

Instructions for creating a gap

For this activity you will need an analogue radio and somewhere to work quietly at a table. The aim is to pay special attention to the spaces between broadcast channels.

1. Sit at the table and place the radio on it in front of you. It may be helpful to be able to see some of the natural world from a window and to have an indication of what the weather is doing.
2. Select either FM, AM, LW or SW on the radio and turn the tuning knob to the start of that frequency range.
3. Take a moment to notice whether you are sitting as comfortably as you can and to be aware of any sounds around you in the same room, in other rooms, in the building and outside. Then become aware of your own breathing, just quietly observing it for a minute or two.
4. Turn the radio on and adjust the volume to a comfortable level (you may have to adjust this again during the session).
5. If you can hear something that is discernable as a 'station' i.e., if speech, music or other deliberately broadcast sounds can be heard, then turn the tuning knob very slowly until this starts to fade and other sounds become audible.
6. Listen carefully to what can be heard at this far end of the spectrum: you will probably find that it is hard to listen without naming the sounds that you hear in some way. This is not problematic, it is just something to note.
7. Turn the tuning knob very slowly until the sound starts to change and notice in what way it changes. Stop again to listen to what can be heard. How is this sound different from before? Is the sound becoming louder or more distant? Are any new sound characteristics being introduced; such as beats or clicks, pulses or intervals? Do the sounds you can hear sound like anything familiar? If so, like what? You may find that, as mentioned above, you have already been using these terms to describe the sounds to yourself.
8. Resume turning the knob very slowly. When you come across a station, notice what can be heard at either 'end' of it. How do the 'between station' sounds give way to voices, music or other deliberate sounds? Do they merge with, or distort, one another? Does one sound become louder than another, or more distant? Does one seem as if it is 'beneath' or 'above' the other/s?
9. Continue to slowly scroll through the frequency spectrum listening carefully to what you can hear between and at the edges of channels. Periodically bring your awareness to your breathing and note whether there are any changes to it as you listen.
10. When you reach the end of the frequency range and have listened to any sounds present there, slowly turn the volume of the radio down, then switch it off.
11. Gradually become aware of your breathing again and then allow the sounds around you to filter through; sounds in the same room, from other rooms, in the building and outside.

You may wish to repeat this activity on another occasion, this time making note of the date, time, and weather conditions and perhaps even whether certain sorts of sounds are specific to certain frequency ranges, as well as anything else about the experience of listening that you want to record.