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This article is about audible acoustic waves. For other uses, see Sound (disambiguation). Vibration that propagates as an acoustic wave A drum produces sound via a vibrating membrane In physics, sound is a vibration that propagates as an acoustic wave, through a transmission medium such as a gas, liquid or solid. In human physiology and psychology, sound is the reception of such waves and their perception by the brain.[1] Only acoustic waves that have frequencies lying between about 20 Hz and 20 kHz, the audio frequency range, elicit an auditory percept in humans. In air at atmospheric pressure, these represent sound waves with wavelengths of 17 metres (56 ft) to 1.7 centimetres (0.67 in). Sound waves above 20 kHz are known as ultrasound and are not audible to humans. Sound waves below 20 Hz are known as infrasound. Different animal species have varying hearing ranges. Acoustics Main article: Acoustics Acoustics is the interdisciplinary science that deals with the study of mechanical waves in gases, liquids, and solids including vibration, sound, ultrasound, and infrasound. A scientist who works in the field of acoustics is an acoustician, while someone working in the field of acoustical engineering may be called an acoustical engineer.[2] An audio engineer, on the other hand, is concerned with the recording, manipulation, mixing, and reproduction of sound.

Applications of acoustics are found in almost all aspects of modern society; subsdisciplines include aeroacoustics, audio signal processing, architectural acoustics, bioacoustics, electro-acoustics, environmental noise, musical acoustics, noise control, psychoacoustics, speech, ultrasonnd, underwater acoustics, and vibration.[3] Definition Sound is defined as "(a) Oscillation in pressure, stress, particle displacement, particle velocity (e.g., elastic or viscous), or the superposition of such propagated oscillation. (b) Auditory sensation evoked by the oscillation described in (a)."[4] Sound can be viewed as a wave motion in air or other elastic media. In this case, sound is a stimulus. Sound can also be viewed as propagation of the heating mechanism results in the perception of sound. In this case, sound is a sensation. Physics Main article: Experiment Using two tuning forks oscillating usually at the same frequency. One of the forks is held tight with a rubberized matel. Although only the first fork has been hit, the second fork will visibly excited due to the stimulation caused by the periodic change in the pressure and density of the air hitting the other fork. Resonance occurs because the frequency of one piece of metal on a prong, we say it's forced damped, and the excitations become larger and less pronounced as resonance isn't achieved as effectively through a medium such as air, water and solids as longitudinal waves and also as transverse wave in solids. The sound waves are generated by a sound source, such as the vibrating diaphragm of a stereo speaker. The sound source creates vibrations in the surrounding medium. As the source continues to vibrate the medium, the vibrations propagate away from the source at the speed of sound, thus forming the sound wave. At a fixed distance from the source, the pressure, velocity, and displacement of the medium vary in time. At an instant in time, the pressure, velocity, and displacement vary in space. Note that the particles of the medium do not travel with the sound wave. This is intuitively obvious for a solid, and the same is true for liquids and gases (that is, the vibrations of particles in the gas or liquid transport the vibrations, while the average position of the particles over time does not change). During propagation, waves can be reflected, refracted, or attenuated by the medium.[5] The behavior of sound propagation is generally affected by three things: A complex relationship between the density and pressure of the medium. This relationship, affected by temperature, determines the speed of sound within the medium. Motion of the medium itself. If the medium is moving, this movement may increase or decrease the absolute speed of the sound wave depending on the direction of the movement. For example, sound moving through wind will have its speed of propagation increased by the speed of the wind if the sound and wind are moving in the same direction. If the sound and wind are moving in opposite directions, the speed of the sound wave will be reduced by the speed of the wind. The viscosity of the medium. Medium viscosity determines the rate at which sound is attenuated. For many media, such as air or water, attenuation due to viscosity is negligible. When sound is moving through a medium that does not have constant physical properties, it may be refracted (either bending upwards or downwards [5]).

