Definition: **drum** 1 from *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

(1539) 1 : a percussion instrument consisting of a hollow shell or cylinder with a drumhead stretched over one or both ends that is beaten with the hands or with some implement (as a stick or wire brush) 2 : tympanic membrane 3 : the sound of a drum; also : a sound similar to that of a drum 4 : any of various chiefly marine bony fishes (family Sciaenidae) that make a drumming or croaking noise using their air bladder and associated muscles 5 : something resembling a drum in shape: as a (1) : any of the cylindrical blocks that form the shaft of a column (2) : a round wall or structure that supports a dome b : a cylindrical machine or mechanical device or part c : a cylindrical container; specif : a large usu. metal container for liquids d : a disk-shaped magazine for an automatic weapon

**drum•like**ˈdrumˌlik\ adj

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**Summary Article: drum**

from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Any of a class of percussion instruments consisting of a frame or hollow vessel of wood, metal, or earthenware with a membrane of hide or plastic stretched across one or both ends. Drums are usually sounded by striking the membrane with the hands, a stick, or pair of sticks. They are among the oldest instruments known and exist in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. They include **slit drums** made of wood, **steel drums** made from oil containers, and a majority group of **skin drums**.

**Tuned drums** Most drums are of indeterminate low or high pitch and are used as rhythm instruments. The exceptions are steel drums, orchestral timpani (kettledrums), and Indian tabla which are tuned to precise pitches. Double-ended African kalungu (‘talking drums’) can be varied in pitch by the player squeezing on the tension cords; higher tension over the playing drumhead results in a higher pitch. Frame drums, including the Irish bodhrán and Basque tambour, are smaller and lighter in tone and may incorporate jingles or rattles.

**Orchestral and military drums** Orchestral drums consist of timpani, tambourine, snare, side, and bass drums. The bass drum is either single-headed (with a single skin) and producing a ringing tone, called a gong drum, or double-headed (with two skins) and producing a dense booming noise of indeterminate pitch. Military bands of footsoldiers play snare and side drums, and cavalry regiments use a pair of kettledrums mounted on horseback for ceremonial occasions.

**Pop and jazz drums** Drum kits have evolved from the ‘traps’ of Dixieland jazz into a range of
percussion employing a variety of stick types. In addition to snare and foot-controlled bass drums, many feature a scale of pitched bongos and tom-toms, as well as suspended cymbals, hi-hat (foot-controlled double cymbals), cowbells, and temple blocks. Recent innovations include the rotary tuneable rototoms, electronic drums, and the drum machine, a percussion synthesizer.

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