



Anna Lin - Taiko



STUDY GUIDE



RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS



Dear Teachers and Educators,

Rhythmix is excited to have you join us for the 2021-22 season of **PAL - Performance, Art & Learning**. These assemblies are intended to serve as a catalyst for arts learning and a springboard for integrating arts education into your classroom activities and curriculum.

To help your students gain the most out of these PAL assemblies, we suggest that the learning begin before, and continue after, watching the videos. Utilizing the resources provided, your students can engage more fully with the performance experience, connecting what they see and hear to their personal lives, culture, community and any school subjects you choose.

Aligning with the **California Arts Standards**, activities are included in every Study Guide to help foster students' artistic competencies, cultivate their appreciation and understanding of the arts, and support them to fully engage in lifelong arts learning.

New this year, **Artist Q&A** videos focus on **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Through the Arts** with activities based on CASEL's SEL Framework to help students develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, show empathy for others, establish supportive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

At Rhythmix, we believe exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience, helping us learn about ourselves, each other, and the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

Your PALs at Rhythmix



From the Artist

Dear Educators,

Thank you for your participation and interest in Rhythmix Cultural Works' Performance, Art & Learning Program --- I hope your students enjoy their exposure to Japanese culture!

About me

My name is Anna Lin. Born and raised in San Jose, CA, I was a performing member of San Jose Taiko from 1981 to 1989. After spending one year training and performing with Miyarabi Taiko, an all-female group of Okinawan style of taiko drummers, I returned to San Jose, and served on the Artistic Staff until 1997. Currently I play taiko independently (for fun!).



Contents

In this study guide, you will find:

- 1 - Topics to discuss with your students about the story Obon!
- 2 - A glossary with the Japanese characters (kanji), pronunciation and meaning for Japanese terms in the story Obon!
- 3 - A glossary with the Japanese characters, pronunciation and meaning for Japanese terms from Activity Part I (Taiko Vocabulary/Matsuri) and Activity Part II (Overlapping Rhythms).
- 4 - Review questions with answers for various grades/levels about what the students have learned in this unit.



What is Taiko?

Taiko is the traditional Japanese drum. The origin of taiko is commonly depicted in the mythological story of the Japanese goddess of the sun, Amaterasu. Angered by her brother, she hid herself in a cave and refused to come out, depriving the world of the sun. The only one to successfully lure her out of the cave was another goddess, who danced on top of a barrel, which served as the first taiko.



History of Taiko

There is a variety of taiko's historical use. Farmers believed that playing taiko would bring rain and rid insects from rice fields. Warriors believed playing taiko would bring fear to the enemy. Priests believed taiko would dispel evil spirits. Taiko was also used as musical accompaniment in theater, such as Kabuki and Noh. Taiko is still used today during Japan's many festivals, such as the Obon Matsuri.

How Taiko is Made

Traditionally, the body of the taiko was carved from a single piece of tree. Animal skin was used for the drumhead, and metal or rope held the body and the head together. Taiko come in a variety of shapes and sizes, ranging from small, handheld taiko to very large odaiko (big drum). The drumsticks, bachi, also vary in shape and size.

Modern Taiko

Currently there are thousands of taiko groups, both in Japan and the rest of the world. Taiko players are no longer limited to people of Japanese descent. With the birth of modern taiko outside of Japan came the development of using barrels instead of single pieces of wood for the taiko.

With the incorporation of rhythms from other cultures, each group has developed its own unique musical style. Although much of the physical forms (kata) of traditional taiko playing remains generally the same, each group also has its own particular style regarding choreography and movement.

Obon Festival

Japan has many festivals (Matsuri) celebrated throughout the year. The Obon Matsuri is a summertime festival, held to honor ancestors. Typically this festival lasts three days. Obon dancing (Odori) is one of the unique characteristics of this festival. Dancers dress in colorful clothing (typically yukata or kimono) and sometimes use props, such as fans, with which to dance. As with taiko, the Odori style varies from region to region.





Obon! Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with your class after watching *Obon!*

Culture

Have your students consider the similarities and/or differences in Japanese culture with their own. Perhaps they noticed details about the Japanese language or music. Please explore the concepts of gratitude and respect.

Differences and Disabilities

Imagine what it would be like to navigate the world if you were deaf. What would it be like to go to school? Speak or play with friends? Watch TV?

What modifications might you have to make in your daily activities in order to participate? What are some things that others could do to help make these activities more accessible?

Do you think Shotoku's deafness prevented him from developing interests and/or having a sense of purpose?



Social Awareness

How was Shotoku's problem of dancing in the Obon solved? Would the outcome have been different without his grandfather's help? Would it have helped or hindered if he managed his emotions, thoughts and/or behavior differently?

Self-Management

How do you think Shotoku felt after dancing for the first time in the Obon? Have you ever experienced something similar? Do you feel the same way after accomplishing a specific goal? What does the story tell you about the value of practice and determination?

