

# BOLANG GU

## A HANDMADE PELLET DRUM TO CELEBRATE THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

Inspired by the books: *The Great Race*  
and *Bringing in the New Year*

Grades: Pre K - 2nd



A finished Bolang Gu-inspired instrument

### OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

- Students will create a three-dimensional, mixed media work of art.
- Students will engage in a multi-sensory activity that involves movement, music, and art making.
- Students will learn about the Chinese New Year and different traditions associated with it.

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY/CONCEPT

This project is an effort to teach students about the Chinese New Year and replicate an instrument, the Bolang Gu, often used in the celebration. Students will use various materials, such as paper plates, oil pastels, strings, and beads, to construct the instrument. Then the art project can become interactive, as students twist their handmade Bolang Gu and make music.

### MATERIALS

White paper plates (2 per instrument), wooden popsicle sticks (1 per instrument), red string (12" per instrument), 6mm plastic beads (4 per instrument), stapler, hole puncher, red, yellow, and black oil pastels.

### VOCABULARY

Chinese New Year/Lunar New Year – an important Chinese festival celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar; the festival traditionally honored deities as well as ancestors.  
Bo Lang Gu – a traditional Chinese instrument that has a double-headed drum, a rod located at the bottom of the drum, and two pellets connected to each side of the drum. When you hold the rod and start twisting it back and forth, the pellets strike the drum in a rhythmic fashion.  
Chinese Zodiac – a classification scheme that assigns an animal and its attributes to each year in a repeating 12-year cycle.

## PROCEDURE

### Pre-class Prep

1. Staple two plates together, with the bottoms of the plates facing outward.
2. Slide a wooden popsicle stick in between each pair of plates and staple it so that it pokes out of the bottom.
3. Punch a hole on the left and right of the plate, about halfway up. Make sure that the holes go through both of the plates. *Students may help with this step.*
4. Cut two 6" long pieces of string. *Students may help with this step.*
5. Attach two beads to one end of the string, and then repeat for the other piece of string. *Students may help with this step.*

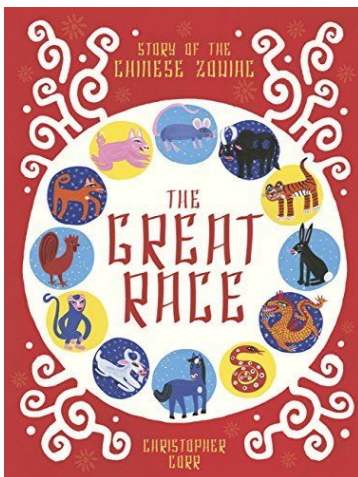
### Class Procedure

6. Students color and decorate both sides of the instrument using the oil pastels.
7. Students tie a piece string to each hole in the plate, so that the beads hang down.
8. Students twist and turn their instruments, so that the beads hit the plates and make music.



## RELATED RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Use these books to guide the lesson and add more meaning to the students' artmaking.



*The Great Race*  
Christopher Corr



*Bringing In the New Year*  
Grace Lin

