Lessons 3–4 Musical instruments of the UAE

- What Emirati instruments do you know the name of? Can you play an instrument? Which one? If not, would you like to learn?

Reading strategy

When you scan a text, don't try to read every word. Let your eyes move quickly across the page. Scanning a text is useful if you want to find key information quickly, such as names or the number of things.

Reading 21st

1 Scan this article about musical instruments of the UAE. Find the names of five musical instruments.

The future of traditional musical instruments

1 A series of unique musical instruments are at the centre of Emirati culture. They are played at family celebrations such as engagements and weddings, and holidays such as National Day and Eid. However, each year fewer people are learning how to play traditional instruments and the Emirates are in danger of losing this important part of their culture.

2 The wonderful sound of the oud is played across the Gulf. It is a pear-shaped instrument that has eleven **strings** and is played like a guitar. The oud player Mehad Hamad is famous for his traditional Emirati songs. The tambura is one of the oldest musical instruments in the Emirates. It has five strings and its base is a wooden bowl that is covered with animal **skin**. It is a very large instrument and the tambura player isn't able to hold it like an oud. Usually, he plays while he is sitting down. The rababa, on the other hand, is a much smaller instrument which the player is able to pick up and hold. It has one string and is played with a **bow**.

3 Drums are a key sound in the music of the Emirates. The large Al-Ras drum is played during the famous Al Ayyalah dance. The tabl is a smaller drum that the player is able to hold under the arm or between the legs. Like the tambura and rababa, the tabl is an ancient instrument that connects the Emirati people with their past, but will it have a place in their future?

4 These instruments were often featured in television programmes during the 1970s and 1980s, and this inspired many young people to learn to play one. But these programmes don't exist now and there is no written record of this music. So how can we protect Emirati traditional music for future generations?

5 There are plans to create a college for traditional music. If successful, the college would set up teaching programmes across the UAE. The college would keep records of music that features traditional instruments from across the different regions and students would be able to learn to play the instruments. With a national college like this, we might stop traditional musical instruments disappearing from Emirati culture for future generations.



Level One Questions

1. The reading is about musical instruments in:
   a. Emirati **Culture** حضارة
   b. Indian Culture
   c. European Culture

2. A lot of people in the U.A.E are **learning to play the traditional musical instruments.** **T/F** تعلم العزف على آلة موسيقية

3. If people don't learn to play the traditional instruments, then a part of Emirati culture will be lost. **T/F**

4. Choose the correct answer. Emirati people usually play the traditional musical instruments:
   a. on **special occasions** مناسبات خاصة
   b. at work
   c. every day

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5. You play the oud like a guitar. **T/F**
6. The tanbura is a small instrument. **T/F**
7. People play the Al Ras drum in the Al Ayyalah dance. **T/F**
8. The tabl drum is bigger than the Al Ras drum. **T/F**
9. In the future, there are going to be colleges where Emirati people can learn to play the traditional musical instruments. **T/ F**

Level Two Questions

2 Read the article again. Answer the questions.

1 When are traditional instruments usually played?
2 Why are Emiratis in danger of losing traditional musical instruments from their culture?
3 Which instrument is played like a guitar?
4 Which instrument is played with a bow?
5 How were young people inspired to learn to play instruments in the 1970s and 80s?
6 Why do the Emirates need a college of traditional music?

Reading strategy

Read the article again slowly to try and understand it in more detail. Look for key words and check any words you don't know.

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