

Teachers Mindful Listening

Unit 1 Overview

*Teachers can explore their personal practice before introducing it to their class.
Each unit should take one week to explore.*

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Teachers
For Teacher Unit 1:



Mindfulness of Sound

Quote or Thought of the Week:

***“[Sherlock] Holmes had cultivated
the ability to still the noise
of the mind”***

Laurie R. King The Beekeeper's Apprentice





Mindfulness of Sound

What is Mindfulness of Sound?

Mindfulness of sound is paying attention on purpose to the 'soundscape' that is all around us. It helps us choose which sounds to focus our attention on. It encourages us to be thoughtful in the way we hear and respond to the words of others.



Why Practice? The Research Base

Research suggests that pupils become more focused and aware of their environment by practising active listening. Training our brains to focus on individual sounds helps develop our sensory skills and to become more responsive. As pupils explore their own 'soundscape' or auditory experience choosing what to focus on, and respond to, they build self awareness, self monitoring and self regulating skills.

Mindful listening is a key factor in effective communication. The ability to listen actively develops our awareness of tone and inflection giving the listener a clearer understanding of how to respond. This developed awareness aids conflict resolution, friendship building and critical thinking.



Teachers Welcome to Mindfulness: Practice 1



Although the benefits of Mindfulness can be far reaching and profound the techniques of practice are very simple. They involve short periods of paying attention on purpose which can help strengthen and develop your mind. The first thing we will learn is a mindful posture.

Personal Practice for Teachers



CD Track 1 - (The CD can be paused as you develop your practice.)

Mindfulness of Sound

And so let's begin...

Find a place that is quiet with few distractions. Turn off the TV, phone etc.

1. Sit on a chair that allows comfort and support but not slouching.
2. Your spine is upright yet relaxed.
3. Note if your body and mind are at ease yet alert.
4. Eyes are softly closed.
5. Hands on thighs, palms facing towards the ceiling.
6. Feet are on the ground, legs uncrossed.

Practice this posture for one minute when you hear the bell gently open your eyes.

Mindfulness is paying attention to whatever is happening in our experience.

Now we are going to pay attention to sound.

Let's return to our mindful posture.

Eyes gently closed

Hands on thighs, palms facing towards the ceiling.

Spine is upright but relaxed

Be aware of the weight of your body on the chair

Feet on the ground

I'm going to ring a bell

Let your attention go to the sound from the instant it starts until it ends.

When you notice the sound has left the room open your eyes (bell rings)

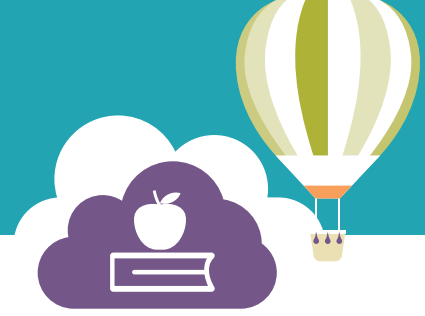
Notice how you feel, was that a challenge or easy for you ?

We are going to try that again and this time notice if any thoughts arise as the sound is still vibrating (bell rings)

We are beginning to develop the ability to observe one single thing for a time.

- **Practice mindfulness of sound over the next few days**
- **Refer to the Reflection Worksheet on page 22.**

Teachers Personal Reflection 1



Was it easy for you to stay focused on the bell?

Have you a particular space that is conducive to practicing in your home?
If so where?

If not, where could you create that space?

Do you think you could practice mindfulness for a few minutes every day?
If so, consider what time would be best?

If not, what changes could you make to create time for yourself to practise ?
Can you set yourself a reminder to help you develop the routine of practise?
What would that be ?

Teachers

Teacher Homework



- **Practise Mindfulness of Sound daily over the next week**

Formally: Use the cd track one, aim for once or twice a day.

Informally: Take a moment in your everyday life to check out the soundscape. What sounds may you have missed if you had not been paying particular attention?

- **Keep a Practise Log (see back of book)**

When did I practise?

Where ?

Did I practise both formally and informally ?

What did I notice?



A stylized illustration featuring a hot air balloon with vertical green and white stripes and a small basket, floating on the left. On the right, a large, fluffy white cloud is depicted against a teal background. In front of the cloud, there is a purple silhouette of an apple with a small green leaf, and below it, a white icon of an open book.

- Pupils will focus on specific sounds
- Pupils will identify different qualities of sounds
- Pupils will develop their listening skills
- Pupils will investigate their ability to self regulate their voices



Introduction

This lesson can be useful when discussing classroom rules with regard to appropriate classroom tone.

Discussion Questions

- What is whispering? Can you whisper loudly?
- Can you whisper so the teacher can't hear you?
- Can you think of times/situations where whispering is a good idea? Why?
- When would whispering not be useful?
- What is an appropriate classroom/indoor voice?
- What is an appropriate outside/playground voice?
- Do we always use loud voices outside?

Let's practice controlling our voices.

The Voice Conductor

Touch the tips of your fingers together to indicate silence and demonstrate increasing voice volume until your hands are far apart.

