

Proposal for Emoji: LONG DRUM

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Emoji Name: LONG DRUM

Sort Order: in the Musical Instrument category, after DRUM WITH DRUMSTICKS

Reference emoji: TUMBLER GLASS

Keywords: DRUM | BONGO | CONGA | RHYTHM | BEAT



Credit: Aphelandra Messer/Emojination. Free for use in context of this proposal.


Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of the LONG DRUM emoji to the Unicode emoji library. While the current library includes a "Drum With Drumsticks" emoji (🥁), all of the current platforms display this as a snare drum with two drumsticks.¹ The drum depicted in this proposal is a different style of drum that is much more common in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Our proposed LONG DRUM emoji is taller, with a round drumhead and a truncated, cylindrical shell. This is more similar to drums like the conga or djembe, as opposed to the current "drum with drumsticks" emoji, which is very clearly a snare. A long drum goes by many different names, but is one of the most common forms of drum in the world. Emojination advocates for improved representation of a wider range of regions and cultures in the emoji library. Drums also have very deep cultural and historical significance in some areas, like Africa and the Caribbean, as we will see in this proposal.

¹ <https://emojipedia.org/drum-with-drumsticks/>

Introduction

Drums are an integral part of music practically everywhere in the world, and in some places, their significance transcends music itself. Wikipedia says "Drums are the world's oldest and most ubiquitous musical instruments, and the basic design has remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years."²

The current "drum with drumsticks" emoji () is a snare, a distinct wire-wrapped drum that is played with drumsticks. On the other hand, many, if not most, drums around the world are closer to the ones depicted in our proposal. These include, but are not limited to, the following drum types:

- Africa
 - djembe³
 - ashiko⁴
 - talking drums⁵
 - karyenda⁶
 - sabar⁷
 - bata⁸
- Caribbean
 - bongo⁹
 - conga¹⁰
 - tumbadora¹¹
 - tanbou¹²
 - palo¹³
- Latin America
 - atabaque¹⁴

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drum>

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Djembe>

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashiko>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talking_drum

⁶ <http://inspireafrika.com/en/burundi-drums/>

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabar>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bat%C3%A1_drum

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bongo_drum

¹⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conga>

¹¹ <https://havanamusicschool.com/the-tumbadoras-in-the-cuban-music/>

¹² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanbou>

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palo_music#Instruments

¹⁴ <http://www.capoeira-world.com/capoeira-music/capoeira-instruments/atabaque/>

- Asia
 - dhol¹⁵
 - chenda¹⁶
 - taiko¹⁷



Performers play Indian dhol drums in Birmingham, UK, in April 2016, in this video by [the Birmingham Mail](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/entertainment/indian-dhol-drummers-perform-birmingham-14444444).

Their use also extends from music into religion, cultural ceremonies, military use, therapy, mass communication and other fields. The tanbou is the official national musical instrument of Haiti, while the Karyenda is featured on the national flag of Burundi.¹⁸

¹⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhol>

¹⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chenda>

¹⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiko>

¹⁸ <http://inspireafrika.com/en/burundi-drums/>



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon plays a ceremonial Karyenda drum during a diplomatic visit to Burundi, February 2016. Photo from the [UN Refugee Agency](#).

Many subcategories of the long drum have their own associated musical genres and cultures. For instance, the bongo is associated with the Caribbean, rasta culture and reggae music, while the tumbadora is associated with Cuba, conga music and the carnival festival.



Two performers demonstrate the musical differences between the djembe and the conga drum in this [video from Howcast](#).

In West African countries, talking drums have been used for thousands of years to send messages by mimicking human speech¹⁹. They were also a central feature of the soundtrack to Black Panther, a movie famous for its financial and critical success as well as its representation of modern-day Africa.²⁰ The talking drum has also been used in Western pop musicians including Fleetwood Mac, Erykah Badu, Tom Waits, the Grateful Dead, and Peter Gabriel.²¹



Massamba Diop demonstrates the talking drum he used to play on the Black Panther soundtrack in March 2018.
Photo from [WBUR](https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2018/04/09/drum-music-black-panther).

