

Advocating for Noise Reduction

Description:

In this lesson, students will create a campaign to raise awareness about noise in our environment and the New York City Noise Code.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness about the New York City Noise Code
- Encourage young people to study in a quieter environment
- Create resource materials about noise pollution in New York City

Vocabulary:

Civics, mitigation, noise pollution, public health

Materials:

- [NYC Noise Code Summary Guide](#)
- Poster board
- Markers and decorative materials
- Medium that teachers and students would like to work in (i.e., a poster, pamphlet, video, or podcasts)

Background Information:

Noise complaints continue to be the number one quality-of-life issue for New York City residents. The NYC Noise Code aims to regulate the amount of noise we experience in our daily lives. The Noise Code restricts noise from construction sites, restaurants, and even ice cream trucks. While the New York City Noise Code aims to reduce noise pollution in the environment, noise pollution continues to persist as a problem for New Yorkers.

Now that students understand the importance of mitigating harmful noise in our classroom, neighborhood, and city, they can feel inspired to design and promote their own public awareness campaign. Public education is one of

the most important mitigation strategies since people can easily help turn down sound on their own.

Method:

- Distribute and read, either individually, in groups, or as a class, the [NYC Noise Code Summary Guide](#). Ask students to share some important points about the Noise Code. What regulations did they learn that they were not familiar with? Did any of these regulations surprise them?
- Break students into groups and give them a few minutes to share their own experiences with noise (“what loud noises have you heard recently that affected you?”). Groups can then pick a sound topic they are interested in exploring. (Two groups can choose the same topic.)
 - Sample topics: NYC’s Noise Code; noise impacts on concentration, focus, and learning; noise and stress; listening to loud music; noise and wildlife; and topics covered in news articles.
- Before students begin designing their own noise campaign, share some examples of current or recent public education campaigns in NYC (or other nearby cities). For example, the [Trash It. Don’t Flush It.](#) campaign, which aims to raise public awareness about the issues with improperly disposed grease, wipes, and other trash that can clog pipes. Another public education campaign, [Billy Never Idles](#), focuses on the issue of idling, the act of letting car exhaust run while remaining in one place, which can worsen several health conditions like asthma.
- Explain to your students that it will be their job to create a campaign focusing on the topic they selected to raise public awareness on the issue of noise. Using media of the students’ choice, each group should create a

message and campaign that promotes understanding of their noise issue. This can be achieved using posters, pamphlets, videos, podcasts, etc.

- Students must include information about the noise issue, why it is important, what is being done to regulate it and possible solutions. Students should also consider who the target audience is.
- Each group will present their campaign to the entire class and accept suggestions and questions. Through their campaign, they should also mitigate and plan noise reduction in their school, community, and the city.

Discussion:

- Which issue did you choose for your campaign? Why?
- Should anything be added to the New York City Noise Code that addresses individual noise issues and solutions?
- Do you ever violate the New York City Noise Code? What aspects of your life might you change to better follow the New York City Noise Code?
- Have you had experience with a noise issue? If so, what was it? How did it impact your life?
- Do you listen to loud music? Can you turn down the volume of music you listen to when wearing earbuds or headphones? How might loud music impact your hearing?

Extension:

- Have students visualize a noise complaint with by using the [Timeline of a Noise Complaint worksheet](#) available through DEP.
- As a class, develop one or more campaigns that identify noise concerns in school or the neighboring school community.
 - Lay out a plan on how the issue(s) can be addressed and who/what is involved. Pinpoint the noise issue at hand; is it creating problems with concentrating? Are other animals being harmed or affected?
 - After conducting diligent research, consider bringing the issue to the attention of school administration. Can the problem be solved by the school? Are other stakeholders involved?
 - If this is a larger or ongoing issue of concern, consider reaching out to NYC DEP or your local city council members

NYC Department of Environmental Protection

educationoffice@dep.nyc.gov

For more information visit www.nyc.gov/dep