

Sound Mapping



When you go for a hike you often hear more than you see, but becoming familiar with sounds of nature, like birdcalls can take some time. As a beginner or to tune your ears just listen to where you hear different sounds, what patterns they make, and possible type of animal. Sound mapping is a good way to practice your listening skills, great for all ages.

Getting Started – It's Easy!

Who: all ages

Where: inside at an open window or outside, in a city or in a rural town

Materials: Something to write on and to write with: Notebook, plain paper, pencil, crayon, pen, markers, clipboard, etc.

Length of time: 15 minutes or more

Note This can take practice so have patience.

Let's Begin:

Grab your writing materials and head outside or over to a window. Pick an area you want to observe, or place you'd like to walk (starting with one area near your home is best for practice). You can even sit and look out a window - nature can be found everywhere. *Make sure the area is safe and you are allowed to be there.

- Take a minute and just observe- look, breathe, smell, listen
 - Now settle in a spot and begin
1. Pick a place along your hike and stop or a window to look out, be it the meadow, forest, hilltop.
 2. Take out the notebook or paper. Open up to a new page. In one corner of the page write down where you are and the date.
 3. Mark the center of your paper with an X. This will represent where you are standing on the trail, or if you are listening from a window you may want to put our X closer to the edge of the paper unless you want to include inside noises. You may want to draw an arrow out from the X to mark which way you are facing or write on the paper which direction you are facing.
 4. Listen to the sounds around you, close your eyes for a moment. When you close your eyes often your listening skill is heightened.
 5. Now open your eyes and mark where you thought you heard the bird calls coming from on your paper in relation to where you are. Remember the X represents where you are on the trail.
 6. Put dots or other small marks on the paper in the direction where you heard the sound come from. In front of you, behind, to the right or left. If you think you know what it is make a small note.
 7. Mark also the approximate distance when you place the dot. Put the dot closer to your X for loud and close calls or further away for more distant calls.
 8. When you are finished listen again and see if the birds or other sounds have moved from where you first heard them. If they have moved mark it with an arrow or a new color.
 9. Count the number of different calls or sounds that you heard.
 10. Try and look for the birds or sounds.

Example to the right >

