



Challenge: Hearing or Listening?

Even when you're not concentrating on the sounds you're hearing, your ears are always sending sound signals to your brain. Most of the time your ears do this automatically, even if you don't realize it. This is called 'passive listening'. You're aware that there are sounds in the background, but you're not focusing on them. When you've got music on in the background, you're listening to it passively.

You will need:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Crayons

'Active listening' is what you do when you're focusing on what you hear, for example when you're having a conversation with someone. You pay attention to the sound of their words, how fast they speak and their tone of voice. All of this helps you understand the meaning of what is being said. Sometimes, you might be hearing the teacher in your classroom but if you're focussing on your piece of work, you might not 'hear' what they said. Now imagine applying that kind of attention to a piece of music that you hear. When you listen actively to music, you're focusing on what you hear and trying to understand it.

Step 1: Choose a piece of music. Start out with something you like that you're familiar with, something you want to listen to. Play the music (try not to watch any music videos if it has one (maybe close your eyes?)) and really focus on what you hear. As the music plays, ask yourself the following questions...

Step 2: How does it make you feel? Is the song happy? Sad? Exciting? Does the feeling change during the song? What is it about the song that make you feel this way? The music, the words?

Step 3: What instruments do you hear? For some people this is easy, but for others it can be hard to tell what instruments are playing. Can you hear drums? Wind instruments? Strings? Voices?



Step 4: Is this song fast or slow? To help you decide, try clapping or tapping along with the song. Listen for fast parts and slow parts happening at the same time.

Step 5: Can you transfer what you hear onto paper? Perhaps a drawing of something the music makes you think about or imagine? You could even just let your pencil draw freely to see what happens – maybe lots of spikes for fast, louder music? Perhaps lots of swirls or sweeping lines for quieter, slower music? Add some colour to your artwork – what colours does the music make you choose? Remember, this is YOUR active listening, so be creative in whatever way you choose – there's no right or wrong answer. You could try the same with some different styled music and compare your work? Can you explain your designs to an adult?

Main

Additional

Which skills will I be developing?



Skills Builder
PARTNERSHIP

