Westminster Abbey
Learning

O is for Organ
Make your own portable organ

Organs, also known as pipe organs, are often found in churches. Although they look like pianos, they are in fact wind instruments. That means the noise is created when air travels through the pipes. In order to create different sounds, each pipe needs to be a different length. At the Abbey, there are 7,000 pipes and the longest pipe is approximately 10 metres long! Have a go at making your own organ (but don't worry, you don't have to create 7,000 pipes).

Time to make your own 'portable organ.   You will need:

- 8 straight drinking straws
- Sellotape
- Scissors
- A ruler
- A pen or pencil

1. Take your first straw and measure 20cm from one end. With your scissors, cut off the short end of the straw (you may need an adult to help here).

2. Take your second straw and measure 18cm from the end. Once again, cut the end off.

3. Make each straw another 2cm shorter than the previous one until you have done all 8.

4. Line them up in order of length, then use your ruler to straighten them up.
5. Tape them on one side, using your sticky tape, then flip them over and tape the other side for extra strength.

6. You've made your portable organ! You should also end up with your straw 'cut-offs' which, if your straws are long enough, are a perfect mini-organ for any smaller siblings.

Holding your portable organ with the straight edge up, blow across the top of the straws and see if you can make different notes. You'll notice the short straws make high notes, and the long straws make deep notes.

We've made our organ with straws. We know not everyone will have disposable straws at home – maybe have a go with other recyclable materials like cardboard tubes (from kitchen roll or wrapping paper) or empty bottles of different sizes.

"Well done" said Livingstone the lion, "Your organs were even louder than my roar! How many tunes can you play?"

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