



**THE OCEAN SENSES
ACTIVITIES BOOK**





SOUND



LISTEN TO THE WORLD AROUND US

Focus:

To take time to identify and recognize the sounds in the spaces around us.

Learning objectives:

With this activity, we will draw attention to our surrounding environment through listening. This can function as a stand-alone activity. However, you can also use it as a starting point before transferring the experience to deep-sea environments in the activity called “Cold Seeps Symphony”.

Key words:

Spatial awareness, listening, sound walk, noise pollution.

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Losleben, L. K., Clerici, M., Holm, V. D., & Panieri, G. (2023). Listen to the world around us. In G. Panieri & M. Stiller-Reeve (Eds.), *The Ocean Senses Activity Book* (pp. 35-39). Septentrio Educational, 2023(1). <https://doi.org/10.7557/8.7050>

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IN SHORT (FOR THE TEACHER):

This is an activity to make pupils more aware of the environments around them through active listening. The pupils can work alone or in pairs. They will spend time in an area and write notes on what they hear.

You will need to investigate and plan which areas the pupils should spend time in before. You can also prepare the pupils by talking about sound and issues like noise pollution. This activity will act as a foundation before the pupils can progress to other activities with sounds and narratives from the deep-sea (see Activity: Cold Seeps Symphony).

Materials:

Each pupil needs:

- A pen/pencil.
- Paper/notebook or the worksheet provided on page 5.

Teaching Time:

90 minutes (estimated) depending on the location where the pupils will listen.

Classroom organization:

Let the pupils work individually or in pairs for the listening exercise. Standard discussion format for the follow-up lesson/discussion in the classroom.

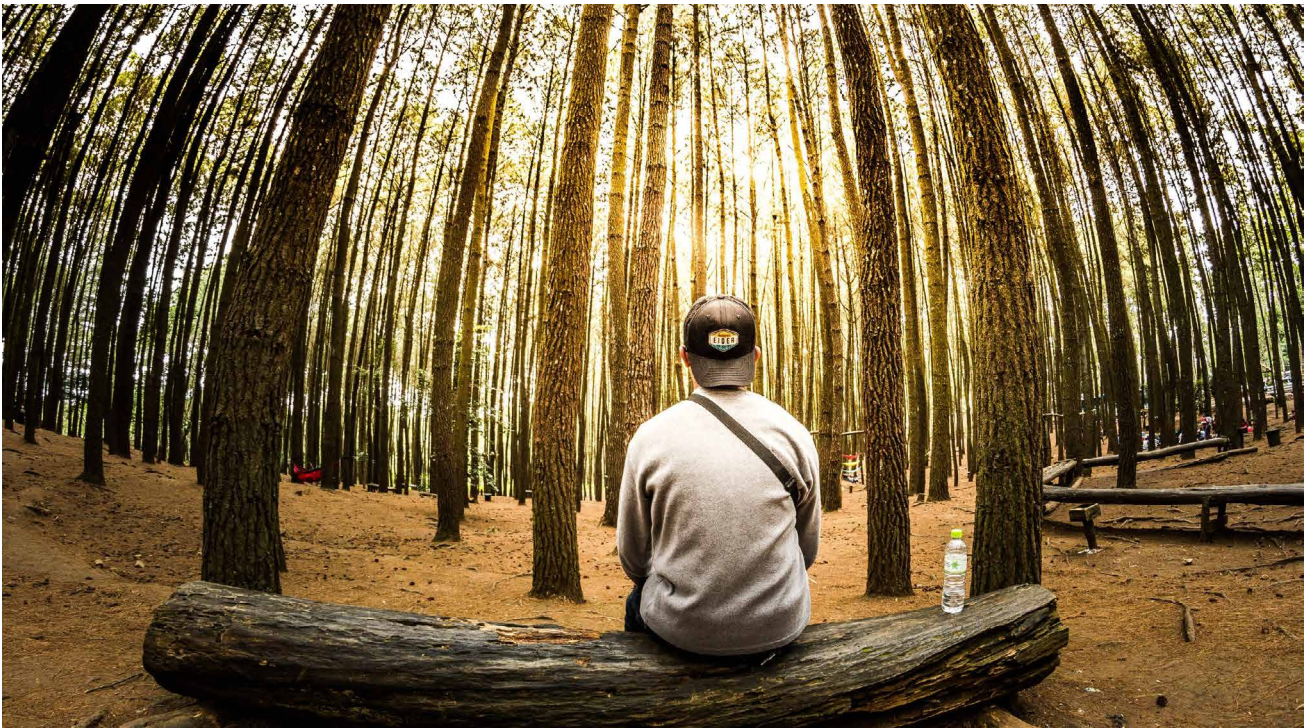
Location:

Somewhere outdoors. This could be near the school or further afield. The activity could be carried out in different locations and the pupils could discuss the differences in what they hear.

BACKGROUND STORY:

Actively listening to the world around you can sometimes be called a “soundwalk”. A soundwalk is an “embodied method of personally connecting with the soundscape through focused listening while physically moving through space” (Polli 2021).

This method was developed by Hildegard Westerkamp and has inspired further adaptations (such as “sound sittings”). These activities can be done in any environment, both on school property and in other locations around the school or further afield.



A person sitting on a log, contemplating the forest in front. Illustration to inspire listening outdoors in a forest if you have one nearby (Rangga Aditya Armien/Pexels)

Learning procedure:

Pupils will start by exploring the chosen area. They will find a place to sit down undistracted by other pupils or groups. They will then spend much time quietly listening to all the sounds they hear. The area could be one of the following:

- The school playground
- A woodland
- A town park
- A bus station
- A beach
- A shopping mall

The pupils should work alone or in pairs. Once they have sat and listened, they should make notes and answer some of these questions (see worksheet on next page, which could be printed for them to use):

- What sounds do you hear?
- What is the loudest sound?
- What sound is closest to you?
- What non-human sounds do you hear?
- What sounds are human-made?
- Which sounds are moving and not moving?

Discussion:

Use these questions to structure the classroom discussion afterwards. With the whole class, map all the sounds everyone has heard in each environment/area. Were there sounds that only some pupils heard? Were there sounds that were difficult to identify? Did the pupils hear more than they may have previously realised?

Another way to round off this activity is for the pupils to write a short essay describing the experience, what they heard and whether they considered some of the sounds as noise pollution.

Reference:

Polli, A. (2021). *Witnessing Space*. In *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Art*, ed. by Jane Grant, John Matthias, and David Prior. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190274054.013.1

Describe the area you are in:

What sounds do you hear?

What is the loudest sound?

What sound is closest to you?

What sound is furthest away?

What non-human sounds do you hear?

What sounds are human-made?

Which sounds are moving and not moving?