

Piano



The piano is one of the most popular musical instruments in our culture. It's extremely versatile; it's used in almost every popular style of music, such as jazz, classical, and rock 'n' roll.

The piano has strings, but you can't see them on every piano and it isn't considered a string instrument. It's actually considered a percussion instrument because each key on the keyboard triggers a hammer inside the piano that strikes a metal string, like a drum. The sound of the string vibrating echoes off the wood in the piano to create loud, full notes.

The piano was invented by Bartolomeo Cristofori in Italy in the early 1700s. It was originally called the "pianoforte." The words "piano" and "forte" mean "quiet" and "loud" respectively. When musicians play the piano, they play quietly by striking the keys softly, or loud by striking them hard. This was one of the most appealing features of the piano when it was first introduced.

Most pianos have 88 keys on their keyboards, 52 white keys and 36 black keys. Pianos weren't the first instruments to use a keyboard. The clavichord and harpsichord both came before the piano. The piano was, however, the most popular of all instruments with a keyboard. It inspired the creation of the electric keyboard, which was invented in 1955. Today, through modern technology, people use electric keyboards to create the sounds of any instrument, or even sound effects for movies!



1. **New terms:** See how these three terms are used in the text, and write a definition next to each one.

versatile

respectively

appealing

2. Where was the piano invented? _____

3. The piano is a string instrument.

True or False?

4. The piano was the first instrument with a keyboard.

True or False?