Stewardship / Consciousness

What did you learn about Ojii-san's desire to help his grandson? What resources did he use to accomplish his task?

Please explore how he uses Earth's natural resources without damage to the planet.

How does it relate to today's implementation of recycling/reusing materials?





Japanese terms from *Obon!*

Kanji	Pronunciation	Definition
-くん	<i>-kun</i>	term of endearment for a young boy
津波	<i>tsunami</i>	tidal wave
お爺さん	<i>Ojii-san</i>	grandfather
お婆さん	<i>Obaa-san</i>	grandmother
桜	<i>sakura</i>	Japanese cherry
寿司	<i>sushi</i>	vinegared, seasoned rice
おいしい	<i>oishii</i>	delicious, tasty
お風呂	<i>ofuro</i>	hot bath
お茶	<i>ocha</i>	tea
漢字	<i>kanji</i>	Chinese written characters
武士	<i>samurai</i>	warriors of ancient times
剣道	<i>kendo</i>	Japanese martial art of fencing
お盆	<i>Obon</i>	summer period of honoring ancestors
祭り	<i>Matsuri</i>	festival
踊り	<i>odori</i>	Japanese traditional dance
鉢巻き	<i>hachimaki</i>	headband
うちわ	<i>uchiwa</i>	round paper fan
扇子	<i>sensu</i>	folding paper fan
かちかち	<i>kachi kachi</i>	wooden clackers
竹笛	<i>takebue</i>	Japanese bamboo flute





Japanese terms from *Obon!*

Kanji	Pronunciation	Definition
三味線	<i>shamisen</i>	Japanese three-stringed lute
太鼓	<i>taiko</i>	drum
大きい	<i>ookii</i>	big
お願いいたします	<i>onegai itashimasu</i>	please (honorific form)
相撲	<i>sumo</i>	Japanese wrestling
お願いします	<i>onegai shimasu</i>	please
こっち見て	<i>kotchi mite</i>	look over here
ハッピ	<i>happi</i>	Japanese worker's jacket
帯	<i>obi</i>	wide belt
行って来ます	<i>itte kimasu</i>	expression said when leaving the home
何	<i>nani</i>	what?
大太鼓	<i>odaiko</i>	large drum
早く	<i>hayaku</i>	quickly



Japanese terms from Taiko Activities

Kanji	Pronunciation	Definition
太	taiko	drum
顔	kao	face
耳	mimi	ear
大太	odaiko	large drum
中太	chudaiko	mid-sized drum
吊り太	tsuri-daiko	hanging drum
吊る	tsuru	to hang
締め太	shime-daiko	rope-tied drum
締める	shimeru	to tie, tighten
おけど	okedo	type of rope-tied drum
うちわ	uchiwa	fan
バチ	bachi	drumstick(s)
型	kata	physical form (martial arts)
ドン	Don	big, loud sound on the taiko
ドゴドン	Do Go Don	variation of Don
ドロンドン	DoRo Don Don	variation of Don
ツ	tsu	soft, quiet sound on taiko
ツク	tsuku	variation of tsu
カ	ka	rim sound on the taiko
カラカ	kara ka	variation of ka
カラ カラ カ	kara kara ka	variation of ka
ス	su	musical rest, silent note
気合い	kiai	vocal shout from the gut
祭り	Matsuri	festival



Review Questions --- Level I (Grades 1-2)

For each question, circle the correct answer.

1. The Japanese word Matsuri means: grandfather festival

The Japanese word Odori means: dance grandmother

2. The body of the taiko is made of: plastic metal wood paper

The drumhead is made of: animal skin paper cloth plastic

They are attached to each other with: needle and thread metal tacks

3. The face of the taiko is called: dou kao mimi

The body of the taiko is called: kao mimi dou

The side (ear) of the taiko is called: mimi dou kao

4. Taiko come in different shapes and sizes: True or False

5. The taiko drumsticks are called bachi: True or False

The drumsticks are always the same shape and size: True or False

6. Players can stand any way they like while playing taiko: True or False

7. In taiko vocabulary, the big, loud sound is: su kara tsu or tsuku Don

The soft, quiet sound is: Don tsu or tsuku su kara





Answer Key --- Level I (Grades 1-2)

1. festival
dance

2. wood
animal skin
metal tacks

3. kao
dou
mimi

4. True

5. True
False

6. False

7. Don
tsu or tsuku





Review Questions --- Level II (Grades 3-4)

1. Match the English words with the Japanese terms:

Grandfather

Matsuri

Grandmother

Obaa-san

Festival

Odori

Dance

Ojii-san

2. Match the parts of the taiko with what they are made from:

body of taiko

metal tacks

drumhead

wood

how they attach to each other

animal skin

3. Match the English words with the Japanese terms:

face of the taiko

dou

body of the taiko

mimi

side (ear) of the taiko

kao

4. Taiko come in various shapes, sizes, but the ways they are built are all the same: True or False

5. The drumsticks, called _____, for all taiko are the same as each other: True or False





Review Questions --- Level II (Grades 3-4)

