

One More Idea: Sound Needs a Messenger

REVEAL AT REVIEW

5 MIN

A TABLE

The point

Every sound starts with something shaking. Here is one more idea: the shake has to **travel through stuff** to reach your ear — air, water, wood. Sound cannot cross *nothing*. And some messengers carry it better than air!

Do it

- 1 Tap the table gently with one finger. Listen through the air — faint.
- 2 Now press your **ear flat against the table** and tap again, just as gently.
- 3 **LOUD!** The wood carried the shake straight to your ear, better than air did.
- 4 Ask: “What was the messenger the first time? The second time?”

Say: “Sound is a shake that travels. No stuff to shake — no sound at all.”



Fig. 1 — the tabletop carries the tap to your ear better than the air does

What to watch for

- The jump when the table-tap arrives louder
- Kids trying other messengers: a string phone, the wall, a water glass

A PEEK AHEAD

REMEMBER THE VACUUM JAR FROM THE AIR LESSONS? A SPACE WITH **NO AIR AT ALL** IS PERFECTLY SILENT — NOT EVEN A BELL CAN BE HEARD THROUGH NOTHING.