The LONG DRUM is also an important addition to the emoji library, because Africa is under-represented in the current emoji library. In an opinion piece for Business Insider South Africa, Helena Wasserman ranked the hut at #3 for most-desired African emoji in the next iteration. "Even with the 157 new emoji [in 2018], we couldn't find many that specifically reflect life in Africa," she wrote.²²

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talking_drum

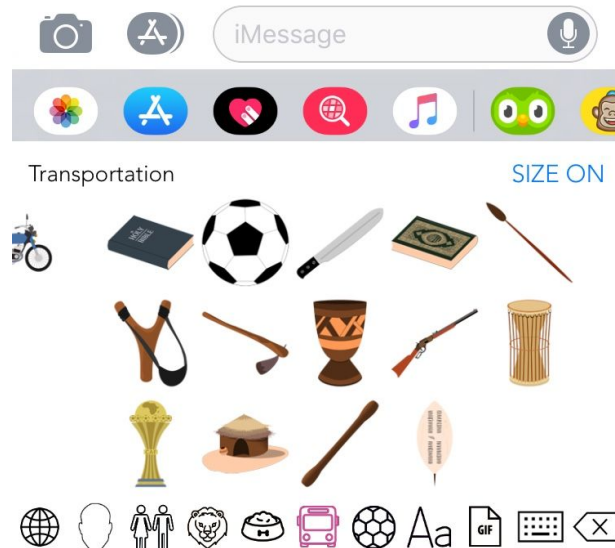
²⁰ <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2018/04/09/drum-music-black-panther>

²¹ <https://www.musicalbrick.com/talking-drum-the-star-of-black-panther/>

²² <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/african-emoji-we-would-like-to-see-2018-9>

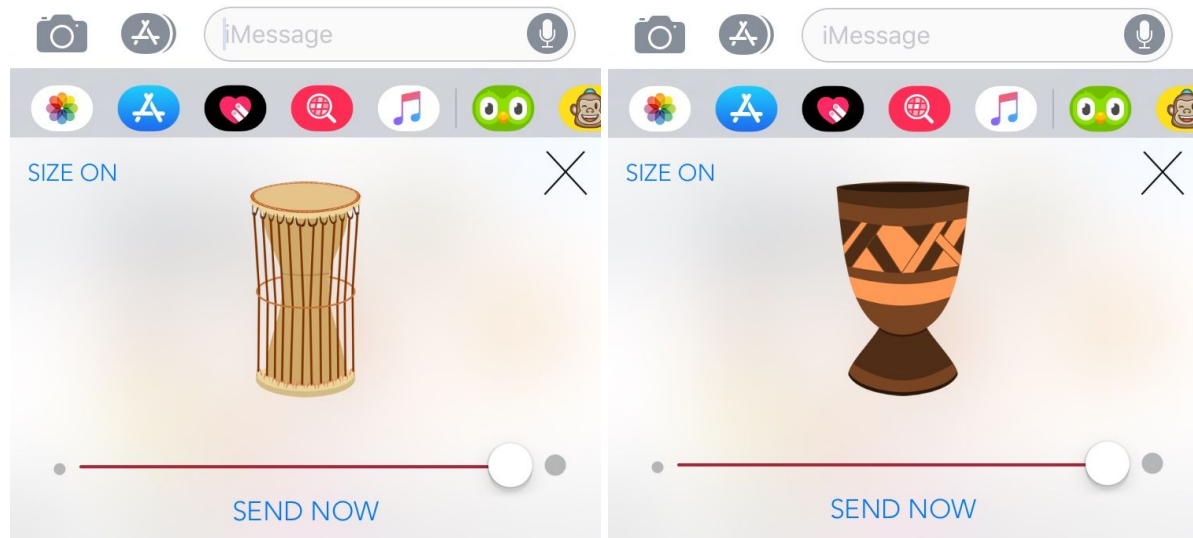
Absa, a banking group based in South Africa, started an "#AfricaEmoji hashtag in July 2018 that quickly turned into a way for African Twitter users to express their desire for more representation of Africa in general.²³ "#AfricaEmoji is the start of a new narrative - the one told by us as Africans. It's a tiny symbol with massive clout – an emoji that lets us share our version of this continent with the rest of the world."

