Sound stories

The activity works well in person and also with small groups of around four people online. It brings the stories to life and is a stimulating, creative activity.

To begin:

Welcome the group and explain that you are going to create a performance piece that brings a text/story to life by using objects to make sound effects. You may want to talk about films, television or plays where sound effects made a big impact. For example, the dramatic music in Jaws when the shark appears.

Next have a look at the different 'instruments' you have. Have a think about the range of sounds they could be used to create. Take some time to explore them, experimenting with the sounds that can be produced separately or with several objects together.

Next:

Read the text together. You may do this, or members of the group may want to have a go. Invite participants to share their first reactions to the text. *What do they like about it? Is it a text that they recognise?* Then discuss/demonstrate examples of sounds that stand out in the text. For example: the doorbell rings = strike a mug with a spoon; heavy raindrops against a window = beans rattled in a jar; footsteps = stamp your feet.

Explain that you are going to work to create a sound performance using your instruments and your text. Go through the text line by line and create a list of moments when you think a sound is needed. Then create a sound for each of them.

You might like to write down your sounds on a flipchart or large sheet of paper as you go and create an informal score for your performance. It can also be a good idea to note who will do what.

Spend time rehearsing, discussing and modifying your scene.

To finish:

Perform the piece you have created. Do this first with the text in the background and then try it just with the sounds. *What atmosphere is created when the words are removed?*