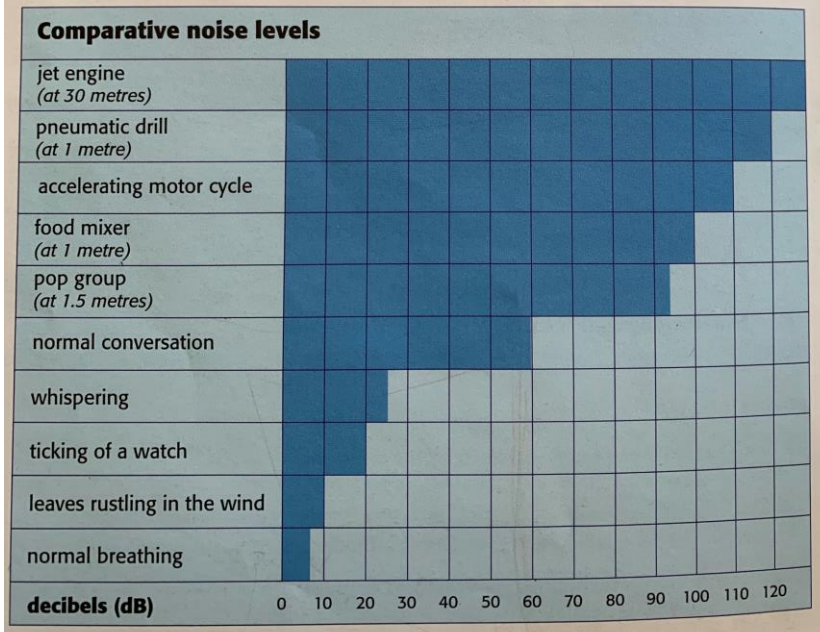
29 Noise

Noise is measured in units known as decibels (dB). The point at which the average human ear can hear is zero decibels; somewhere around 180 decibels is the lethal level. Rats exposed to levels approaching this turn cannibalistic and eventually die from heart failure.

Sound at 90 decibels or above may cause pain and temporary deafness lasting for minutes or hours. This deafness is a warning that hearing may be damaged permanently unless the source of the noise is removed or unless suitable precautions are taken. Prolonged tinnitus (buzzing in the ears) occurring after a noise has ceased is an indication that some damage has probably occurred.

People who cannot avoid exposure to loud noise (for example, workers using pneumatic drills) should wear ear protection.



Answer in sentences.

1 Explain in your own words what effect noises of 180 decibels can have on rats.

2 What effect can noises over 90 decibels have on a person?

3 What should workers using pneumatic drills do to protect their ears from the noise?

4 What is the noise level of a pneumatic drill if you are standing one metre away?

5 Which word in the passage means "lasting for a short time"?

6 Which word in the passage means "lasting for ever"?

7 Which word in the passage means "stopped"?

8 Which word in the passage means "injury"?

9 Which word in the passage means "a buzzing in the ears"?

10 What is the decibel level of a normal conversation?

11 What is the decibel level of a ticking watch?

12 Which item in the chart makes a noise of 100 decibels?

13 Which is noisier, the rustling of leaves in the wind or a whisper?

14 Which is noisier, a pop group 1.5 metres away, or an accelerating motor cycle?

15 Which decibel level surprises you most? Why?