



**noise**  
ACTION WEEK

# Schools Activity Ideas

Young people are increasingly exposed to noise sources – at home and at leisure. There is also evidence that hearing impairment in later life can be a result of exposure to excessive noise in earlier years. Too much noise can also impact on children's learning. Whether you are a school, or an organisation that wants to work with schools on noise, here are some ideas for activities to raise awareness in young people of noise and its impacts.

## Teaching Resources

We have a range of teaching resources, including two new resources for 7–11 year olds (key stage 2):

- **Neighbourhood Noise and Me** a lively and interactive teaching pack, written and developed by practising teachers to raise awareness of sound and noise, the impact noise has in our neighbourhoods, and how we can prevent our noise from annoying neighbours and families.
- **Travel Buster** [www.travelbuster.org.uk](http://www.travelbuster.org.uk) a free online activity aimed at raising awareness of the impacts of travel on health, noise and air quality. Pupils are asked about their journey to and from school over a week and are given a rating based on the impact their journey has. They can then make a pledge to improve it.

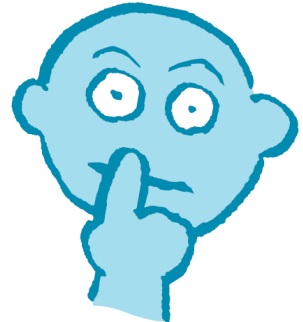
The Hear This! (key stage 1&2) and Sounding Off! (key stage 3&4) teaching packs are also available, together with cartoons, sample sounds, and activity sheets. Visit [www.noiseactionweek.org.uk](http://www.noiseactionweek.org.uk)

## Primary/Junior (Key Stage 1&2)

### Activity Sheets and Cartoons

Whether in class or at a promotional stand, use the activity sheets and cartoons, and get children (and adults!) thinking about noise and the different ways we perceive sounds.

- Ask pupils to colour in the activity sheets and cartoons and think about the different noises in each picture and the impact it might have on other people.
- The Terrible Tunes sheet can be used to get pupils to identify their least favourite song or type of music and why they don't like it.
- You can discuss the differences that arise and use this to demonstrate that people have differing tastes when it comes to sounds.
- The cartoons can also be used to create your own materials.



### Competitions and Creativity

Organise a competition with a noise theme. You may be able to borrow noise monitoring equipment from your local environmental health department:

- Who can shout the loudest? Many Noise Action Week participants have successfully done this. Wyre Borough Council held an education session in schools about noise and sound in 2008 – including a shout the loudest competition and encouraged pupils to pledge to turn down music.
- Which is the noisiest place in your school? In 2008 North Lanarkshire Council measured noise levels in playgrounds. Readings were taken with and without children in the playground.
- Who can shout the loudest? In 2008 Merstham Beaver Cubs were visited by noise specialists, who measured how loud they were, who was the loudest beaver, and how many decibels they could produce!
- Provide a list of sounds and ask pupils to put them in order from loudest to quietest - the Decibel Chart and sample sounds will help with this – both are available at [www.noiseactionweek.org.uk](http://www.noiseactionweek.org.uk)
- Designing Posters - Bury MBC held a poster competition with the local primary schools in 2008, where children were asked to design posters promoting noise awareness and how to reduce noise in the community. The winner was awarded a £10 book voucher and their school received a £50 book voucher.
- Poems about noise - Shetland Islands Council held a poem competition in 2008, where children were asked to compose a poem using letters from a noise related word for the first letter in each word/line of the poem.

## Assembly Ideas

There are a number of ways noise can be used as an assembly topic – here are some:

- Invite a noise specialist to talk to the school – for example, this could be a local noise control officer, someone with a hearing dog or mediation service.
- Talk about sounds that contribute to noise pollution – and describe/demonstrate simple solutions and/or encourage children to suggest solutions.
- Talk about the importance of listening to others and valuing their opinions – a representative from a local mediation service could support this.
- Sound demonstrations – use a decibel meter to demonstrate how sound works. South Oxfordshire Council ran educational workshops at Didcot Primary School in 2007 - showing how hearing works, how to avoid hearing damage, demonstrating sound levels, and getting pupils to listen to different noises and guess the decibel level. Hearing Dogs for the Deaf also came along to demonstrate how trained dogs help their owners.

## Sound Surveys

Use the Environmental Protection UK Sound Survey, available in Neighbourhood Noise and Me teaching pack, or devise your own survey to encourage pupils to find out more about noise in their environment and how it affects their quality of life. Suggest a list of songs or types of music, and ask pupils to vote for their least favourite and say why they don't like it.

Staff from Waterloo Housing Association visited Castle Bromwich Junior School in 2008 to talk to pupils in Year 3. Pupils were asked to think about noise, how it makes people feel and ways to cut neighbour noise. They were also asked to carry out sound surveys at home and report back to their class. Ideas from Environmental Protection UK's teaching pack were also used – including getting pupils to guess sounds played to them and to plot them on a decibel chart, role-play, and a neighbour noise game where they had to choose the actions they would take in different scenarios.

## Secondary Schools (Key Stage 3&4)

### Noise Levels

Encourage pupils to carry out a noise audit of their own home, and think of ways to reduce the noise. You can use our Quieter Homes website [www.quieterhomes.org](http://www.quieterhomes.org) to find out about noise levels and sound solutions.



### Sound Science

Invite a local noise expert (your local authority, or a local noise consultant may be willing to help). They can tell pupils about the science of sound and help them take some measurements to find out how noisy different areas of your school are. The results could be used to make a noise map of the school and grounds.

### Opinion Poll

Carry out a noise poll within school. Pupils can design their own questionnaire, and find out which are the most and least annoying noises, and how many people are bothered by noise. Do teachers and pupils like and dislike different noises?

### A Question of Noise

Noise is an important factor when considering the development of new roads/supermarkets/housing etc. Set up a role-play exercise where pupils represent groups of people with an interest in a new development, and discuss the noise implications.

### Sound Safety

Many children listen to their MP3 player on the way to school and listen to their stereos or go to music events in their spare time. Invite them to test how loud their MP3 players are and educate them about safe sound levels. And explain the impact their music can have on others who can hear it!

## Noise in the News

Stories about noise problems are often in the news – while some of them might seem silly, noise can cause disturbance and distress. The Decibel Chart and Fact Sheet on the Noise Action Week website have some examples. Look out for noise stories in local and national press, or use our examples as a starting point for a discussion about the noises we like and don't like and the problems noise can cause.



## Radio

Contact your local radio station and tell them about Noise Action Week and your activities. Pupils could record their own radio jingle to promote Noise Action Week. Tell the local press what you are doing (you can use our pro-forma press release to help you write your own).

## A Short Film About Noise

A free 10 minute DVD, illustrating the impact neighbour noise can have is available from Environmental Protection UK. It tells the story of David, who, tormented by noise from the flat above, begins to imagine what the noises might be. The dream like sequences have been described as 'cool' and 'wicked' by Noise Management, making it ideal for getting the message across to teenagers. The film depicts his approach to his neighbours to complain about the noise and gives four alternative, realistic outcomes to his complaint. This short film aims to encourage discussion about the impact of neighbour noise and relationships between neighbours.

**More information is available at [www.noiseactionweek.org.uk](http://www.noiseactionweek.org.uk)  
or contact us at [noiseactionweek@environmental-protection.org.uk](mailto:noiseactionweek@environmental-protection.org.uk)**