



NYSDEC Environmental Education

Stop and Listen

Objective: The students will become aware of the importance of their sense of hearing to learn about the world around them.

Materials: None needed

Grade level: Elementary - Intermediate

Season: Any

Time: 5 -10 minutes

This activity is best done as part of an outdoor investigation, usually near the beginning. The object of this activity is to have the students use their sense of hearing, as well as to interpret the sounds heard to find out what is happening around them. It requires a few moments of listening quietly to the environment.

Sounds are important, and can tell you what is nearby (waterfall, human activity. etc.); many animals have a highly developed sense of hearing. Why would it be important to them? For locating other animals? (This can work two ways - the predator looking for prey, as well as the prey listening for a predator). An example would be a rabbit (prey) hiding in the brush using its large ears to listen for foxes or other predators. While playing this game, the students should imagine that they are wild animals, silently listening for things around them.

Activity Description:

Go outside to a relatively open area. have the students join in a circle, turn half -way around and walk about 10 steps away (dispersing them so they are not right next to each other). They can then either sit or stand (depending on the ground conditions) and be silent to hear as much as possible. In a few minutes, call them back and share experiences.

- How many different sounds did they hear?
- What caused the sounds?
- Did they hear any animals!
- What were they doing?
- Was the wind blowing?
- Is there a stream nearby?
- Were there any sounds caused by humans?