In 2017, an African-American entrepreneur launched Afrimoji, a third party app meant to bridge the gap left by the lack of African and Caribbean related emoji. The Afrimoji keyboard includes a talking drum and a djembe similar to the drum in our proposal.



Screenshot of the [Afrimoji](https://afrimoji.com/) keyboard, which includes two drum emojis.

²³ <https://tweetreach.com/reports/22387397>



Close-ups of the talking drum and djembe emojis in the [Afrimoji app](#)

Drums surpass other musical instruments in their significance around the world. In some Native American tribes, a drum symbolizes Mother Earth.²⁴ In the US, drums are sometimes used in psychology and therapy to improve mental health.²⁵ Drums have been integral to many other uses, like military instructions and religious ceremonies.

Reference Emoji

We use "TUMBLER GLASS" as the reference emoji below, under "Frequency."

Selection Factors Inclusion

Compatibility

N/A

²⁴ <https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/drum-symbol.htm>

²⁵ <https://www.thedailybeast.com/not-just-for-music-drumming-is-therapy-too>

Expected Usage Level

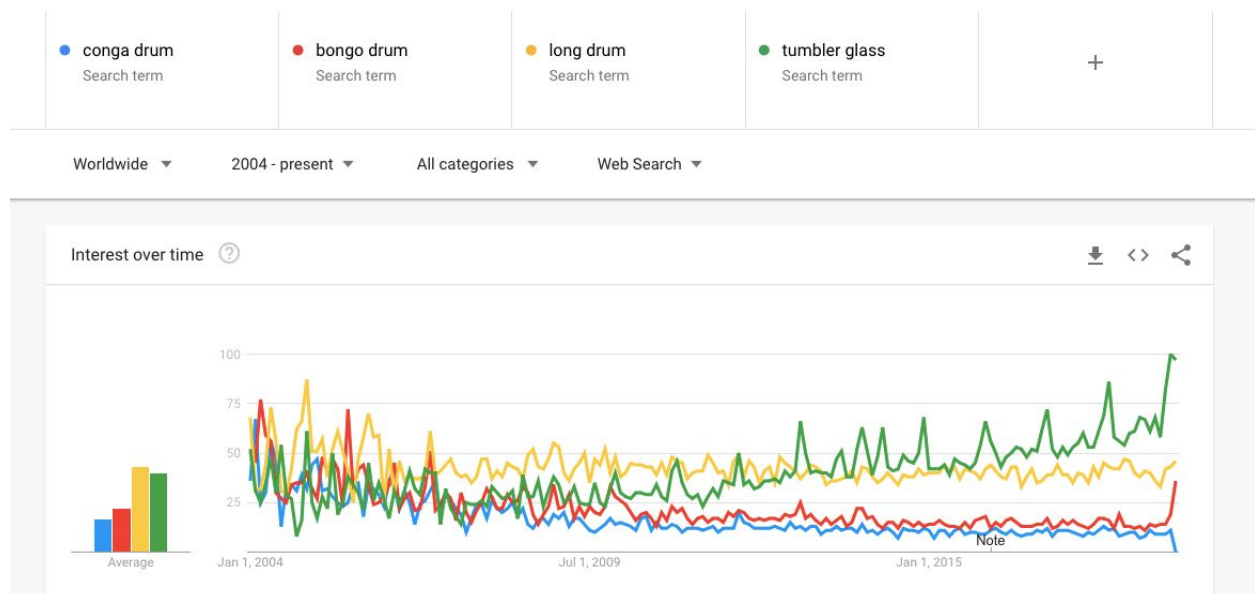
- Frequency

Google Trends: Web Search

The term "long drum" describes a vast range of instruments used in musical traditions around the world, though the term itself appears infrequently. The West African Talking Drum alone can be known as a Dondo, Odondo, Tamanin, Lunna, Donno, Kalangu, Dan karbi, Igba, Doodo, Tama, Tamma, Dundun, or Gangan -- the differences reflect both language variations as well as size and pitch.

