# Sound Mapper: Listen, Map, Discover

## Badge overview:

Students and teachers become more aware of the sounds around their school, distinguish between natural and human-made sounds, and consider how noise and everyday human activity may affect nature.

## Badge goals:

By the end of this activity, students will

1. Become more aware of the sounds in and around their school.
2. Distinguish between natural and human-made sounds.
3. Observe and record sounds in different locations.
4. Create and interpret a simple sound map.
5. Identify noisy and quiet areas around the school.
6. Consider how human activity and noise may affect nature.
7. Suggest ways to protect quieter spaces and reduce unnecessary noise.
8. Communicate what they discovered to others.

## When & Where to use this badge:

### Teacher Tip

This activity can link with

- **Environmental Studies** (nature, habitats and human impact)
- **Science** (sound and observation)
- **Geography** (mapping and land use)
- **Mathematics** (recording and comparing observations)
- **Languages** (describing and communicating findings)
- **Art / Music** (soundscapes and creative responses)
- **ICT / Media** (recording and presenting sound)

### Flexibility

- Students can join the activity at different break-club sessions, with each group adding to the shared school sound map.
- Different groups can investigate different areas of the school.
- The activity can focus on natural sounds, human-made sounds, or both.
- Students can use the supplied worksheet or create their own symbols for the sound map.
- Teachers can adapt the number of locations and recording methods depending on their school context.

## Steps to complete:

### Step 1 Listen & Think

### Teacher Instructions

- Play the short audio recording *Sounds of nature, echoes of impact*. Ask students to close their eyes and concentrate on the different sounds they hear.
- Ask students what they noticed and which sounds they recognised.
- Discuss how the different sounds made them feel and whether some sounds were more pleasant or disturbing than others.

- Introduce the idea that a place has its own soundscape made up of both natural and human-made sounds.
- Ask students to think about how disturbing sounds might affect people and wildlife, and what people can do to reduce unnecessary noise.

**Step 2 Sound Map**

**Teacher Instructions**

- In small groups, choose different places around the school grounds, such as a garden, courtyard, sports area or other suitable location.
- At each location, students close their eyes and listen carefully for a short period.
- Students record the sounds they hear and identify them as natural or human-made.
- Encourage them to listen beyond the most obvious sounds. They may hear birds, insects, wind, leaves, voices, footsteps, vehicles, machinery or other sounds.
- Students mark their observations on a school map to build a sound map of the school.

**Students record**

1. What sounds they hear
2. Whether each sound is natural or human-made
3. Where they heard it
4. Which sounds were loud, quiet, pleasant or disturbing
5. Anything that surprised them

The original worksheet uses exactly this basic approach: listen at different locations, record the sounds and distinguish natural from human-made sources.

**Step 3 Investigate**

- Compare sound maps from different parts of the school.
- Look for patterns.

Students consider:

- Where are the quietest areas?
- Where are the noisiest areas?
- Where can natural sounds be heard most clearly?
- Did you hear more natural or human-made sounds?
- Are there places where human activity seems to dominate the soundscape?
- What might this mean for nature in and around the school?
- Could anything be changed to reduce unnecessary noise?

The worksheet specifically asks students to identify noisy and quiet zones and consider which natural and human-made sounds they found most enjoyable or distracting.

**Step 4 Tell the Story**

Students use their sound maps and observations to communicate what they discovered. Students should include what they heard, where they heard it, what they discovered and what they think could be changed.

They could

- Create a **“Sounds of Our School”** display
- Display their sound map
- Make an infographic showing natural and human-made sounds
- Create a short nature soundscape using recordings from the school
- Produce a short video or podcast
- Present their findings at assembly
- Create a **“Did you know?”** awareness message
- Suggest one or two practical ways the school could reduce unnecessary noise