The manner of vibration. Transversal sound waves cannot exist in plasmas, liquids or gasses, and must move longitudinally. Longitudinal sound waves can move transversally. Transversal sound waves require shear stress, which requires rigidity. Shear stress exists in solids, but not in fluids. Longitudinal sound waves can move transversally. Longitudinal sound waves are waves of alternating pressure deviations from the equilibrium pressure, causing local regions of compression and rarefaction, while transverse waves (in solids) are waves of alternating sheer stress at right angle to the direction of propagation. Sound waves may be viewed using parabolic mirrors and objects that produce sound.[8] The energy carried by an oscillating sound wave converts back and forth between the potential energy of the extra compression (in case of longitudinal waves) or lateral displacement strain (in case of transverse waves) of the matter, and the kinetic energy of the displacement velocity of particles of the medium. Longitudinal plane waveTransverse plane waveLongitudinal and transverse plane wave A "pressure over time" graph of a 20 ms recording of a clarinet tone demonstrates the two fundamental elements of sound: Pressure and Time. Sounds can be represented as a mixture of their component Sinusoidal waves of different frequencies. The bottom waves have higher frequencies than those above. The horizontal axis represents time. Although there are many complexities relating to the transmission of sounds, at the point of reception (i.e. the ears), sound is readily dividable into two simple elements: pressure and time. These fundamental elements form the basis of all sound waves. They can be used to describe, in absolute terms, every sound we hear. In order to understand the sound more fully, a complex wave such as the one shown in a blue background on the right of this text, is usually separated into its component parts, which are a combination of various sound wave frequencies (and noise).[9][10][11]

Sound waves are often simplified to a description in terms of sinusoidal plane waves, which are characterized by these generic properties: Frequency, or its inverse, wavelength Amplitude, sound pressure or intensity Speed of sound Direction Sound that is perceivable by humans has frequencies around 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. In air at standard temperature and pressure, the corresponding wavelengths of sound waves range from 17 m (56 ft) to 1.7 cm (0.67 in). Sometimes speed and direction are combined as a velocity vector; wave number and direction are combined as a wave vector. Transverse waves, also known as shear waves, have the additional property, polarization, and are not a characteristic of sound waves. Speed Main article: Speed of sound U.S. Navy F/A-18B approaching the speed of sound. The white halo is formed by condensed water droplets thought to result from a drop in air pressure around the aircraft (see Prandtl–Glauert singularity).[12] The speed of sound depends on the medium the waves pass through, and is a fundamental property of the material. The first significant effort towards measurement of the speed of sound was made by Isaac Newton. He believed the speed of sound in a particular substance was equal to the square root of the pressure acting on it divided by its density: c = p / ρ {\displaystyle c={\sqrt {\frac {p}{\rho }}}}. This was later proven wrong and the French mathematician Laplace corrected the formula by deducing that the phenomenon of sound travelling is not isothermal, as believed by Newton, but adiabatic. He added another factor to the equation—gamma—and multiplied √{\displaystyle {\sqrt {\dfrac {p}{\rho }}}} by p / ρ {\displaystyle {\sqrt {\dfrac {p}{\rho }}}}, thus coming up with the equation c = γ · p / ρ {\displaystyle c={\sqrt {\gamma \,{\dot{p}}/{\dot{\rho }}}}}. Since K = γ · p {\displaystyle K=\gamma \,{\dot{p}}/{\dot{\rho }}}, the final equation came up to be c = K / ρ {\displaystyle c={\sqrt {{K/\rho }}}}, which is also known as the Newton-Laplace equation. In this equation, K is the elastic bulk modulus, c is the velocity of sound, and ρ {\displaystyle \rho } is the density. Thus, the speed of sound is proportional to the square root of the ratio of the bulk modulus of the medium to its density. Those physical properties and the speed of sound depend upon ambient conditions. For example, the speed of sound in gases depends on temperature. In 20 °C (68 °F) at sea level, the speed of sound is approximately 343 m/s (1,230 km/h; 767 mph) using the formula v[m/s]= 331 + 0.6 T[°C]. The speed of sound is also slightly sensitive, being subject to a second-order anharmonic effect, to the degree of humidity. The speed of sound in steel is 5,960 m/s (21,460 km/h; 13,330 mph); in concrete it is 3,600 m/s (12,800 km/h; 7,900 mph); in wood it is 3,300 m/s (11,800 km/h; 7,330 mph).

