

## Are noise-cancelling headphones impairing our hearing skills? Some audiologists are beginning to worry

### Level 1: Elementary

**Article summary:** This article discusses the effects of using noise-cancelling headphones and whether they can cause hearing problems.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Modal verbs

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

#### 1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking about noise-cancelling headphones and what the consequences of their use might be. Ask students to work in pairs to discuss the questions. Get feedback from one or two pairs on what they discussed.

#### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to find the words in the article and then complete the sentences. Allow a few minutes for students to check their answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

**Key:**

1. expert
2. Processes
3. affect
4. Research
5. audiologist
6. block out
7. ear infections
8. Autism

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using the words from the previous activity. Encourage students to read the completed sentences aloud when they give answers, so you can check their pronunciation of the key words.

**Key:**

1. audiologist
2. processes
3. affect
4. research
5. autism
6. ear infections
7. block out
8. expert

#### 3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs. Encourage students to underline the part where they found the answer in the article and to correct any false answers.

**Key:**

1. T
2. F – More adults are coming to her clinic with hearing problems. But their ears are actually fine. The real issue is how their brain processes sounds.
3. F – People who use noise-cancelling headphones might find it hard to hear where sounds are coming from. They often find it difficult to follow conversations in noisy places like cafes or trains.
4. T
5. T
6. F – Professor Dani Tomlin suggests that noise-cancelling headphones might actually help some people, like those with autism. But she agrees we need more research.

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#### 4. Key language

- a. Students work individually or in pairs to choose the correct option. You may want to review the modal verbs *can*, *should*, *may* and *must* before students do this activity. To extend the activity, ask students to replace the modal with any other modal that fits grammatically and retains the same purpose.

**Key:**

1. *b*
2. *a*
3. *a*
4. *b*
5. *a*

#### 5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

#### 6. In your own words

- a. This task aims to help students experience what it's like to struggle with auditory processing and develop empathy for individuals with APD and autism. It should be done in pairs or groups of three. It needs to be done in class if possible. Allow students to research online or to use their phones to find a sound clip that they can use as background noise.
- b. Discuss the questions as a class and encourage students to reflect on what they felt they learned about the auditory challenges that people with APD and autism may face.