

1.

We begin with a simple exercise. WRITE DOWN ALL THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR. Take a few minutes to do this; then, if you are in a group, read all the lists out loud, noting differences.

Everyone will have a different list, for listening is very personal; and though some lists may be longer than others, *all answers will be correct.*

This simple exercise can be performed anywhere by anyone. It would be a good idea to try it several times in contrasting environments in order to get into the habit of listening.

2.

Now we are going to divide the lists in various ways. Start by assigning the letters N, H or T to each sound depending on whether it is a sound made by nature, a human sound or a technological (machine) sound. Which category predominates?

Now place an X beside each sound you produced yourself. Were most of the sounds on your list produced by you or by others?

Some sounds continued unceasingly throughout your listening period; others may have been repetitive, occurring more than once, and some were heard once only. Assign the letters C for continuous, R for repetitive and U for unique before each sound on your list. (By the way, can you think of a sound that has been going on continuously ever since you began the exercise though you hadn't noticed it until asked this question?)

3.

Take another sheet of paper. Let the top of the page stand for loud and the bottom for soft. Arrange the sounds you heard up and down the page according to how loud or soft they seemed to be.

Now let the top of the page stand for pleasant, the bottom for unpleasant, and list your sounds this way.

Turn the page over. Draw a medium-sized circle in the centre. Place all the sounds you made in the circle. Arrange all the others according to the distance and the direction from which they came to you.

The intelligent teacher will encourage discussion during these exercises, which are intended to demonstrate that sound may be regarded in many different ways. You can never keep sounds prisoner in one category alone. They are polysemous, always changing, always rendering new meanings.

A Sound Education

100 Exercises in Listening and Sound-Making

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