Name: _____ Date: _____

The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

Circle group

In the high mountains of Switzerland, a very long wooden horn is played. It is called the alphorn. Some alphorns are taller than a grown-up. The bell at the end often rests on the ground while the player blows in the other end.

Long ago, herders used the alphorn to send messages across a valley. A deep sound can travel far over open land. An echo bounces back off the steep slopes. A herder on one slope could call to a neighbor on the other slope without shouting.

The alphorn has no buttons, valves, or finger holes. The player makes different notes by changing how the lips buzz. The player also changes how much air goes in. A tight buzz makes a higher note. A loose buzz makes a lower note. The tube is very long, so the notes are spaced far apart. The tunes are slow and floating.

Alphorns are made from a tall, straight tree. Makers shape the wood, hollow it out, and join the parts. Today, people hold alphorn festivals. Players fill a green valley with soft, rolling music. It sounds as if the mountains were singing.

Questions

1. In which country is the alphorn played?

_____

_____

2. How did herders use the alphorn long ago?

_____

_____

3. How does a player make different notes?

_____

_____

4. What parts does the alphorn not have?

_____

_____

5. Why could a herder call a neighbor without shouting?

_____

_____

6. How do makers build an alphorn?

_____

_____

Words to know

herders: people who look after groups of animals
valley: low land between mountains or hills
echo: a sound that bounces back to you
hollow: empty on the inside

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: _____

The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

Triangle group

In the high mountains of Switzerland, a very long wooden horn has been played for a long time. It is called the alphorn. Some alphorns are taller than a grown-up, and the bell at the end often rests on the ground while the player blows into the other end.

Long ago, herders used the alphorn to send messages across a valley. A deep sound can travel far over open land, and an echo bounces back off the steep slopes. A herder on one slope could call to a neighbor on another without shouting.

The alphorn has no buttons, valves, or finger holes. The player makes different notes only by changing how the lips buzz and how much air goes through the mouthpiece. A tighter buzz makes a higher note, and a looser buzz makes a lower one. Since the tube is so long, the horn can sound many notes, but they are spaced far apart, so the melodies are slow and floating.

Alphorns are usually made from a straight, tall tree. Makers shape the wood, hollow it out, and join the parts. Today, people gather for alphorn festivals, where players fill a green valley with soft, rolling music that sounds as if the mountains themselves were singing.

Questions

1. In which country is the alphorn played?

_____

_____

2. How did herders use the alphorn long ago?

_____

_____

3. How does a player make different notes on the alphorn?

_____

_____

4. What parts does the alphorn not have?

_____

_____

5. Why could a herder call to a neighbor without shouting?

_____

_____

6. How do makers build an alphorn?

_____

_____

Words to know

herders: people who look after groups of animals
valley: low land between mountains or hills
echo: a sound that bounces back to you
mouthpiece: the part of an instrument that touches the lips
hollow: empty on the inside

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: _____

The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

Square group

In the lofty mountains of Switzerland, an exceptionally long wooden horn has been played for centuries. It is known as the alphorn. Some alphorns stand taller than a grown-up, and the bell at the far end frequently rests on the ground while the musician blows into the opposite end.

Long ago, herders relied on the alphorn to send messages across a valley. A deep sound can carry a great distance over open land, and an echo bounces back from the steep slopes, so a herder on one slope could call to a neighbor on another without having to shout.

The alphorn possesses no buttons, valves, or finger holes. The player produces different notes solely by changing the way the lips buzz and the amount of air that passes through the mouthpiece. A tighter buzz creates a higher note, and a looser buzz creates a lower one. Because the tube is so long, the horn can sound many notes, but they are spaced widely apart, which makes the melodies slow and floating.

Alphorns are usually crafted from a tall, straight tree. Makers shape the wood, hollow it out, and join the sections together. Nowadays, people gather for alphorn festivals, where players fill a green valley with soft, rolling music that sounds as though the mountains themselves were singing.

Questions

1. In which country is the alphorn played?

_____

_____

2. How did herders use the alphorn long ago?

_____

_____

3. How does a musician produce different notes on the alphorn?

_____

_____

4. Which parts does the alphorn lack?

_____

_____

5. Why could a herder call to a neighbor without having to shout?

_____

_____

6. How do makers construct an alphorn?

_____

_____

Words to know

herders: people who look after groups of animals
valley: low land between mountains or hills
echo: a sound that bounces back to you
mouthpiece: the part of an instrument that touches the lips
hollow: empty on the inside

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: The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

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

Circle: The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

Easier · 191 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.3

1. Switzerland.
2. To send messages across a valley.
3. By changing how the lips buzz and how much air goes in.
4. Buttons, valves, or finger holes.
5. A deep sound travels far over open land, and the slopes send back an echo.
6. They shape wood from a tall tree, hollow it out, and join the parts.

Triangle: The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

This passage · 208 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.2

1. Switzerland.
2. To send messages across a valley.
3. By changing how the lips buzz and how much air goes through the mouthpiece.
4. Buttons, valves, or finger holes.
5. A deep sound travels far over open land, and the slopes send back an echo.
6. They shape wood from a tall tree, hollow it out, and join the parts.

Square: The Alphorn Calls Across a Mountain Valley

Harder · 218 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.5

1. Switzerland.
2. To send messages across a valley.
3. By changing how the lips buzz and how much air passes through the mouthpiece.
4. Buttons, valves, and finger holes.
5. A deep sound carries far over open land, and the slopes return an echo.
6. They shape wood from a tall tree, hollow it out, and join the sections together.