Agree on what should be the loudest they can get indoors. Have students test this range by singing "ah" as you move your hands farther apart and closer together. If they have trouble modulating their volume, stop and have a few volunteers model successfully. Then try it again with the whole class. This should reinforce students' sensitivity to sounds and their ability to self-regulate.



Pupils Body of Lesson-Pupil Practice

Unit 1 for children - CD - Script Track 1A

Mindful Bodies and Listening



Hello everyone,

Today you are going to spend a little time listening carefully. We are going to learn about mindfulness. Being mindful is about paying attention carefully. Paying careful attention can help us to calm down if we're angry- help us to be happy and even help us be better at school and sports. So listen up! Firstly let's make sure that you push your chair back from your desk so you can see your knees- check that first- check that you are facing your teacher- you don't need to look at anyone else for this.

Ok? Let's Begin.

Check that your body is still and quiet.

Not twitching or squirming or fiddling.

Our feet and hands are not moving.

This is what we call our mindful bodies.

Now softly close your eyes and see if you can sit like that for one minute until you hear my voice again.

Good job- great start - was that easy or hard? When I next ask you to put on your mindful bodies - you'll know what to do.

Mindful Listening

There are lots of ways to practice mindfulness- now we are going to practice mindfulness of sound. The next sound you hear is my singing bowl -first get into your mindful body again.

Feet on the ground.

Hands on your thighs, palms looking up to the ceiling.

Still hands and feet.

Eyes gently closed.

Quiet stillness.

Now listen to this sound all the way to the end. (bell rings)

Good - listen again - this time notice how the sound starts - changes- and put up your hand when the sound has completely gone. (bell rings)

Well done!

Body of Lesson-Pupil Practice (cont'd)



This time, with our mindful bodies on, listen to the sounds around you.
Can you notice the loudest sound and the very quietest sound.
Here we go, open your eyes when the bell stops ringing (one minute)
(bell rings)

Good listening- you really paid very good attention.

We can practice mindful listening together but you can also do that when you are on your own- in your bedroom or even in the playground.

Your teacher might give you a worksheet to complete.

You can help a friend by reminding them to practise mindful listening over the next few days.

Good start- well done!



Lesson Worksheet 1



Draw a picture of a mindful body

Make a list of sounds you heard
Inside the room

.....

.....

.....

What was the loudest sound you heard ?

.....

.....

What was the quietest sound you heard ?

.....

.....

Can you list some places you could practise mindful listening?

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Curriculum Linkage



English

Creative Writing 1

Drop Everything And Write

Write a one page short story entitled:

The Problem With Wearing Earphones

Creative Writing 2

Make 2 lists

Relaxing Sounds

.....

.....

.....

Disturbing Sounds

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.....

.....

S.P.H.E

Chinese Whispers - Organise the class into lines. A short phrase is whispered from one to another. Only the last in the line says it aloud. Is it the same as the original?

Music

Play different genres of music (e.g. modern, jazz, Irish). Ask the children to close their eyes and listen and imagine they are watching TV. What would the scene be on the TV - Draw what you see in your copy book.

Science

Line up eight empty bottles and fill them with varying amounts of water. Tap each gently with a wooden spoon. Now blow into each bottle.

What is the difference?

Sounds are made by vibrations that travel through the air. Tapping causes the glass and water to vibrate. Less water means the vibrations are faster and the pitch is higher and vice versa.

What You Might Notice/Lesson Evaluation

Were your students able to relate mindful listening to times when they listened with care and also to times when they didn't pay full attention?

Is there a greater awareness of when their peers are paying attention to them and when they're not?

Is there a greater awareness of the sound and tone of your classroom?

Library Resources



Drop Everything And Listen (D.E.A.L)

(Books to read aloud in your class)

The Magic School Bus In The Haunted Museum: A book about sound Linda Beech (1995)

The Animal That Drank Up Sound Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich (1992)

Rumpus of Rhymes: a noisy book of poems: Bobbi Katz (2001)

Assessment (See Page 9 - How to assess.)

Methodologies

Tick the methodologies you used

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Modelled Language | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Photo Language | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Talk and Discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Use of images as stimulus | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Circle Time | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Story | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Thinking Time | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Library Usage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Brainstorming | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |



