

LEARN

The talking drum is an hourglass-shaped, double-headed drum that is played in West Africa. The drum is clasped under the player's arm and struck with a curved beater. The player squeezes the sides of the drum, tightening or loosening the membrane to produce a wide range of tones. It is called a "talking drum" because the pitch changes mimic the tone and speech patterns of the human voice. One of the oldest instruments in West Africa, the talking drum is found in many different geographic areas and cultures. It is used for creating speech, dance, or signal patterns; oftentimes, the drums were used to communicate information over long distances. The talking drum is known by many different names; for example, in Senegal it is the *tama*, while in Nigeria it is the *kalangu* or *dundun*.

MAKE**Materials**

- 8-inch embroidery hoops (1 set)
- Medium-sized plastic planting pots (2)
- Clear duct tape
- Decorative duct tape
- Scissors
- Glue Dots
- Ribbon (optional)
- Pencil

Instructions

1. Tightly cover one side of each embroidery hoop in 2 layers of clear duct tape. Tape each layer in the same direction so there is one horizontal layer and one vertical layer.
2. Center and place each embroidery hoop on top of the planting pots with tape side down to attach.
3. Using glue dots, glue the bottoms of the planting pots together. (Optional: Using clear duct tape, tape the 2 ends together.)
4. Tightly wrap the drum in decorative duct tape by going **all the way** around the drum. Do this 2 or 3 times at even distances around the drum.
5. On the sides of the drum, fold wrapped tape in half.
6. Optional: Attach ribbon to hoops as shoulder strap.
7. Using the pencil as your beater, play your drum.

SEE

Visit MIM's Africa Gallery and see talking drums in Nigeria, Togo, and Burkina Faso.



LISTEN

Check out [this playlist](#) for performances featuring the West African talking drum.

PLAY

Kye Kye Kule, a call-and-response song from Ghana, is also a well-known salsa song.

Lyrics

Leader: Kye kye kule

Group: Kye kye kule

Leader: Kye kye kofi sa

Group: Kye kye kofi sa

Leader: Kofi sa langa

Group: Kofi sa langa

Leader: Kaka shi langa

Group: Kaka shi langa

Leader: Kum aden nde

Group: Kum aden nde

Kum aden nde

Kum aden nde, hey!

Talking Drum Pitches

High, high, low, high

High, high, low, high

High, high, high, low, low

High, high, high, low, low

Low, high, low, high

Low, high, low, high

Low, low, high, low, low

Low, low, high, low, low

Low, low, low, high

Low, low, low, high

Low, low, low, high

Low, low, low, high, HEY!

LEARN MORE

Check out the *Roots of Rhythm* curriculum about the *dondo* [here!](#)