

National Quiet Day



Shhh! Time to take a break from our noisy world on National Quiet Day.

Noise surrounds us all the time – whether it's our partner snoring or traffic whizzing past us as we walk to work. National Quiet Day

on 14th September is a step towards recognizing the negative effects noise can have in our lives – and trying to find a solution for the harm it can do.

Scientists have identified many negative consequences of high levels of noise: it can be fatiguing, increase our stress levels, affect our ability to concentrate and it can affect us physiologically. Anyone who has tried to write a report while the workmen are digging up the road outside the window, will bear testimony to that fact. We are suffering from increasing levels of noise and that is no good thing.

In a recent survey in Britain, people were asked which noises they found most annoying. In first place was snoring! Indeed, 10% of respondents said they had considered breaking off a relationship because of it. And in second place in the annoying-noises list came loud chewing, followed by dogs barking, fingernails running down a blackboard and in fifth place slurping drinks. So we had better all mind our manners at the next afternoon tea we attend! Other annoying noises were car alarms, motorbike engines, talking loudly on mobile phones and babies crying.

And that is why National Quiet Day has been introduced in an attempt to let people find their little sanctuary of silence. The top tips to combat our noisy world? Curl up with a good read, get exercising, create a bedtime ritual, do yoga in the park, and take a long, languid bath. And all without headphones, radios or smart phones.

But is there any music that might be appropriate for National Quiet Day? Well, what about John Cage's silent piece 4'33". This is a three-movement piece of silence that lasts for four minutes and 33 seconds.

Bildnachweis: stock.adobe.com (Chris Titze Imaging), Dublin

If you would like to find out more about National Quiet Day on 14th September, then click here: <http://quietday.co.uk/>

And if you would like to watch a performance of John Cage's 4'33'', then click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTEFKFiXSx4>

And if you would like to use National Quiet Day in your lesson, then we have provided you with an activity at A2 level and at B1 level; see the **Teacher's Notes** and **Worksheet**.

Teacher's Notes

Listen (Level A2 and above, 10+ mins)

- On the board write *National Quiet Day* and ask students what they think this is about.
- Explain the background (see notes above).
- Tell students they are going to do an activity in silence for five minutes: Listening to the noises they can hear in the classroom.
- Make sure all students have a pen and paper.
- Explain that students should listen and write down all the noises they can hear. Tell them they can use German words if they don't know the English word. Tell them not to use dictionaries while listening.
- Write the first noise on the board.
- Join in and write a list yourself. You may hear: creaking, coughing, sighing, air-conditioning, laughter, chatting, car engines, birdsong, footsteps, airplane engine.
- When five minutes have finished, ask students to check their lists with a partner and if necessary use a dictionary to find translations.
- Write all the noises on the board and see how noisy a silent classroom can be.
- If you think your class would like the challenge, ask them to write a haiku about the noises they heard.
- A haiku is a three-line poem with five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line and five syllables in the third line.
- An example: Leaves are murmuring, quiet rubbing over page, a car door slamming.
- Ask students to write their haikus on the board and read them out to the class.

Be quiet! (Level B1 and above, 15+ mins)

- Make a copy of **Be quiet!**, one for each student.
- On the board write *alarm clock ringing* and ask students whether they like this noise or they think it is annoying.
- Explain that they are going to complete a questionnaire about nice and horrible noises.
- Distribute the **Worksheet**, one to each student and ask them to complete their response to each noise.
- Help with any unknown vocabulary. I don't mind it = *Ich habe nichts dagegen*.
- When everyone has finished, divide the class into groups of three (*birdsong*, *rock music* and *snoring* could be one way to find their new group members – you need one of each 'noise' in each group).
- Tell students to discuss their responses to the noises.
- Ask each group to think of more noises they like or dislike.

Worksheet

Be quiet!

How annoying do you find the following noises?

Tick (✓) the appropriate box.

	I don't like it.	I don't mind it.	I like it.
A baby crying			
Snoring			
A dog barking			
Loud rock music playing when you are trying to sleep			
Loud rock music playing at a party			
Birdsong			
Waves breaking on the beach			
Loud chewing			
Slurping drinks			
A fountain playing			
People talking in a loud voice on their mobile phone.			
Kindergarten children playing.			
Music from another passenger's headphones.			
Airplanes taking off.			

In groups of three, discuss your answers.

Are there any other noises you like or dislike?
Discuss in your group.