6. The way someone stands while playing taiko does not matter:

True or False

The way someone stands while playing taiko is similar to martial arts:

True or False

7. Choose the correct sounds of the following rhythmic pattern:

Don tsuku Do Ro tsuku su Don Don

- A. Loud soft Loud soft soft Loud Loud Loud
- B. Loud soft soft Loud Loud soft soft (rest) Loud Loud
- C. Loud Loud soft soft Loud soft (rest) Loud Loud
- D. Loud soft Loud Loud soft Loud (rest) Loud

Bonus question!

During the silent note, or musical rest, a taiko player must remain quiet and motionless. True or False





Answer Key --- Level II (Grades 3-4)

1. Grandfather = Ojii-san

Grandmother = Obaa-san

Festival = Matsuri

Dance = Odori

2. body of taiko = wood

drumhead = animal skin

how they are attached to each other = metal tacks

3. face of the taiko = kao

body of the taiko = dou

side (ear) of the taiko = mimi

4. False (they do come in various shapes and sizes, but there are also different ways to make them)

5. Bachi / False

6. False / True

7. B

Bonus question:

False (remaining quiet and motionless is an option, though)





Review Questions --- Level III (Grades 5-6)

1. Provide the Japanese term for festival: _____

Provide the Japanese term for dance: _____

2. What is the body of the taiko made from? _____

What is the drumhead made from? _____

Name two ways how they are attached to each other:

3. Write the Japanese terms for the face, body, and side (ear) of the taiko:

4. Describe two different types of taiko:

5. Name two ways taiko drumsticks, called _____,
can differ from each other:





Review Questions --- Level III (Grades 5-6)

6. Briefly describe the way someone stands while playing taiko:

7. Provide the taiko vocabulary for

the big, loud sound: _____

the soft, quiet sound: _____

the sound on the rim: _____

the musical rest: _____

How would you write: soft soft Loud soft soft Loud Loud (rest) Loud:

Bonus question!

Name two ways to fill a silent note, or musical rest:





Answer Key --- Level III (Grades 5-6)

1. Matsuri / Odori
2. Wood / Animal skin, Metal tacks or thick rope
3. Kao, Dou, Mimi
4. Any two among: large drum, mid-sized drum, rope-tied drum, portable drum, hanging drum, fan drum (there can be more options).
5. Bachi / They can differ in length (size), diameter (size), shape, and type of wood.
6. A taiko player's stance is similar to that found in martial arts --- low and wide, with flexibility to move around while remaining grounded and centered.
7.
Don
tsu or tsuku
ka or kara
su
tsuku Don tsuku Do Ro su Don

Bonus question

Any two among: movement, pose, kiai (vocal shout)



Thank You!

Thank you for joining Rhythmix Cultural Works and Anna Lin.
We look forward to seeing you next time!



For more info about Rhythmix, please visit: www.rhythmix.org



About Rhythmix Cultural Works

Rhythmix Cultural Works brings people of all ages together to experience and explore music, dance, visual art and educational opportunities. The organization seeks to build community by inspiring engagement in the arts as a way to learn about each other and the world. With a strong commitment to provide programming relevant to the local population, Rhythmix strives to promote cultural awareness, encourage participation in the arts, and support local artists in the presentation of their work.

Since Rhythmix opened its doors in 2007, the community-based arts facility has built its reputation through the artistic excellence and cultural depth of its programming. To date, more than 150,000 people have engaged in arts experiences, attending high-quality performances of world music, dance, theater, exhibits and community events, as well as enrolling in classes for youth and adults in the arts, crafts, and movement-based practices from other cultures.

About PAL - Performance, Art & Learning

Rhythmix Cultural Works believes that exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience and a catalyst for cultural celebration. In support of this vision, Rhythmix developed PAL as an assembly-based youth arts education program in collaboration with the Alameda Unified School District. PAL fosters awareness of world cultures and empowers underserved youth through exposure to educational music and dance performances.

In response to the ongoing pandemic, Rhythmix launched its PAL program virtually for the 2020-21 school year, expanding its reach to all schools in Alameda County. Thanks to the belief in the power of arts education and generous support from the foundations listed below, PAL has served over 60,000 students since its inception in 2012.





RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS



Thanks to our PAL Funders and Partners

RADIUM



Robert L. Lippert
Foundation



Laurel
Scheinman

Lauren & Joshua
Cook

Shuler-Heimbürger
Family Fund

and supporters
like you!

This study guide was written and developed by Anna Lin with additional design modifications by Rhythmix Cultural Works.

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