

Noise and Hearing Loss

Basically, noise is unwanted sound. It is a pollutant and a hazard to human health and hearing. In fact, it has been described as the most pervasive pollutant in America.

Noise in our environment affects physical health. Noise also has psychological and social implications and affects our well being and quality of life. Sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous. Both the amount of noise and the length of time of exposure determine the amount of damage. Hair cells of the inner ear and the hearing nerve can be damaged by an intense brief impulse, like an explosion, or by continuous and/or repeated exposure to noise. Hearing loss induced by noise is usually gradual and painless, but, unfortunately, permanent. Once destroyed, the hearing nerve and its sensory nerve cells do not regenerate! Don't be fooled by thinking your ears can get used to noise.

Noise not only affects hearing. It affects other parts of the body and body systems. It increases blood pressure and breathing rate, it can cause an upset stomach or ulcer or it can negatively impact a developing fetus, perhaps contributing to premature birth.

Noise can also hamper performance of daily tasks, increase fatigue, and cause irritability.

The key word in dealing with noise is prevention! We want to eliminate unwanted noise when we can. Wearing hearing protectors or limiting periods of exposure to noise are good examples of prevention.

Dealing with noise and its effects is a personal responsibility, a work-place responsibility, and a community responsibility.

Different firms are working trying to avoid hearing loss. For example, Apple is developing a volume control device for its iPods that would automatically calculate how long a person has been listening and at what volume, before gradually reducing the sound level, all in an effort to protect users' hearing. Also, Apple has released a free software update for some iPods that lets listeners set a maximum volume limit.

1. Comprehension exercises (2 points)

1.a. Noise(0.5 points)

- a. is a desirable sound.
- b. is a way of contamination.
- c. is only dangerous from a psychological point of view.

1.b. According to the text (0.5 points)

- a. A fetus is seldom affected by noise
- b. Apple volume limit program is rather expensive.
- c. Noise may make us feel more tired.

1.c. The damage caused by noise depend on the quantity of noise and the period of exposure.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

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1.d. We are the only responsible for avoiding noise damage.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

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2. Do the following grammar exercises according to the instructions given (2 points)

2.a. Complete the sentence so that it has a logical meaning (0.5 points)

- Your hair is too long. You should go to the hairdresser's and

2.b. Turn the two sentences into a clause containing 'as a result of' (0.5 points)

- There was a transport strike. We couldn't arrive on time.

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2.c. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one using 'wish' (0.5 points)

- It would have been better if you hadn't insulted him.

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2.d. Write the appropriate verb form of the verb in brackets (0.5 points)

- I enjoy _____ (to read) at nights.

3. Identify ONLY FOUR words from their definitions (1 point)

- the condition of spreading throughout.
- the smallest living part of an animal or a plant.
- something that is dangerous.
- a piece of equipment that is used for a particular purpose.
- make it difficult for someone to do something.
- caused by a particular condition.

4. Write a summary of the text of about 30 – 45 words using your own words (2 points)

5. Write a composition of about 100 – 150 words on ONLY ONE of the following topics (3 points)

5.a. What would you do to fight against crisis?

5.b. Are we exposed to too much noise?