

Sound Mapping

Parents: This activity would work great for contrast and comparison. Repeat the activity 2 or 3 times at different times of the day in the same location. For example, when you arrive and right before you leave a certain site. Or if you are staying at one of the local lodging accommodations you could do a morning, mid-day (lunch) and evening observation in the same location.

Considerations: Review all Leave No Trace Principles before starting any activity/lesson. Find a safe a quiet place to sit. If you are at a park or preserve be sure you stay on the trail, sit on a provided bench or picnic table (do not climb on structures not intended for human relaxation), can identify poison ivy, and check for ticks after any outdoor exploration.

Have you ever made a sound map before? This activity will help you hear all the wonderful sounds that nature makes! You might hear birds singing, wind blowing through the trees, insects buzzing, trees creaking, or rain falling. Listen carefully and take your time. The longer you listen, the more you will hear!

Let's Begin:

To make your Sounds Map, you'll need a blank piece of paper and something to write with. Here's what to do:

1. Go outside where you can sit comfortably.
2. Place an 'x' or draw a picture of yourself in the center of your paper.
3. Listen carefully to the sounds around you.
4. When you hear a sound make a mark on your map where you heard the sound in relation to where you are sitting. For example, if you heard a bird singing from behind you, draw a picture of a bird below the 'x' you made on your map that represents you.
5. Keep making marks for all the sounds you hear around you for the next 10 minutes.

Extensions:

1. Will you hear different sounds if you listen during different parts of the day? Try making a night sound map?
2. Make a sound map of the human made sounds you hear from your spot. Which map do you like better? Why?
3. Do you think the orientation of North, South, East, or West affects the sounds you are hearing? What characteristics or land features are in each direction? (This is a great time to introduce a map, compass or GPS unit depending on grade level).