



# What are INSTRUMENT FAMILIES?

**Age Range:** Elementary

**Learning Objective:** Students will learn the characteristics of the four primary instrument families.

## ENGAGE students

**MOVE.** Play a game to notice similarities between students. Ask students to stand up based on a prompt. Prompts include: "Stand if you: are wearing the color red, have long hair, have short hair, like basketball, like pizza, etc." Play several rounds.

**SAY.** "We have a lot of similarities, and there's also some differences! Today we're going to talk about instruments that share similar features."

## EXPLORE sounds

**EXPLAIN.** "Instruments are placed in groups based on similarities of how they create sounds. We call these groups families. We can group instruments into four families: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion."

**DEFINE.** Sing *Instruments Belong in Four Families* to teach students the characteristics of each family. Sing the song a few times. Add movement or actions to help students retain the information. [Download the score!](#)

**LEARN.** Choose one instrument demonstration video from each family to show. Each video is 1-2 minutes long. While listening, students can color one of the included [Instrument Family Coloring Sheets](#). Each features a few instruments from each family.

String	Brass	Woodwind	Percussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Violin</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Viola</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cello</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Guitar</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tenor Trombone</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Alto Trombone</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tuba</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">French Horn</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bassoon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Oboe</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Clarinet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Flute</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Marimba</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hand Drums</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Goat Hoof Shaker</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mbira</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tabla</a></li> </ul>

**PLAY.** Play 4 Corners with students to practice identifying instrument families. Use our ready-to-go [4 Corners Visuals & Instructions](#) to play.

## EXTEND learning

*Choose one or more activities to extend learning.*

**WATCH.** Continue learning with our [Virtual Concert: Instrument Families](#) lesson featuring Class Notes Artists.

**PLAY.** Utilize resources from TeachersPayTeachers like [Instrument Family Bingo](#) or [Instrument Scavenger Hunt](#) to reinforce learning.