

## Sound Map Activity

**Concepts, skills, and qualities taught:** Auditory awareness, serenity

**When and where to play:** Day and night / natural area

**Number of people needed:** For 1 person or more

**Suggested age range:** Ages 5 and up

**Materials needed:** Paper, pencil(s)

*The drumming of a woodpecker—wind streaming through the trees—flutelike calls of a hermit thrush—water cascading down a steep, rocky incline.*

Enchanting choruses of natural sounds delight players of *Sound Map*. Children love this activity and sit surprisingly still while mapping the sounds around them.

To play, give each person a piece of paper with an X marked in the center. Tell the participants that the paper is a sound map and that the X represents where each player is sitting (once he's chosen his spot). When a player 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 player's seat. Tell players 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.

Encourage the players 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.

To hear a variety of natural sounds, choose an area that encompasses several habitats, such as meadow, stream, and forest. Tell the players they have one minute to find their special "listening place." Setting a definite time limit prevents restless players from walking around too long and disturbing the rest of the group. For the same reason, tell players to remain in their spots until you signal that the activity is over.

How long should you play? From 4 to 10 minutes is good—depending on the group's age and interest level, and on how active the animals are. Once you've called the group back together ask them to divide into pairs, each to share his sound map with a partner.

After players have shared their maps, you can ask them questions such as these:

- What sounds were the most familiar to you?

- What sound had you never heard before? Do you know what made the sound?
- What sound did you like best? Why?

Sitting quietly—listening to the soothing voices of nearby trees, birds, and rustling grasses—calms us and deepens our appreciation for the life around us. *Sound Map* is an excellent activity for instilling greater awareness of one's surroundings.

Accessed from: <https://www.sharingnature.com/sound-map.html> (Sharing Nature: Nature Awareness Activities by Joseph Cornell)