



# The String Family





Can you name all five instruments of  
the string family?

*(clue - guitar is not one! We'll explain later.....)*

*One minute....ready....steady....go!*



# STRING FAMILY



violin



viola



cello



double bass



harp

How many did you get? One point for each (bonus point for the harp!)

The Violin is the smallest member of the string family. It is played by placing it on your left shoulder and either plucking with your finger and bowing the strings. It has four strings (G D A E) and makes the highest sound.

Here is an example of the violin.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UTq1eZrDkl>



The Viola is the next biggest member of the string family. It is played in the same way as the violin. It is bigger than the violin and slightly deeper (see in the picture how big it is on the player?). It has four strings (C G D A) - three are exactly the same as the violin. The viola is just missing the high E string.

Here is an example of the viola.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b5Ex2CgSPI>

The Cello is the next biggest string instrument. It is played by placing it between your knees (there is a spike that reaches the floor) – definitely don't put this on your shoulder! It has the same strings as the viola (C G D A), though each string is deeper. Here is an example of the cello....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeDB27cq3fE>  
(do you know whose famous wedding this was?)



The Double Bass is the biggest member of the string family. Players normally have to stand up or sit on a stool to play. They are the deepest (lowest) string instrument and can be 6 foot tall! It also has four strings (E A D G) - can you spot that this is the same as the violin, just backwards?

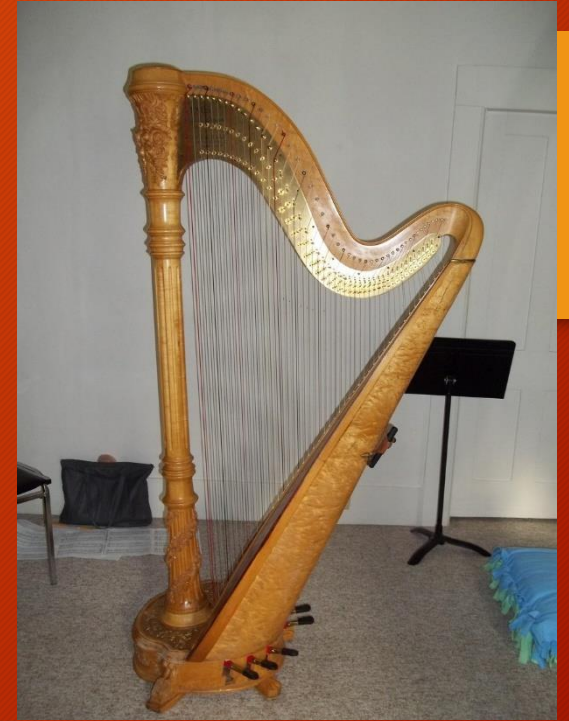
Here is an example of the double bass (taking on a violin!).....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5n0qXS07Z-Q>

The harp is the final member of the string family. Instead of using a bow like the rest, the strings are only plucked. The number strings can vary depending on what type of harp, but most modern harps have 47 strings and 7 pedals, which the player controls with their feet (epic hand-eye-foot coordination needed!).

Here is an example of a harp.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5n0qXS07Z-Q>



So why no guitar?

When we talk about the string family, we are thinking more about instruments that appear in an orchestra. However, there are more and more pieces written for orchestra, which include guitar, so perhaps in future powerpoints, they will be included!

# Challenge Time!

Now that you have seen the different types of string instruments, it's now time for a challenge.....

Imagine that Earth has been visited by aliens and they want to know what these strange looking wooden instruments with strings on them are (very musical aliens!). Working either on your own, or with a group, pick one of these string instruments to explain to this alien.

Think about:-

- The shape
- How many strings
- How you play it
- What it sounds like
- Are there any good videos of people playing it?

Create a mini presentation and perform this to your class or family!

