

Bones

Bones are sets of slabs or sticks, held two or more in each hand, and made to strike each other to make snapping and rolling sounds. They have funny names like: clappers, sticks, clackers, and knicky-knackers. The most common name comes from what they were originally made of...BONES!

Rib bones of animals were used because of their size and shape.

Rhythm bones date back almost as far as recorded civilization. They have been excavated from prehistoric Mesopotamian graves (from 3000 BC), depicted on Egyptian reliefs (from 3000 BC), found in Egyptian tombs (circa 3000 BC), and depicted on Greek urns (circa 500 BC). Early Irish settlers brought the sound of bones to America. In Europe today bones are most widely heard in connection with Irish and Scottish folk music.

In ancient Celtic languages bones had their own special names. In Brittany France they were called...gradgel. In Galicia Spain they were called...tarranolas. In Ireland and Scotland they were called...cnamhan. There are more than 50 other ancient names for bones from many countries.

For a fun project use two tongue depressors and glue a penny to one end of each. The penny adds weight to help make the bones easier to play. Hold one "bone" by the tip of the non-penny end between the index and middle fingers and another "bone" between the middle finger and the ring finger. Curl your hand around so that you can hold the "bone" closest to your thumb with the tip of your middle finger. Hold that "bone" against the fleshy part of your hand. Let the other bone sort of dangle so that it moves freely. Use a snapping motion of the wrist moving your hand away from your body and you should get a snapping sound from the bones! With a little bit of practice you can play the BONES!

For another fun activity print and color the "Lady Bones" coloring page!

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