better success with the straw!)



That's it! To play your harmonica, press your lips against the edge of the instrument and blow.

Experiment to make different sounds -- does the sound get higher or lower depending how hard you blow? Does it matter which part of the instrument you blow on? Try moving the straws across the instrument as you play, and see what happens. Try pinching the popsicle sticks closer together. What differences do you hear?

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It's important to remember that sounds are really the energy made by vibrations -- when objects move back and forth super quickly, sometimes faster than our eyes can see! As they vibrate, they cause the air around them to vibrate, too, making **sound waves**, and those waves reach our eardrum and cause *it* to vibrate! That's how our ears perceive sound.

The vibrating in *this* project comes from you. When you blow into the harmonica, your breath causes the paper and straws to vibrate very quickly, making the noise you hear!



Note to parents and caregivers:

Sorry about this one.

This project was provided by Pomelody at www.blog.pomelody.com. Visit their website for more craft ideas!