**Instrument Exploration: Viola**

**Age Range:** K–6

**Learning Objective:** Students will listen to and learn about the viola.

**ENGAGE**

**NOTICE.** “Look at this picture. Do you think the two instruments are the same? Can you name some similarities? Do you notice any differences?”

**EXPLAIN & EXPLORE**

**EXPLAIN.** “The smaller instrument in the picture is the violin. The slightly larger instrument is the viola (vee-OH-lah). The viola is a member of the string family. It looks a lot like the violin. Since it is slightly bigger than the violin, it can play a little lower—but not quite as high.”

**LEARN.** Watch this 3-minute video about the viola, featuring Kirsti from the Lux String Quartet.

**LISTEN.** Show this 5-minute video, *Capriccio in C minor*, Op. 55, or this 7-minute video, *Peace*, both featuring young violinist Steven Baloue.

**REFLECT.** Write down or tell someone three things you learned about the viola.

**EXTEND**

Choose one or both of the following activities to extend learning.

**WATCH.** Watch violinist Valerie, talk about the viola. She explains the technique *sul ponticello*. Ask students if they can explain what that means and describe how it sounded.

**PLAY.** Play a round of “Name That String Instrument.” Remind students that the *cello* shares the same shape as the violin and viola, but is even bigger, and therefore lower. Choose pieces for solo violin, viola, or cello and ask students to guess which instrument they hear. Ask them to explain their answers. Use this playlist or create your own.

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