

Name _____

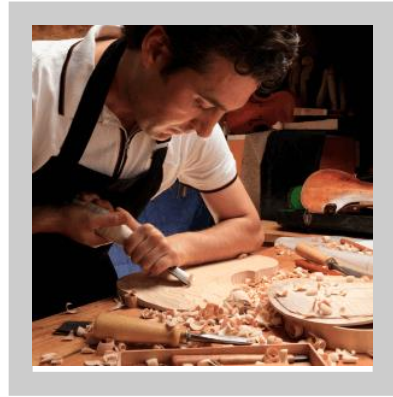
Date _____

The Luthier

A luthier is a person who makes guitars or any other stringed musical instruments. In this passage, a reporter interviews a guitar maker named Joe Ripner.

Reporter: Can you tell us how you got started making guitars?

Joe Ripner: Well, I have played guitar ever since I was about 12, and I also have a lot of experience working with wood. I have my own shop and make custom furniture. So after a few years of making furniture, it was only natural that I would start thinking about whether I could make a guitar. Turns out I could.



Reporter: What goes into making a guitar?

Joe Ripner: First you have to design the style and shape. From there, you have all kinds of decisions such as scale length and what kind of wood to use for the body of the guitar. Rosewood is a common wood to use for the body, but you can use all kinds of exotic woods. Cedar or spruce is often used for the soundboard. Then there is the actual process of building the guitar: that involves measuring, cutting, and gluing the pieces of wood together.

Reporter: How long does it take you to make a guitar?

Joe Ripner: There is usually 15-20 hours of shop time to make the actual structure, and then several more hours of set up, setting up the neck and checking the frets. The stringing takes a certain amount of time, and of course you have to apply multiple layers of finish. All the layers have to dry and be polished before the next layer can be added. So there is some waiting in between steps.

Reporter: How much do you charge for your custom guitars?

Joe Ripner: Depending on the wood I use and the complexity of the design, my guitars cost between 400 and 800 dollars.

Reporter: What do you like best about making guitars?

Joe Ripner: I like spending the time getting to know one object so well. I make guitars one at a time, so it's almost like I get to watch the instrument being born over a few weeks. Then it goes out in the world and has a life of its own, being played by someone I may never even meet.