

Exploring Sound



Sounds are all around us. Your voice is a sound, music is a sound, and all sorts of things make sounds—both living things and non-living things.

Vibrations of an object or substance cause sound.

Stretch a rubber band so that it's tight, then pluck it. Can you see the band moving quickly back and forth? That movement is called a vibration. When a vibration reaches your ear, you hear sound.

A vibration is caused by a force or action.

Hold a ruler flat on the table so a portion of it extends off the edge. Flick the overhanging part of the ruler. What happens?

A little at a time, slide more of the ruler off the edge while still firmly holding the other end flat to the table. How does the sound change? How would you describe the different sounds?

Sound can travel though many different objects.

Cut two pieces of string (16-18 inches long) and tie them onto the ends of a metal coat hanger, cake rack or large metal utensil. Wrap the strings' loose ends around your index fingers, then place your fingers next to your ears. Gently swing the metal object away from your body and let it tap a hard surface such as the edge of a table or back of a chair.

What do you hear? How do you think the sound is reaching your ears? Test and compare different metal objects. How are the sounds the same or different?



Talking and Exploring Together

Make a string telephone: You'll need two large paper cups, string and two large paper clips.

Poke a hole in the bottom of each cup, then cut a string at least 20 feet long and thread the ends into the cups. Tie a paperclip to each end of the string (this anchors the string inside each cup).

Try out your telephone: first try it with the string loose between you and your child, then make the string tight. How is the sound different? Can you hear one another? If not, how can you fix it?

Listen to the sounds around you, indoors and outdoors.

Indoors: Sit quietly and listen. What do you hear? How would you describe the sounds?

Outdoors: Go on a listening walk. As you walk, stop every few minutes and listen for sounds. What is making the sound? What is the sound's source? How would you describe the sounds you hear?



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