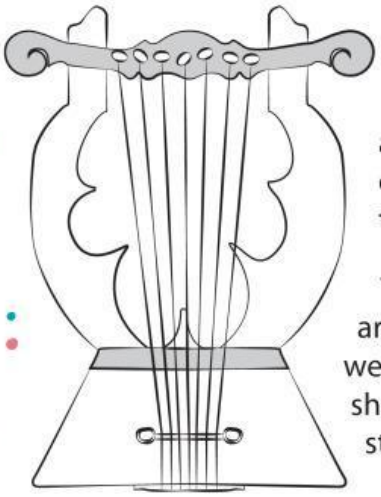
The History of the Guitar



The guitar is an ancient instrument that can be traced back over 4,000 years! There are many different theories about its ancestry. Ancient Greeks played a similar instrument called a ***kithara***, which had only four strings when it was first created. But the kithara was not the first stringed instrument.

The earliest stringed instruments known to archaeologists are ***bowl harps*** and ***tanburs***, which were made with small gourds or hollow tortoise shells. Their necks were made with sticks, and the strings were made from silk or, more commonly, from animal guts.

A slightly more modern version of the gourd instrument, called an ***oud,*** was brought to Spain from North Africa by the Moors. Over time, the Europeans added frets to the gourd-like instrument and changed its name to "lute".



Most of these early instruments had four strings. In medieval manuscripts and old churches, there is evidence of five-stringed instruments. Then in the 17th century, the Italian ***guitar battente*** was made with six strings. Soon guitars all over Europe were seen with this new design. Later on, guitar makers took this design a step further, creating a 12-string guitar!



Today's ***classical guitar*** is modeled after an instrument made by Antonio Torres in the mid-1800s. He made the guitar's body bigger and changed its shape. This new design revolutionized and improved the sound and volume of the guitar. Soon, guitars were being made with steel strings. In the late 1920s, Orville Gibson was able to improve the design a bit further by adding "pickups," which then led to the creation of the electric guitar.

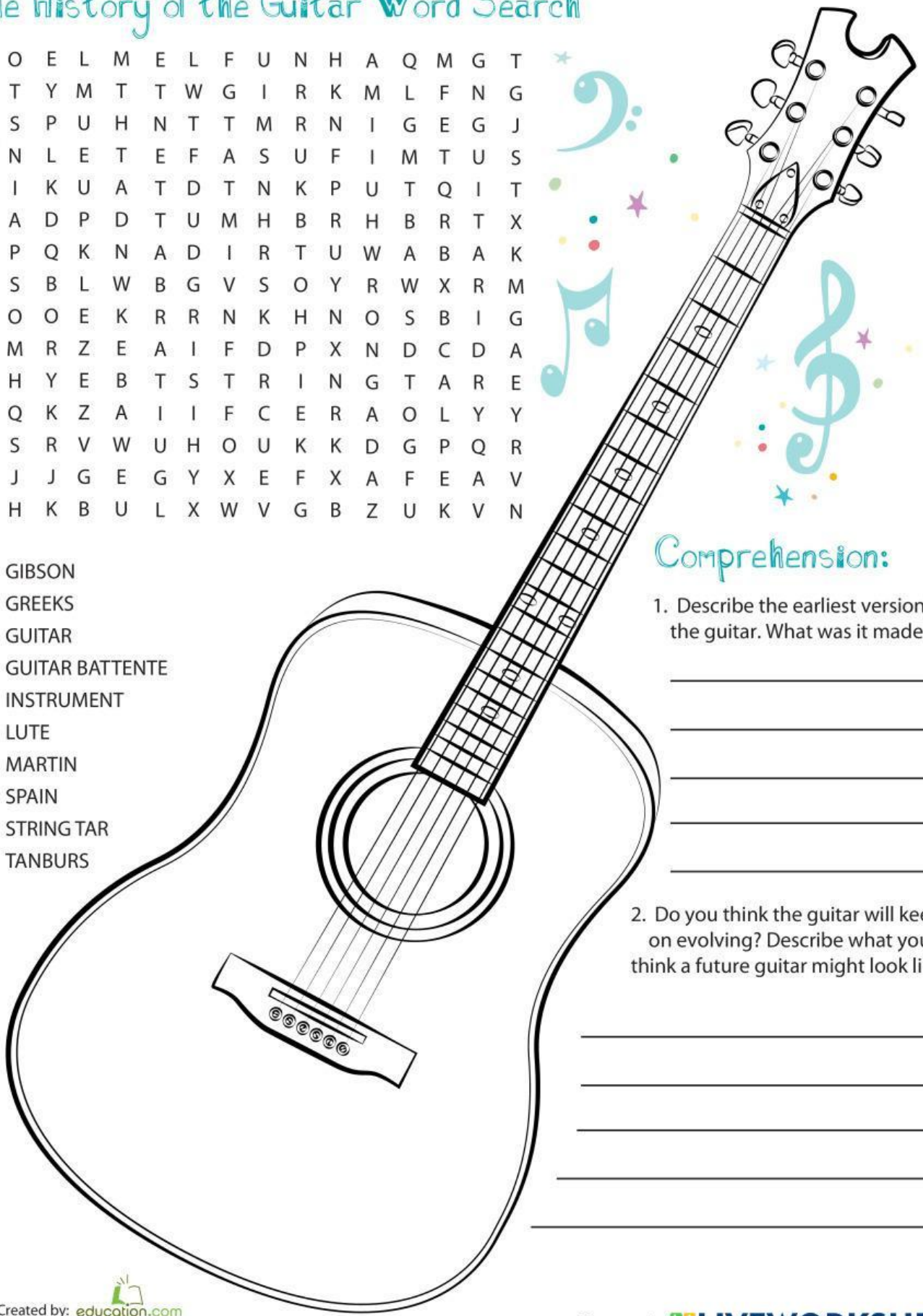
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Comprehension:

1. Describe the earliest version of the guitar. What was it made of?

2. Do you think the guitar will keep on evolving? Describe what you think a future guitar might look like.

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