



MINDFUL LISTENING FOR STUDENTS

"There's a lot of difference between listening and hearing."

—G. K. Chesterton

OVERVIEW

In this mindfulness practice, students develop their attention by tuning into the sounds in the classroom as they come and go, ultimately focusing on the sound of a bell or chime.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Daily, for at least one week or longer
- At the start of a school day, during a transition between classes, to close a class
- When you would like your students to practice skills of attention

TIME REQUIRED

- 15 minutes (Video: 7 minutes)

LEVEL

- PreK-Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary
- Middle School

MATERIALS

- [Video](#) (optional)
- Bell or chime

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Practice focusing their attention on sounds as they come and go

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making a Practice Trauma-Informed](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Spend a couple of minutes during a break in the school day to focus your attention on the sounds inside and outside of your classroom or workspace.
- What do you notice when you take the time to identify the sounds around you?
- What do you notice in yourself as you practice listening?

INSTRUCTIONS

GETTING STARTED

- Before beginning the video or sharing the transcript with your students, invite them to get into a comfortable position, sitting on a chair or the floor.
- Ask them what sounds they notice throughout the school day (e.g., cars outside, voices, etc.)? Do they notice sounds coming and going?
- Invite them to learn to pay attention and really listen to the sounds they hear during this practice.

The video activity below entitled "[YoMIND presents: JusTme](#)" can be found at the following [link](#) and features hip-hop artist [JusTme](#) (Timothy Scott, Jr.)

THE PRACTICE

Let's do a little mindfulness exercise to relax your mind and your body and tune up our mindful listening. So here's what you're going to do; it's like this...

Make sure you're sitting up nice and tall with your shoulders relaxed and rolled back.

Now if you're in a chair, put your feet flat on the floor,

And if you're already seated on the floor, just cross your legs.

The next thing is your hands.

Let's have them either palms facing up or palms facing down in your lap.

Now let's start to move our focus inside.

I invite you to close your eyes, or focus on a spot on the floor in front of you without dropping your chin.

I'm going to keep my eyes open, so I can check out the room and make sure everything is good around you.

So feel safe; feel secure. And let's get to it.

Let's start with a deep breath just to settle into the practice, breathing in and breathing out.

Start to notice what you feel in your body.

Notice if you have any pain, any areas of tightness, or if you're feeling uncomfortable in any way.

If you notice any discomfort, don't worry about it; it's all good; just notice it.

If you need to wiggle a little bit to adjust--to get a little bit more comfortable, go right ahead and do that.

Now once you're comfortable, try to keep your body really still.

Let's take a few more breaths together.

Let's breathe in; breathe out

Breathing in, and breathing out.

Keep it going.

This time let's tune into our sense of hearing and notice the sounds of our breath as we breathe in and breathe out.

So once more, let's breathe in and breathe out.

Now, direct your attention to the sounds in the room, and just notice those sounds.

[Pause.]

And also notice if you can hear where there are spaces of silence between the sounds.

[Pause.]

Great job--you all.

Now continue to keep your eyes closed and your ears open as we listen for the sound of the mindful bell.

The mindful bell sounds like this...

[Ring a bell or chime.]

Now, when you hear the sound of the mindful bell, raise your hand.

And when you don't hear the sound anymore, you can just gently bring your hand back down.

We're going to practice this three times together.

So get ready. Eyes still closed.

Ready? Here we go.

[Play a bell or chime three different times. Pause between each sound.]

Awesome job, you all.

Now, before we open our eyes, let's say our kind, loving words to ourselves.

Let's bring our hands over our hearts.

I will say some things out loud and you can repeat them to yourself in your head or in a soft whisper.

*So repeat after me.
It's okay to be awesome.
I AM awesome.
It's okay to be great.
I AM great.
When I work hard and set my mind to it, I can do it.
I can be my best.
I can do my best because I am my best.*

*Now inhale and let's lift our arms up over our heads for a full body stretch.
And as your bring your hands down slowly, you can slowly and gently open your eyes.
Great job, you all.*

*Taking these journeys into our inside world helps us deal with what's going on in our outside world.
It takes practice, but over time, practicing mindfulness will strengthen your mind and your body so that you can be your best self at all times.*

*I love you all and respect you.
Please love and respect yourselves.
Love and respect each other.
And take care of your mind.*

CLOSURE

- Invite students to describe their experience during this practice.
- Ask them what they noticed about their ability to trace the beginning and ending of the mindful bell's ring.
- Why might this practice might be useful to them? (Invite ideas and suggestions.)

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

How did you and your students respond to this practice? When might you try it again? When would it be most well-received during the day or week?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

While research on the effects of mindfulness on young children is still in the early stages, a [meta-analysis](#) that focuses on 24 studies of K-12 students showed changes in students' attention and resilience to stress, including positive emotions, self-esteem, and self-concept.

In addition, a [2019](#) targeted review of mindfulness interventions with young adolescents indicated multiple

benefits to their well-being. Apart from affecting student well-being, some research studies also suggest that mindfulness practices can foster [curiosity and learning](#).

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Many mindfulness practices involve turning inward to observe thoughts, breath patterns, and body sensations. However, mindful listening prompts students to turn

outward and engage with their world. In this case, students are sharpening their awareness of their immediate surroundings.

Students may also benefit from mindful listening because they are practicing paying attention—a skill that may ultimately improve their [executive functions](#) (e.g., attention, self-control, memory) and [academic achievement](#).

SOURCE

yomind.com