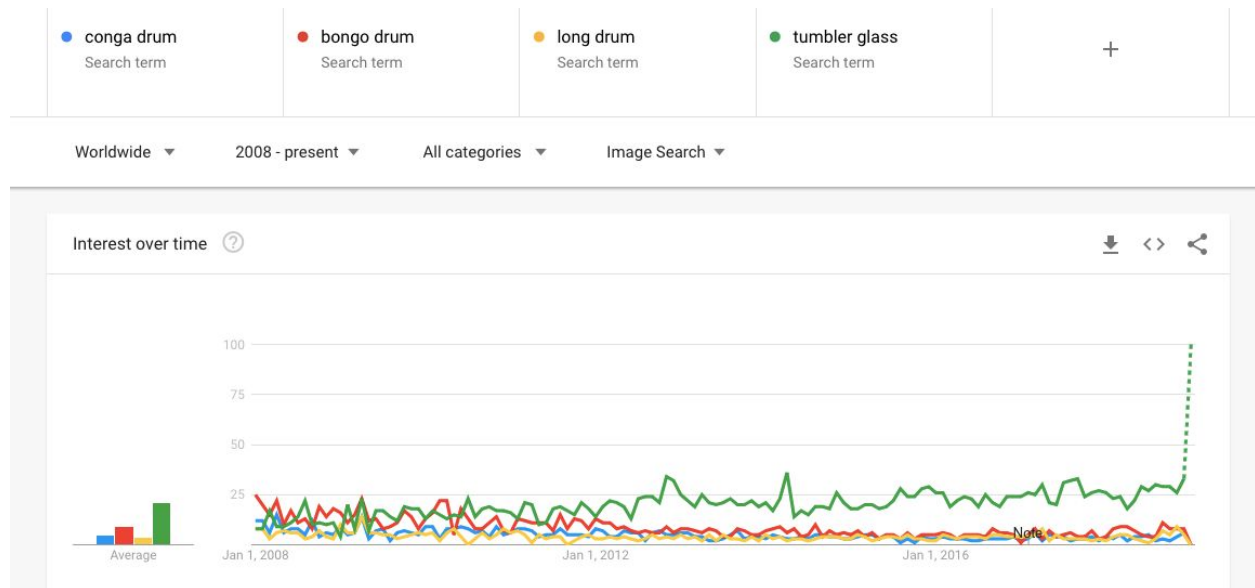
Our proposed drum encompasses many varying styles and shapes, some of which are included in a partial list in the Introduction above. Therefore we have included the required frequency statistics here for "conga drums" and "bongo drums", as well as "long drum." We are comparing their use against the median emoji of "tumbler glass."

Though "tumbler glass" was searched more often on Google in the last year, searches worldwide over the last 14 years show that the three drum types have kept roughly in step.



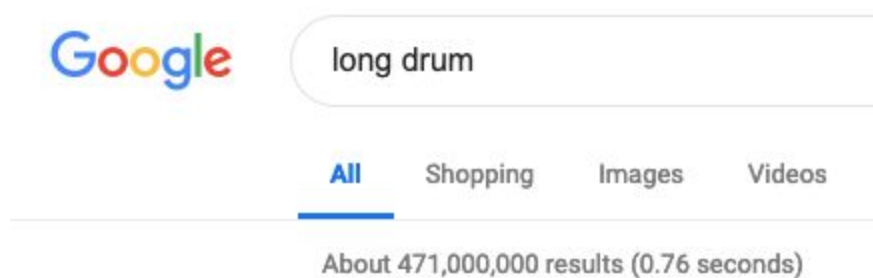
Google Trends: Image Search

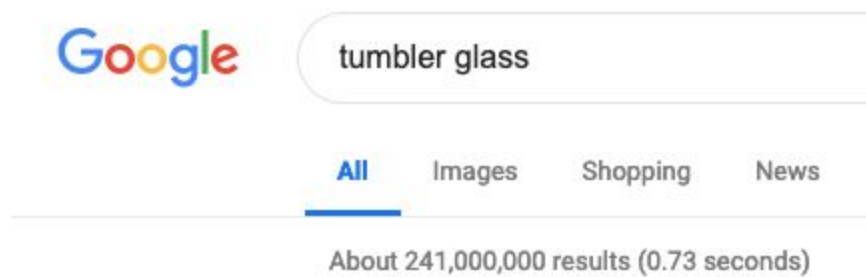
The same is true for Google Images searches worldwide since 2008, although "tumbler glass" has remained most popular in image searches for the past few years.



