

Sound Mapping Activity

Taking an inventory of your place in the watershed

Grade Level: 3-6

Time: 5-15 minutes, depending on student's ability to focus

Objective: *What can I learn from the sounds that surround me?*

This activity provides students with a new way to explore and connect with the outdoors. Using just their sense of hearing, students will discover the range of activities and inhabitants that occupy the space around their school grounds.

Required Materials:

A journal and writing utensil for each student

Objectives and Outcomes:

1. Students will practice using just their sense of hearing for discovery
2. Students may determine relative species abundance
3. Students will learn to create a map and legend

Activity:

Prepare students before they head out by telling them:

1. They will need to find a spot within the designated boundaries that is within sight of the teacher but away from other students.
2. Sound maps are a quiet, individual activity. They need to be as quiet as possible and not interact with other students.
3. They can choose to sit however is comfortable for them.
4. They begin by drawing a dot in the center of the paper to represent them. Space at the top of their paper represents space in front of them. Space at the bottom of the paper represents space behind them. The right side of the dot represents space to their right and so on.
5. When the teacher gives the signal to start, students record everything they hear using a symbol they create. Students can use letters or shapes to represent sounds. Each time they hear a repeated sound, they record it again using the same symbol. Some students might do better if they close their eyes and

wait for a sound, then open their eyes and record the sound on their paper. This activity does not use sight at all.

6. Students keep listening and recording until the time is up.
7. Students will finish by creating a legend to accompany their sound map. They do not need to know what the sound they heard was.

Extension Ideas:

- Students can adopt one specific location on campus as their own unique spot for ongoing study and exploration throughout the year.
- The sound mapping activity can be repeated from different locations or different habitats, during different times of year or different times of day. Students can compare their results and make note of any differences.
- Maps could be used to determine species abundance if wildlife sounds is the focus as in the example (below).
- Students could create a story of events to accompany their sound map.
- Students could create a graph from their sound map to determine the relative frequency of sounds in their location and make comparisons to other locations chosen by their classmates.
- Students could use the sound map data to make predictions about habitat quality of different locations or to determine the various ways their location in the watershed is being used (driving, flying, mowing, playing, dogs etc.).

5-01-04 Picnic Meadow



- ~ Clark's Nutcracker
- ~ pine squirrel chatter
- ~ Kinglet
- o flicker
- ~ fly buzzing
- ~ bird wings flapping
- Δ raven call
- () grouse drums
- ~ unknown bird
- ~ unknown bird
- ~ wind in conifers
- ~ chickadee
- ~ woodpecker
- ~ tree trunk creaking
- o Sandhill cranes
- Me