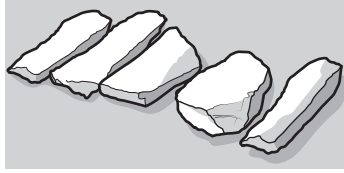


Exercise 1

Read the article about a special sort of stone, called a lithophone, and then answer the questions.

Lithophones: musical stones

Most people have heard of rock music, but you might perhaps be surprised to learn that rocks and stones have been used to make music for many thousands of years. Lithophones are special stones that make sounds. The word lithophone comes from two Greek words, *lithos* and *phone* meaning 'stone' and 'sound', and the word lithophone is also used to describe a type of musical instrument consisting of a row of stones. The idea is simple; the stones make sounds when they are hit with something like a piece of wood. The various sounds produced depend on several factors, such as the quality of the stone. Different sounds are also made according to the thickness of each stone, so it's important to take this into account when deciding how to arrange them. The chosen stones are commonly attached to a wooden frame or sometimes they are simply placed on the ground.

Researchers think that lithophones have been played since Neolithic times, about 12000 years ago, although early examples have only been found relatively recently. In 1949, some road builders were working on a construction project in an area of Vietnam called Dak Lak, and uncovered a collection of unusual stones. A group of eleven stones were discovered standing in an upright position. As it was thought that these stones could be important, a scientist named Georges Condominas was asked for his opinion on what their function might be. He wanted to examine the ten stones which remained undamaged, so after getting permission from local people, Condominas transported them from Vietnam to Paris for further investigation. Here, it was discovered that the stones made sounds when they were hit, and not only that, a variety of sounds were produced depending on cuts made on the stones' surfaces. This was thought to be the first time lithophones had been studied so thoroughly, and experiments also showed that different sounds were produced when the length of the stone varied.

These stones were, however, not the first to have been discovered in Vietnam. In 1942, Bo Ren, a boy from the Raglai tribe of that country, discovered some stones which the public became aware of in 1979, when they were handed over to a museum. While in many places lithophones are used as musical instruments, for Bo Ren's tribe, they had an alternative use. The stones were hung above streams where the movement of the water caused a tool to hit them, making a loud noise. This helped to scare away predators that might attack their animals.

It's extraordinary that when we hear someone playing a lithophone today, we can experience the same music that has existed for thousands of years.

Question 3

How many of the stones in Dak Lak were in good condition?

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