Google Search

Google returns almost twice as many web results for "long drum" as it does for "tumbler glass."

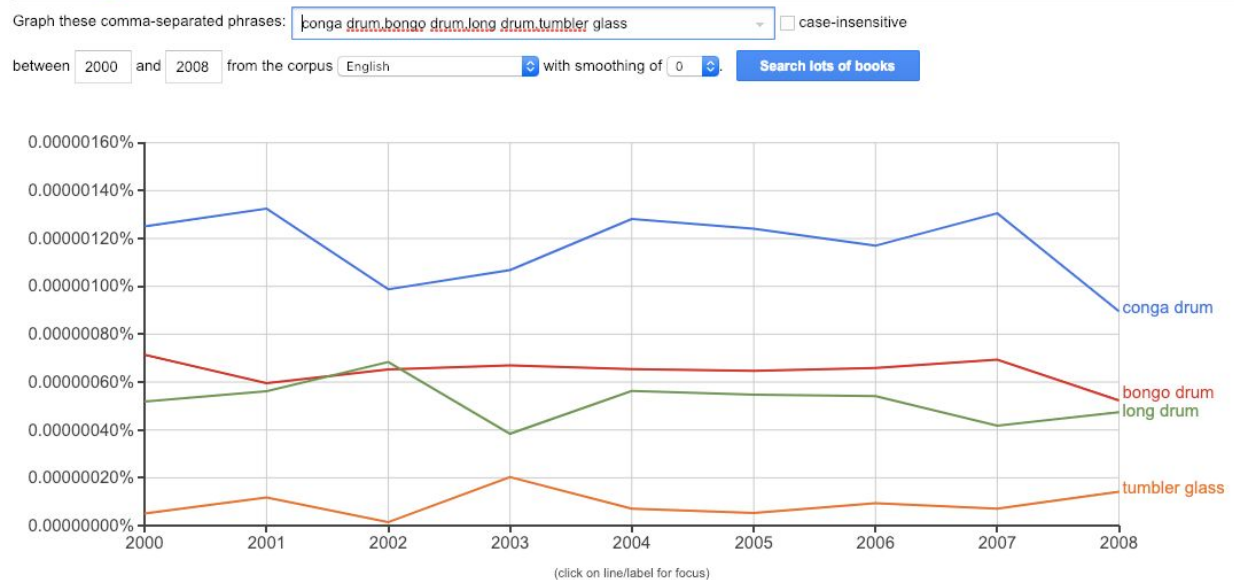




NGram Viewer

The three drum types appeared more often in books indexed by Google Books from 2000 to 2008, the most recent data available from the Google Ngram Viewer.

Google Books Ngram Viewer



Bing Search

Bing returned many more results for "conga drum", "bongo drum" and "long drum" than it did for "tumbler glass."

Search engine	Search term	Number of results
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Bing	Long drum	45,300,000
Bing	Conga drum	2,360,000
Bing	Bongo drum	1,480,000
Bing	Tumbler glass	581,000

YouTube

Posts on YouTube use the phrases "long drum", "conga drum" or "bongo drum" more than "tumbler glass", the median emoji.

Platform	Phrase	Number of Posts	Source
YouTube	"long drum"	5,060	https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Ayoutube.com+"long+drum"
YouTube	"conga drum"	3,280	<a conga+drum"="" href="https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Ayoutube.com+">https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Ayoutube.com+"conga+drum"
YouTube	"bongo drum"	7,230	<a bongo+drum"="" href="https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Ayoutube.com+">https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Ayoutube.com+"bongo+drum"
YouTube	"tumbler glass"	334	https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Ayoutube.com+"tumbler+glass"

• Multiple Usages



A drum is an intensely universal object, and is found in several sayings and idioms throughout the world.