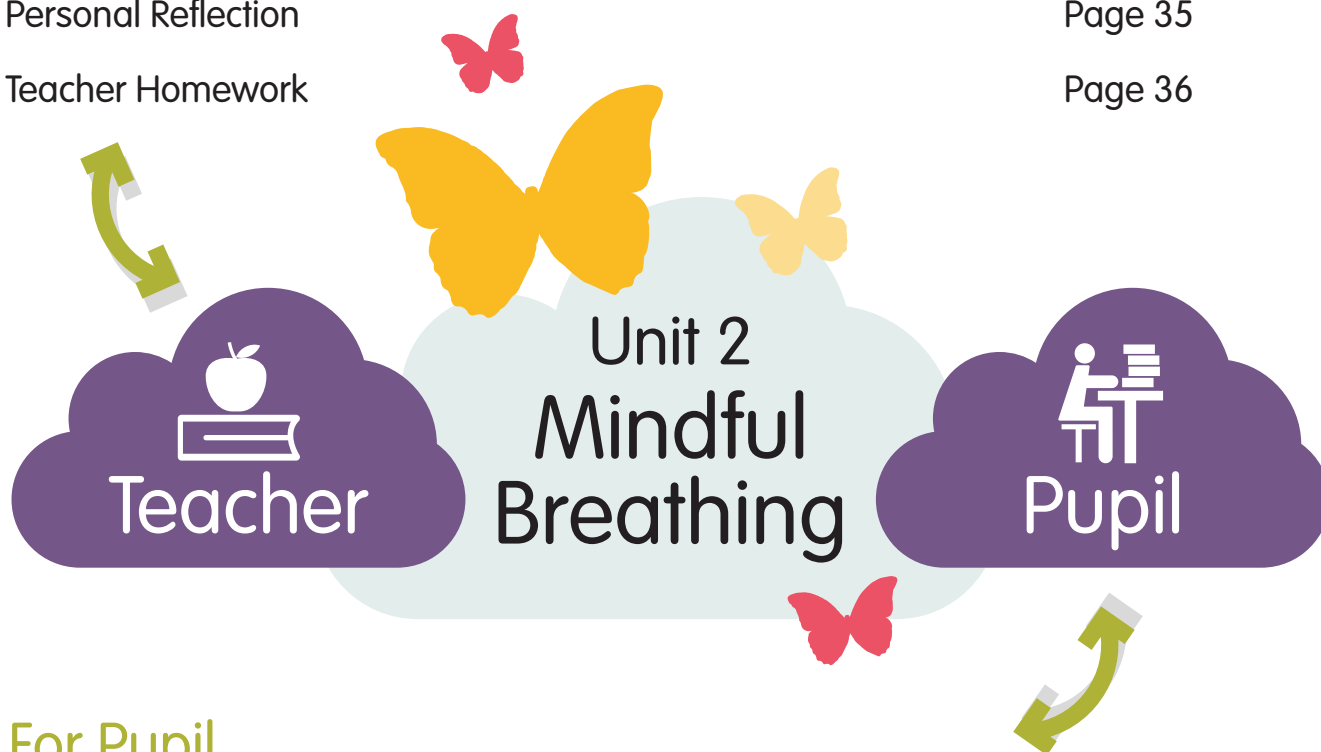
Teachers Mindful Breathing

Unit 2 Overview



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Mindfulness of Breath

Quote or Thought of the Week:

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom”

Victor Frankl - Man's Speech for Freedom



Why Practise? The Research Base



- Paying attention to our breath helps calm the body, slows our heart rate and lowers blood pressure. Focused breathing overrides the 'flight or fight' adrenaline response which contributes to anxiety. When we focus on our breath we change the activity in our brains from the reactive amygdala to the controlled and conscious thinking which takes place in the prefrontal cortex. When students practice these simple techniques of controlled breathing they are training their brains to develop the habit of responding rather than reacting, leading to more self control and a lessening of anxiety.
- Neuroplasticity means the brains ability to change. Psychologists used to think that our brains weren't very changeable – however research has shown that as we can change our muscles and the shape of our bodies by exercise so too can we change our brains by exercise and practice. The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that manages our thoughts and emotions. If you have a strong habit that you want to change it's this part of the brain that fires up. EEG (electroencephalogram) measures brain activity and it has been shown that when we practise mindful breathing the prefrontal cortex gets more active, and when we practice regularly, over a sustained period of time, the prefrontal cortex actually gets thicker.
- Research in primary schools in America have shown that students have improved decision making skills and emotional management after learning Mindfulness and that the benefits were still in evidence three months after the courses were finished.



Teachers Mindful Breathing Practice 2



In this lesson we are going to focus on our breath. It is something that is continuous and happening all the time. It is neutral – it is not something that evokes strong feelings. It is just there – all the time – breathing in and breathing out. It is with us always.

Personal Practice for Teachers Script 2 - CD Track 2



Mindful Breathing

So let's begin!

Remember your mindful posture.

Spine upright yet relaxed.

Eyes closed softly.

Hands on thighs, palms facing the ceiling.

Feel the weight of your body on the chair.

Feet on the ground.

Now bring your attention to your breath. Don't change it – just notice.

Now take 3 breaths.

Now take 3 breaths and follow each breaths journey from your nostrils to the back of your throat – your lungs, notice your tummy moving. Notice the point of your breath where the inhalation stops and exhalation starts.

Now notice the place where your breath seems the most obvious. It can be at your nostrils, back of your nose, throat, lungs, diaphragm. Notice the breath pass this spot on the inhalation and exhalation.

We call this place – our anchor. It is the place to anchor your attention.

Let's try to anchor our attention there for one minute.....

Open your eyes when you hear the second bell.

Let's try again and if you notice that your attention has wandered from your anchor gently escort it back.

Let's try for two minutes.

I'll begin by ringing the bell. Open your eyes when you hear the bell the second time.

(Bell rings)

Over the next few days see if you can remember to notice your breath. Is your anchor always in the same place?

