

# Sound Mapping

## Activity Description

Individually, students will create their own maps of the sounds they hear around them.

## Accessibility

This activity requires some hearing ability. Hard of Hearing students will be able to complete the activity - their sound maps will show a different view.

## Materials and Space

- Paper, pencil, and writing surface - one for each student
- Optional: plastic bags or other sit-upons for sitting on the ground.
- Space needed: An outdoor location with room for students to sit apart from others.

## Introduction

The idea of sound mapping can be an unfamiliar concept. Here are a few ways to help students develop and understand the idea of sound mapping:

Assess knowledge of current maps. You can bring up the section mapping activity if that has been done already. What other maps do they know of? How do we create those types of maps? What senses do we use to create those maps?

With sound mapping, we are going to use our sense of hearing to create a map. To get a better idea of how we're going to do this, consider the question 'what is sound'? Have students think about their idea of sound and share as a group or with the person next to them. Since you'll be drawing on a piece of paper, how can sound be illustrated? What does sound look like? If a sound is repeated, how will you show that? How will you differentiate between big and small sounds? Encourage students to draw something that isn't the actual object.

Consider the school bell. How would this sound look without drawing the actual bell? How about an airplane that moves from one place to another? Perhaps it is a squiggly line, or many tiny dots together. Remember: there is no right or wrong way to draw sounds. It is each person's personal experience that will create the shapes and drawings.

Go back to the definition your students have of ecosystems. How can sound mapping be a part of that definition?

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## Building Your Sound Map

Remind students that the goal is to hear as much of their environment as possible, and give each other the opportunity to hear as well. If they are making noises, it's hard to hear other things! This is a time for silent voices and quiet bodies.

Define the area they should stay in and have students spread out and take a comfortable seat. No one should be able to touch anyone else while they are sitting!

Students will place an 'x' in the center of the paper that represents their position. Optional: mark the top of the page to represent the direction in front of them. Give students as long as they need; recommended at least 5-7 minutes to listen to the sounds and draw them accordingly.

## Extensions

- What are other ways of experiencing ecosystems without sight? You can have students explore their environment by touch. E.g. closing their eyes and just feeling the ground and air around them. What can they feel? How many different textures are there?
- Create another sound map in a different environment whether that be a completely different space, or in a new spot or different time in the same environment. Make hypotheses on what new information can be gathered by sitting in a different spot.
- Have students draw an ecosystem-web based on the sounds they heard, similar to the physical one they made earlier. How would you connect the different sounds?

## Discussion

Once students have finished the activity, have a follow-up discussion to discuss what the students heard, in small groups or as a class.

- What was the closest sound they heard? The farthest?
- What's a sound from something biotic? Abiotic?
- What story do the sounds tell you about who is in your ecosystem and what they do?
- What are some things you heard that you may not have seen?
- How do these sounds interact with and shape our environment? Did different people hear different things?
- Have students compare their sound maps to each other. How are they different? How are they the same?