- "Marching to the beat of a different drummer" refers to someone who is acting differently than everyone else
- "March to the beat of your own drum" similarly advises the listener to follow their own instincts, as opposed to what everyone else is doing
- "Beating the drum for ___" indicates raising awareness for an issue
- "Drum up support" similarly uses the drum as a metaphor raising awareness

- "Tight as a drum" means something is closed up tightly, either literally or figuratively
- "Drum roll, please" is a saying meant to indicate an important message coming, often facetiously

The drum is also found in countless song lyrics, either referring to the literal musical instrument or as a metaphor.


• Use in sequences

The LONG DRUM in conjunction with other musical instruments such as "trumpet" () and "guitar" () might represent a band or simply music itself.

• Breaking New Ground

This emoji breaks new ground by introducing a more worldly drum to the musical-instruments category, which for now is limited to a Western-style snare drum.

Image Distinctiveness

Our proposed emoji is somewhat visually similar to the AMPHORA emoji () , a kind of vase, but the shape is not similar enough that the two would be legitimately confused. They are also very separate in their categorization - AMPHORA is in dishware, while LONG DRUM will be in the musical-instrument category.


Completeness

N/A

Frequently Requested

The "long drum" does not appear on any lists of most-requested emoji, but a few social media users have expressed a desire one to use in various contexts.

"I'm a bit caught up on the fact that there are 2 "sun partially obscured by cloud" emojis, a male and a female "2 children with bunny ears performing a dance routine" emoji, and both ! and !! emojis but not even ONE bongo emoji. I had to use a drum with sticks. This is not ok."²⁶

"Thank you!  (no bongo emoji!)"²⁷

²⁶ https://twitter.com/meg_is_asleep/status/1035638149119188999

²⁷ <https://twitter.com/DustinStarr/status/921975003331088384>

"Can't find a bongo emoji. My evening is ruined."²⁸

"I let my daughter watch the credits of Voices with @VancityReynolds so she could sing a happy song...Damn it no conga emoji. 🥁🥁🥁🥁🥁" ²⁹

Selection Factors Exclusion

Overly Specific

The LONG DRUM emoji it manages to encompass so many different instruments across so many cultures, which vary slightly in size, shape and sound. A single graphic can represent the many variations. A partial list appears above, in the introduction.

Open Ended

The LONG DRUM emoji is not open-ended because it encompasses many different instruments within one image - bongos, conga, talking drums, dohl, etc.

Already Representable

The LONG DRUM is not already represented, because the current "drum with drumsticks" emoji is a snare drum with two drumsticks (🥁). This drum is rare in many parts of the world, and is less universal than the drum depicted in this proposal.

Transient

Drums are well known as the oldest musical instrument in the world, and remain one of the most popular instruments today. As such, they are unlikely to decline in popularity any time in the next few centuries.

Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

Drums can be found in the many logos, most commonly bands and music-related companies, though a drum is not copyrighted or copyrightable. Many of the bands and companies use drum kits in their logo if they are marketing toward jazz or rock-and-roll fans, for example:

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/iFartHaiku/status/908829388216692741>

²⁹ <https://twitter.com/Klynn3656/status/938549966611582976>



However, drums more along the lines of the one in this proposal are used to symbolize rhythm, Africa, activism, pacifism and other concepts.





25 November - 10 December



Team
Rhythms

Other Character Properties

The other character properties are suggested to be defined as follows.

General Category: So

Canonical Combining Class: 0

Bidirectional Class: ON

Decomposition Type: Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored: N Unicode 1 Name:

ISO Comment:

Simple Uppercase Mapping: Simple Lowercase Mapping: Simple Titlecase Mapping:

Bios

Samantha Sunne (samanthasunne@gmail.com) is an emoji enthusiast and music fan, but cannot play any musical instruments. She can, somewhat, keep a beat on a drum.