

Is your Classroom Acoustically Friendly or Unfriendly??

Check which acoustically unfriendly features you can find in your classroom:

- Hard, flat, high ceilings - they provide an ideal (and unwelcome) surface for sounds to reflect.
- Walls made of concrete block, brick, drywall and wood paneling – these are highly reflective and allow sounds to bounce around the classroom.
- Doors left ajar. Children's voices, slamming lockers, and tennis shoe squeaks from the hallway all pour into the classroom.
- Inferior doors – ones that have a hollow core or do not fit well in the frame.
- A hard surfaced floor (wood, concrete, tile) reflects unwanted noise.
- Objects on the wall (posters, student papers or chalkboards) reflect sound.
- Easily movable furniture which scrapes the floor
- Desks too close to the walls and potential sources of external hallway or heating noises.
- Teacher positioned behind a desk too far away from students.
- Radiator heating that hisses and pops or inferior heating and air conditioning systems with noisy blowers or loose/vibrating parts.
- Overhead fans always on.
- Noisy fluorescent lights
- Windows open or old windows with loose frames and thin panes - a poor noise barrier between the outdoors and classroom.
- Windows without coverings or hard blinds/shades deaden reflected sounds and create ample opportunities for echoes to develop.



Some Better Alternatives:

- Low, acoustically tiled ceilings
- Classrooms having two sets of doors
- Install hypo-allergenic carpets or area rugs on the floor
- Soft textured, sound-deadening wall coverings such as fabric panels or cork or burlap bulletin boards. Even a row of hanging sweaters and coats, plants or a beanbag chair will soak up sound.
- Teachers stand closer to your students and you won't need to crank up the vocal volume to reach their ears.
- An updated, well-functioning and quiet heating and cooling system
- Acoustically friendly heating and cooling systems feature mechanical components located away from "critical listening spaces" such as classrooms. (i.e.) on the roof above the gymnasium.
- Adequately-sized ductwork also reduces the speed of air movement and thus, reduces noise.
- New, thick and tightly-fitted windows
- Install hypo-allergenic fabric drapes that absorb noise.
- Place felt pads or other commercial products on the legs of chairs and tables in classrooms with no carpeting.
- Consider installation of a soundfield amplification system\
- Replace the ballasts on noisy fluorescent lights

