

**Topics**

Sound, Instruments,  
Rhythm

**Materials**

- ✓ 4 Spice jar caps or equivalent
- ✓ Pony beads, paper clips, or similar small items
- ✓ Tape

**Learning Standards**

NGSS: Senses

[4-LS1-2](#)

NGSS: Sound, Waves

[1-PS4-1](#)

[1-PS4-4](#)

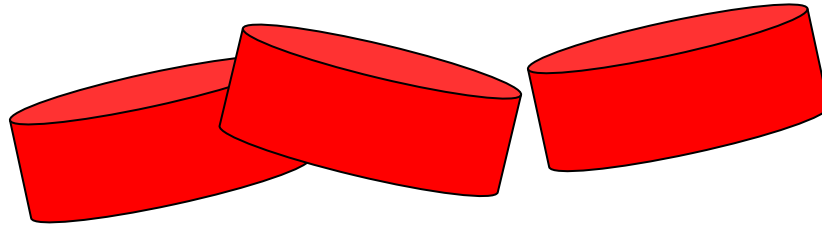
CA Visual & Performing  
Arts – Music

[1.MU:Cr1](#)

[2.MU:Cr1](#)

# Spice Cap Maracas

Exploring Sound and Rhythm



This auditory and tactile activity gives children an opportunity to explore rhythms with sound shakers made with common caps.

**To Do and Notice**

(Note: This activity can be used as a group activity or in stations, with students exploring rhythms on their own.)

1. Enclose about 10 pony beads or 4 paper clips between two caps, making sure to align the cap edges.
2. Secure the caps together by wrapping a piece of tape around both cap edges.
3. To play the spice cap maracas, hold 1 in each hand and shake in a specific pattern, causing a rhythm.

**The Content Behind the Activity**

Sound is caused by vibrations that travel in compression waves through the air (the medium) and into the ear. When they hit the eardrum, the sound is sent to the brain's auditory cortex where it is analyzed and interpreted.

Generally, young learners explore music with their voices and with simple instruments that focus on rhythm and usually make just 1 or 2 notes: maracas, castanets, triangles, drums. Rhythm is the heartbeat of music. Regular, steady beats are most common in popular music today, but many common world dance forms have more complex rhythms, such as the examples below:

- **Waltz, Foxtrot, and Greek Syrto:** Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow, Quick, Quick
- **Rumba and Polka:** Quick, Quick, Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow
- **Swing:** Slow, Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow, Slow, Quick, Quick

Older students can try more complex rhythms and patterns by following “right” or “left” instructions as well as rhythm instructions: **L, L, R, R, L, L**

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