

# Sound



## CONTENTS

### Think About . . .



What Causes Sound? . . . . .	2
How Does Sound Travel? . . . . .	4
How Are Sounds Different? . . . . .	6
How Is Sound Absorbed and Reflected? . . . . .	8
What Is Noise Pollution? . . . . .	9
How Do We Speak and Hear? . . . . .	10
How Do Musical Instruments Make Sounds? . . . . .	12

### People in Science

Audiologists . . . . .	14
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### Did You Know?

About Echolocation . . . . .	15
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<b>Glossary</b> . . . . .	16
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## Glossary

**absorb** to take in

**amplitude** amount of energy in a sound wave

**auditory nerve** nerve that carries signals from the inner ear to the brain

**compression** part of a sound wave where air particles are pushed close together

**decibel** unit used to measure the loudness of sound

**ear canal** tube that leads from the outside of the ear to the eardrum

**eardrum** thin tissue at the end of the ear canal that vibrates when sound waves hit it

**echo** reflected sound that can be heard

**echolocation** way of sensing the environment by sending out and receiving sound waves that reflect off objects

**energy** ability to cause change

**inner ear** space deep inside the ear that contains a tiny coiled tube called the cochlea

**loudness** amount of sound energy that reaches our ears; also called *volume* or *intensity*

**middle ear** space containing three small bones that vibrate and pass sound waves from the eardrum to the inner ear

**noise pollution** any sound that causes problems for people or things

**percussion instrument** instrument that makes sound when it is hit

**pitch** highness or lowness of a sound

**reflect** to bounce back

**sonar** use of reflected sound waves to find the depth of water or to locate underwater objects

**sonic boom** loud noise caused by an aircraft as it flies at or above the speed of sound

**sound** energy that travels through matter in waves of high and low pressure

**sound wave** compression wave that carries energy through matter

**speed of sound** how fast sound travels

**stringed instrument** instrument that makes sound when strings vibrate

**tuning fork** tool that vibrates at only one pitch when tapped on a surface; used to tune musical instruments

**ultrasonic** too high-pitched for the human ear to hear

**vibrate** to move rapidly back and forth

**vocal cords** folds of thin muscle tissue in our larynx, or voice box

**volume** amount of sound energy that reaches our ears; also called *loudness* or *intensity*

**wavelength** distance between two compressions of a sound wave

**wind instrument** instrument that makes sound when a column of air vibrates inside it