



Sounding Out Schools

5 fun noise activities

Educating young people about noise is important and can be great fun. Exposure to too much noise impacts on development and learning, and damage hearing causing problems later in life.

References to statistics and research on noise can be found on <http://www.noiseactionweek.org.uk>

Meanwhile, here are 5 ideas for simple, fun activities to encourage children of all ages to think about noise and sound and get you thinking about other ways you can make young people more aware of noise.



1. Favourite sounds and nasty noises

Ask children to list their top 5 favourite noises and the 5 noises they dislike most.

These can be individual lists to discuss in class – or set up a spreadsheet for them to collate results from the class and find out which are the most popular and unpopular sounds.

Alternatively, children can survey their class mates, teachers friends and family – and ask them to rate a list of common noises as to how much they find them annoying.

The class can then discuss whether the noises liked or disliked are loud or quiet, and why they don't like them, or write a short essay or story about the noises.

2. Measuring noise levels

Contact the environmental health team at your local council, or a local acoustic consultancy and see if they would like to bring a noise meter and come and talk to children about noise (they already be taking part in Noise Action Week).

Loud shouts - Recording who can shout the loudest is always fun – for pupils and teachers. This can inform discussion about who are the noisiest and quietest in the school.

Noise levels in and around school - recording noise levels in and around the school and comparing them to see where is quiet, where is noisy – and which areas should be quiet or noisy and why.

Headphone noise – for previous Noise Action Weeks environmental health teams have measured the volume of headphones. Listening on headphones too loud for too long can lead to hearing damage.

3. Sound survey

Create a simple sound survey to get children listening. List 10 – 20 common noises heard in or around the school – for example traffic, aircraft, other classes, birdsong, footsteps, building work, alarms, phones ringing, coughing - and set up a form or spreadsheet that can be used to tally the number of times each noise is heard over a period of time (eg 15 mins). Get everyone to stay quiet and record sounds they hear– this can be repeated in different locations eg library/quiet study area, sports hall, canteen. Or a survey can be done at home as homework – then the sounds heard at home can be discussed and compared.

4. 'Quiet Please' signs

Discuss times and places around school where people have to be quiet. Encourage children to think about why they need to be quiet and what effect making too much noise has on other people. Ask them to make signs that could be displayed in areas and at times when quiet is needed. These could be placed around the school – and form a presentation about noise levels in the school for an assembly.

5. Noise in the news

Noise is often in the news – and stories about noise – whether it 's noisy neighbours, construction sites or from airports or roads can be either provided or researched by children from local papers or online.

The stories can then form the basis of a discussion about noise and its effects on people, and potential solutions to problems.

Children can be asked to write their own reports about noise problems they have experienced or read about – and consider the viewpoint of all involved – including those making the noise, those affected by it and any laws that apply to that noise.

These are some ideas to get you started – you may be able to think of more activities or find some online– for example:

Activities on the science of sound from the University of Salford:

<http://www.acoustics.salford.ac.uk/schools/>

Music and sound from the BBC:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/ks2_lessonplans/science/changing_sounds.shtml

Noise Action Week™ is co-ordinated by Environmental Protection UK

<http://www.environmental-protection.org.uk>

April 2014

