

Understanding Soundscapes



Lesson Overview

We live in a world suffused with sound. Similar to how the land within our view is called a land scape, sound within our hearing range is called a sound scape.

There are various sounds that we hear throughout the day. Some of them can be used to tell us what time it is, like a rooster crowing, or the sound of traffic in the morning. There are sounds that tell us about the weather, like the pattering of rain, or the sound of wind. Additionally, many animals use sound to understand their surroundings. Is a predator coming? Is my prey nearby? Where can I find water? All of these questions can be answered by sound.

This lesson can teach you about sounds, what kinds of sounds there are, and help you to stop and think about why you hear them.

We would love it you would please enter your data into enter data into EpiCollect5 to compare and share with other students!

Notes for Parents/Teachers

This lesson can be done without use of the internet. There is a link to a podcast near the end, but it is not completely essential.

Be prepared to go outside with your student.

If you can't print out this lesson with your student, the outdoor activity can be performed with a notebook or scrap.

Age Group:

- Middle School +

Total Time Needed:

- Total: 55 Minutes

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pencil
- Ears,
- Internet Capable Device (optional)

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Step 1:

~5 Minutes

Name some of the sounds you might hear when you go outside your house, if you're with a partner or a parent, discuss these together.



Think about....

- Sounds may sound closer or further away based on magnitude.
- Sounds may seem closer or further away based on distance
- Sounds may be closer or further away based on what is making them.
- Sounds may move different through different habitats, or over different surfaces. (concrete, grass, trees)

Step 2:

- Of these sounds you listed, which are you more likely to hear from far away and which from close up? Why do you think that might be?
- You may talk about, write, or draw your concept.

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Step 3:

■ Sound Exploration Activity

■ ~ 20 Minutes

■ Find a spot outside where you can be comfortable sitting for 5 minutes. Do not look around, stare straight at your paper as you listen for sounds. Record what sounds you hear and then categorize it as geophony, biophony, or anthrophony on the tables below. When you are done find a new spot and repeat. You will do this a total of 3 times. Please make sure that your locations are safe before you start this activity.

■ Location 1: _____

Description of Sound (What do you think made it?)	Categorize the Sound (Geophony, Biophony, or Anthrophony)

■ Location 2: _____

Description of Sound (What do you think made it?)	Categorize the Sound (Geophony, Biophony, or Anthrophony)



Think about....

- Think about what makes which sound.
- Think about how the sound reached you.

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Location 3: _____

Description of Sound (What do you think made it?)	Categorize the Sound (Geophony, Biophony or Anthrophony?)



Think about....

- How do you know which type of sound is which?
-

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Step 4:

■ **Sound Type Matching**

■ ~5 minutes

■ Match the terms used to define soundscapes with their correct definitions by drawing a line to connect them. For a hint to which is which, you can use the definitions of the prefixes and suffix provided below.

■ Definitions: Geo = Land, Bio = Life, Anthro = Human, Phony = Sound

■ **Term:**

Definition:

■ Geophony

Human made sounds – cars, talking, electricity humming

■ Biophony

Animals calling/rustling, trees rustling

■ Anthrophony

Abiotic (nonliving) sounds - Wind, rocks falling, water rushing

Step 5:

Sound Category Identification:

~5 minutes

Below are sentences describing different types of sounds. Decide if the sounds described in each sentence are geophony, anthrophony, or biophony. If it helps, close your eyes and try to imagine the sound and what is involved in making it.

- The leaves of the trees rustled in the wind.
- A squirrel eating an acorn.
- The waves of the ocean crashing against the sand.
- Eric honked his car horn at the deer so it would move out of the road.
- The birds were singing as the sun rose.
- The neighbor started the lawn mower.
- Rocks tumbled down a steep cliffside after the earthquake.
- The wolves howled as the wind blew.
- Kelsey dropped her weights on the floor, hard, it made a loud clang.
- Felix the fox is scratching at your door.

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Step 6:

Reflection:

~ 15 Minutes

If possible, listen to the attached podcast: <https://soundcloud.com/eric-savadow/podcast-two-jake-holub-interview>

Answer the following questions as best you can:

1. What can we do to be more mindful of the sounds we hear?
2. Please specify, do you prefer anthrophony, geophony, or biophony? Please explain your choice. Which sounds?
3. Where do you go to listen?
4. How do you think anthrophony and geophony impacts biophony?
5. How are we as humans impacted by geophony and biophony?
6. Do you hear or perceive sounds differently after this exercise? If so, please explain.

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Step 7:

■ **Bonus Activity:**

If you have extra time, try to create a sound that nothing has ever made before. If you think you have succeeded, you may send a recording of your attempt to mossgrad@gmail.com .



Think about....

- The three types of sound in a soundscape
- Everything that makes a sound
- Things you've never imagined before

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