

The String Telephone

KIDS BUILD + TEST

RUN AT 11:35

25 MIN

The point

Sound needs a **path of matter**. A taut string carries the bumps beautifully; a slack string is no path at all — the call goes dead.

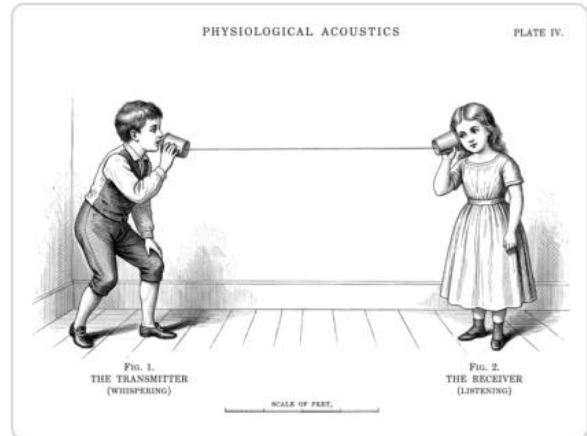
Materials

- Two paper cups per pair, pre-punched
- Kite string, ~10 ft per pair
- A doorway or hall to stretch across

Steps

- 1 Build: thread the string through both cups, knot inside each.
- 2 Pull the line **TAUT** across the room. One whispers into a cup, partner listens on the other. **PREDICT** first (worksheet box), then test.
- 3 Swap roles. Try a secret word — can the listener repeat it?
- 4 Now let the string hang **SLACK**. **PREDICT** (second box), then whisper again.
- 5 Pinch the taut string mid-call with two fingers — what happens, and why?

Say: "Tight string: the bumps march right down it, cup to cup. Loose string: no road for the bumps — your whisper has no way to travel. Matter must be pulled tight to carry sound."



TEACHER PREP

Pre-punch cup bottoms and cut strings to length. Scout a stretch long enough that normal voices won't carry over the air.

What to watch for

- The slack test is the teaching moment — run it **AFTER** the taut success
- The mid-string pinch: damping the path kills the call — C-2's silence move again

EXPECTED RESULT

Taut carries the whisper; slack goes dead; a pinch kills a live call. Sound travels only where connected matter can pass the bump along.