

You Can... Use an interactive whiteboard to investigate sound

Recording sound is a quick and easy process with the whiteboard. Sound recordings take up little memory and are an ideal, transportable resource for use in a computer suite or with the whole class on the whiteboard PC. All computers come pre-installed with a number of programs that record sound. In order to record, you will need either a webcam or a standard microphone: both options are inexpensive and offer a good standard of quality of sound.

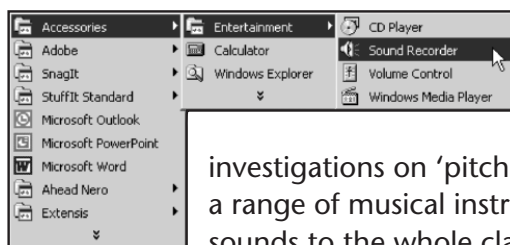
Thinking points

- Consider the flexibility of your classroom set-up. Often the small microphones provided as part of the computer bundle can't pick up noise from further than 1m. If the subject is not within this range, the recording of the investigation might be lost. Also, if the subject cannot move – for example, a large instrument – then you may need to use either a PDA or laptop for the sound recording.

- To use the recording facility:

- 1) Click Start and then Programs.
- 2) Click Accessories (usually found at the top of the My Programs file) and then scroll down to Entertainment.
- 3) Locate the Sound Recorder icon.
- 4) Open the program (a small grey rectangle with a record button). Place the microphone or webcam as near to the subject as possible (this may be easier using a laptop) and press Record. The program will allow 60 seconds of recording time, which is usually sufficient.

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Tips, ideas and activities

- The BBC website offers online resources on sound for Key Stage 1 children (www.bbc.co.uk/schools/scienceclips). Online models work best as a stimulus to show how the experiment would work under ideal circumstances (not often found in the primary classroom!). However, they are no substitute to actually doing the experiment.

- Save your files and store them, so that you can reuse the sounds you have recorded.

- The Sound Record program automatically displays the sound waves from the recording. This may not be part of your teaching objective but it offers a worthwhile teaching point. Use this facility for investigations on 'pitch', playing and recording a range of musical instruments. Play back the sounds to the whole class on the whiteboard and encourage each child to describe the pitch or volume of each instrument using appropriate vocabulary.

- Another use is to record children's comments on investigations for review and assessment purposes. Children in particular find recordings a useful tool for evaluation of work they have done.

