Name: _____ Date: _____

Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

Circle group

A big harp has many strings. They all look the same. It would be easy to get lost! A harpist sits behind the strings. She cannot look down at her hands. So harp makers use color.

Each C string is red. Each F string is black or dark blue. The rest are white.

The colors work like signs on a street. A harpist sees red and knows, "That is C." She can find her way fast.

The strings go up in a slanted line. The long strings make low sounds. The short strings make high sounds.

Questions

1. What color are the C strings?

_____

_____

2. What color are the F strings?

_____

_____

3. Why can a harpist not look down at her hands?

_____

_____

4. Which strings make low sounds?

_____

_____

5. How are the colors like street signs?

_____

_____

6. What would be hard if all strings were white?

_____

_____

Words to know

harpist: a person who plays the harp
strings: the thin cords that make sound when plucked
slanted: leaning to one side, not straight up

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

Triangle group

A large concert harp has a great many strings, and they all look much alike. Think how easy it would be to lose your place! A harpist cannot look down at her hands like a pianist can. She often sits behind the strings, and the strings are in the way. So harp makers found a clever fix. They use color.

Every string that plays the note C is dyed red. Every string that plays the note F is dyed a dark color, usually black or deep blue. All the other strings are plain white or a light color.

These colored strings work like street signs. A harpist sees a red string and knows right away, "That is a C." She can find her way up and down the harp quickly. She counts from a red string or a dark one to reach the note she needs.

The strings do not stay in one tidy row, either. They rise from the sound box in a long slanted line. The longest strings make the lowest sounds. The shortest strings make the highest sounds. Color lets a player jump around the whole harp without getting lost.

Questions

1. What color are the strings that play the note C?

_____

_____

2. What color are the strings that play the note F?

_____

_____

3. Why can a harpist not look down at her hands the way a pianist can?

_____

_____

4. Which strings make the lowest sounds?

_____

_____

5. How are the colored strings like street signs?

_____

_____

6. What would be harder for a harpist if every string were white?

_____

_____

Words to know

harpist: a person who plays the harp
strings: the thin cords that make sound when plucked
dyed: colored by soaking in a liquid color
slanted: leaning to one side, not straight up

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

Square group

A large concert harp carries an enormous number of strings, and at a glance they all look nearly identical. Imagine how easily a player might lose her place! Unlike a pianist, a harpist cannot glance down at her hands, because she usually sits behind the strings and they block her view. Harp makers solved this problem with color.

Every string that sounds the note C is dyed red. Every string that sounds the note F is dyed a dark shade, most often black or deep blue. All of the remaining strings are plain white or another light color.

These colored strings function like street signs. When a harpist spots a red string, she knows at once that it is a C, and she can count from a red or dark string to reach whatever note she needs.

The strings also do not stand in a neat, even row. They rise from the sound box along a long slanted line. The longest strings produce the lowest sounds, while the shortest produce the highest. Thanks to color, a player can leap around the entire harp without getting lost.

Questions

1. Which color is used for the strings that sound the note C?

_____

_____

2. What color are the strings that sound the note F?

_____

_____

3. Why is a harpist unable to look down at her hands as a pianist can?

_____

_____

4. Which strings produce the lowest sounds?

_____

_____

5. In what way do the colored strings work like street signs?

_____

_____

6. What difficulty would a harpist face if all of the strings were white?

_____

_____

Words to know

harpist: a person who plays the harp
strings: the thin cords that make sound when plucked
dyed: colored by soaking in a liquid color
slanted: leaning to one side, not straight up

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

Easier · 96 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade -0.1

1. Red.
2. Black or dark blue.
3. She sits behind the strings.
4. The long strings.
5. They show the player where she is.
6. She would lose her place.

Triangle: Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

This passage · 193 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.8

1. Red.
2. A dark color, usually black or deep blue.
3. She sits behind the strings, and they are in the way.
4. The longest strings.
5. They help the player know where she is, just as signs help a traveler find the way.
6. She would lose her place and have a harder time finding the right note.

Square: Red and Dark Strings Guide a Harpist

Harder · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.4

1. Red.
2. A dark shade, most often black or deep blue.
3. She sits behind the strings, which block her view.
4. The longest strings.
5. They tell the player where she is, the way signs guide a traveler.
6. She would easily lose her place and struggle to find the right note.