



Make a Sound Map

Suggested age range: Ages 6+

Materials needed: Paper, pencil, clipboard or hard surface to write on

1. To hear a variety of natural sounds, choose an area that encompasses several habitats. Tell the participants they have one minute to find their special “listening place.” Tell participants to remain in their spots until you signal that the activity is over.
2. To start, each participant will make an X in the center of their paper. Tell the participants that the paper is a sound map and that the X represents where each participant is sitting (once he’s chosen his spot). When a participant hears a sound, he makes a mark on the paper to represent the sound. The location of the mark should indicate the direction and distance of the sound from the participant’s seat. Tell participants not to draw a detailed picture for each sound, but to make just a simple mark. For example, a few wavy lines could represent a gust of wind, or a musical note could indicate a singing bird. Making simple marks keeps the focus on listening rather than on drawing.
3. Encourage the participants to close their eyes while listening for sounds. To help them increase their hearing ability, ask them to make “fox” ears by cupping their hands behind the ears. This hand position will create a greater surface area to capture sounds. Then show them how to cup the hands in front of the ears (palms facing backwards) to hear sounds behind them more easily.
4. This activity can last from 5 to 10 minutes depending on the group’s age and interest level. Once you’ve called everyone back they can share their sound maps.
5. After participants have shared their maps, you can ask them questions such as these:
 - Which sounds were the most familiar to you?
 - Which sound had you never heard before? Do you know what made the sound?
 - Which sound did you like best? Why?