

Art Exploration

RUBBER BAND BANJOS



Make your own banjo using rubber bands and a paper plate, then strum away!

Materials Provided:

Paper Plates (2)
Rubber Bands
Paint Stirrer

Materials Needed:

Markers, Paint or Stickers
Duct Tape
Stapler

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Stack two paper plates on top of each other and staple around the outside edges, to hold them together. This will make the body of your banjo stronger.
2. Paint, color, or decorate your plates however you like. The inside of the plates will show as you play - the back will be against your body.
3. Wrap 3 or 4 rubber bands around the plates, running in the same direction. Leave a little bit of space between each band. Hold them in place using duct tape or packing tape on the back of your plate. (Note: the example below uses a jar lid, instead).



4. Decorate your paint stick with markers, stickers or washi tape.
5. Attach your paint stick to the back of your plates using duct tape, packing tape, or tacky glue. The top of your paint stick should stick out from behind the plates on one end, to serve as the handle (or "neck") of your banjo.
6. To play, hold your banjo in two hands -- one hand should be on the handle, and another plucking or strumming the "strings."



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Just like the harmonica, stringed instruments work by making vibrations. When playing the harmonica, your breath causes the vibration -- with the banjo and other instruments with strings, your fingers do the work! Plucking, picking, or strumming the rubber bands causes them to vibrate, creating the sounds we hear.

The more **tension** the strings have -- the tighter they are -- the higher the sound they make. Experiment by using different sized rubber bands to create higher and lower sounds. You can also try taping the bands in different places on the back of your plate, or playing on different parts of the band to change the sound they make.

Enjoy, and rock on!