

# The school listening challenge

Create some unity at school by hosting a giant “Listening Challenge”. It’s not very often you get the chance for the whole school to get together, regardless of age group, to do something that’s fun and educational.

- Try to create your region’s biggest secret whisper and line the whole school up for some whispering fun.
- Make an excursion out of it and invite family members and the local business community to **be part of the challenge**

## Class v Class

A year-appropriate competition. Classes compete against other classes in their year for the title of “Champion Listener”.

- **Best of 5.** Five different secret messages are whispered to the classes. The winning class is the one with the least mixed message
- **Elimination Rounds.** Have all classes competing in the challenge in a common area. Eliminate the class with the message that has been mixed the most. Continue with secret messages until one champion class remains.

## Year v Year

Let the school determine which year’s students are the better listeners.

- Host class v class competitions until you have one winning class from each year... then host a play off with the winning class from each year competing for the ultimate title..... the school’s best listener! Will you be surprised by the results??

## Teachers v’s Students

The ultimate school challenge – who **really** listens the most?

- Get student council involved to play off against a group of teachers to see who the ultimate listener really is.
- Have each class choose a representative to be a part of the “student team” and compete against the teachers.

## Lesson Plan 1 – Mystery Noises

Jingling coins, clinking glasses, clapping hands... think you know what these sound like? Test the ability of students to identify several sounds with this game. Students should close their eyes or turn away from the "sound maker." Make each sound and see if everyone can guess it correctly.

1. Shake coins
2. Clap hands
3. Clap whiteboard erasers
4. Tap a pencil or pen on a desk
5. Close a book
6. Crumple up paper or foil
7. Stomp on the floor
8. Tear some paper
9. Close a stapler
10. Bounce a ball

Think of other sounds to make. You could also have students take turns to make and guess the sounds.



**Materials:**

- Sound effects

## Lesson Plan 2 – In the Middle

- Form a circle of students around a student who sits in the middle blindfolded.
- Point to one of the students in the circle and have them say the seated person's name.
- The seated person must then try point in the direction of the voice and identify the student who said his name.
- Try this experiment with the seated person using both ears and then again with one ear. How accurate can the centre person identify the caller and their location? Are two ears better than one?



**Materials:**

- Chair for centre subject, blindfold, earplugs

## Lesson Plan 3 – Two Ears are Better Than One: Sound Localisation

- Make an x on the floor with tape, chalk or erasable marker.
- Measure distances in a straight line in increments of 1.5 m from the x and label each of these points with the distance it is from x (1.5m, 3m, 4.5m etc.)
- Place a blindfolded student on the x.
- One student stands on one of these points and calls the student's name.
- The student attempts to identify the distance from the caller.
- Repeat the test at various points and then try using only one ear.
- Are 2 ears better than one in judging distance?



### Materials:

- tape OR chalk OR marker, earplugs

For most people, it will be easier to judge distance using both ears. Our brains use the loudness of sounds and the differences in time for sounds to reach each ear to make accurate determinations of sound locations.

## Lesson Plan 4 – Model Eardrum

It's simple to make a model of the eardrum (also called the "tympanic membrane") to demonstrate how sound travels through the air.

- Stretch some plastic wrap tightly over a large bowl or pot (any container with a wide opening will work) to represent the eardrum.
- Place about 20-30 grains of uncooked rice on the top of the plastic wrap.
- Use a baking tray as the noise maker. Hold the tray close to the plastic wrap. Hit the tray to create a "big bang" noise and watch the rice grains jump.

The "big bang" produces sound waves (changes in air pressure) that cause the plastic sheet to vibrate which causes the rice grains to move. Sound waves vibrate the eardrum in much the same way.



### Materials:

- Plastic wrap
- Container with wide opening
- Uncooked rice (any other small grain will work)
- Baking tray (or other noise maker)