In fact, the speed of sound is about 5,960 m/s (21,460 km/h; 13,330 mph). Second most the fastest in solid atomic hydrogen at about 36,000 m/s (129,600 km/h; 80,530 mph)[13][14] Perception A distinct interval of the term sound from its usage in physics is evident in its use in physiology and psychology, where it refers to the subjective experience of perception by the brain. The field of psychocoustics is dedicated to such studies. Webster's 1936 dictionary defined sound as: "1. The sensation of hearing, that which is heard; specif.: a. Psychophysical. Sensation due to stimulation of the auditory nerves and auditory centers of the brain, usually by vibrations transmitted in a material medium, commonly air, affecting the organ of hearing. b. Physical. Vibrational energy which occasions such a sensation. Sound is propagated by progressive longitudinal vibratory disturbances (sound waves)".[15] This means that the correct response to the question: "if a tree falls in the forest with no one to hear it fall, does it make a sound?" is "yes," and "no," dependent on whether being answered using the physical, or the psychophysical definition, respectively. The physical reception of sound in any hearing organism is limited to a range of frequencies. Humans normally hear sound frequencies between approximately 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz (20 kHz).[16]:382 The upper limit decreases with age.[16]:249 Sometimes sound refers to only those vibrations with frequencies that are within the hearing range for humans[17] or sometimes it relates to a particular animal. Other species have different ranges of hearing. For example, dogs can perceive vibrations higher than 20 kHz. As a signal perceived by one of the major senses, sound is used by many species for detecting danger, navigation, predation, and communication. Earth's atmosphere, water, and virtually any physical phenomenon, such as fire, rain, surf, or earthquake, produces (and is characterized by) its unique sounds. Many species, such as frogs, birds, marine and terrestrial mammals, have also developed special organs to produce sound. In some species, these produce song and speech. Furthermore, humans have developed culture and technology (such as music, telephone and radio) that allows them to generate, record, transmit, and broadcast sound. Noise is a term offered to refer to unwanted sound. In science and engineering, noise is an undesirable disturbance. It is the quality of the sound that causes discomfort or annoyance. The word "noise" comes from Old Norse *nōisr*, "clamor". The sound of the ocean surface is produced by breaking waves. The sound of falling raindrops is produced by impact (whether audible to humans or not) within a given area as modified by the environment and understood by people, in context of the surrounding environment. There are, historically, six experimentially separable ways in which sound waves are analysed. They are: pitch, duration, loudness, timbre, sonic texture and spatial location.[18] Some of these terms have a standardised definition (for instance in the ANSI Acoustical Terminology ANSI/S4.1.1-2013). More recent approaches have also considered temporal envelope and temporal fine structure as perceptually relevant analyses.[19][20][21] Pitch Figure 1. Pitch perception Pitch is perceived as how "low" or "high" a sound is and represents the cyclic, repetitive nature of the vibrations that make up sound. For simple sounds, pitch relates to the frequency of the slowest vibration in the sound (called the fundamantal harmonic). In the case of complex sounds, pitch perception can vary. Sometimes individuals identify different pitches for the same sound, based on their personal experience of particular sound patterns. Selection of a particular pitch is determined by pre-conscious examination of vibrations, including their frequencies and the balance between them. Specific attention is given to recognising potential harmonics [22][23] Every sound is placed on a pitch continuum from low to high. For example: white noise (random noise spread evenly across all frequencies) sounds higher in pitch than pink noise (random noise spread evenly across octaves) as white noise has more high frequency content. Figure 1 shows an example of pitch recognition. During the listening process, each sound is analysed for a repeating pattern (See Figure 1: orange arrows) and the results forwarded to the auditory cortex as a single pitch of a certain height (octave) and chroma (note name). Duration Figure 2. Duration perception Duration is perceived as how "long" or "short" a sound is and relates to onset and offset signals created by nerve responses to sounds. The duration of a sound usually lasts from the time the sound is first detected until it fades away. It is related to the amplitude of the sound, so louder sounds last longer. Timbre Figure 3. Loudness perception Loudness is perceived as how "loud" or "soft" a sound is and relates to the totalled number of auditory nerve stimulations over short cycic time periods, most likely over the duration of the theta wave cycles.[26][27] [28] This means that at short durations, a very short sound can sound softer than a longer sound even though they are presented at the same intensity level. Past around 200 ms this is no longer the case and the duration of the sound no longer affects the apparent loudness of the sound. Figure 3 gives an impression of how loudness information is summed over a period of about 200 ms before being sent to the auditory cortex. Louder signals create a greater 'push' on the Basilar membrane and thus stimulate more nerves, creating a stronger loudness signal. A more complex signal also creates more nerve firings and so sounds louder (for the same wave amplitude) than a simpler sound, such as a sine wave. Timbre Figure 4. Timbre perception Timbre is perceived as the quality of different sounds (e.g. the thud of a fallen rock, the whir of a drill, the tone of a musical instrument or the quality of a voice) and represents the pre-conscious allocation of a sonic identity to a sound (e.g. "it's an oboe!"). This identity is based on information gained from frequency transitions, noiseness, unsteadiness, perceived pitch and the spread and intensity of overtones in the sound over an extended time frame[9][10][11] The way a sound changes over time (see figure 4) provides most of the information for timbre identification. Even though a small section of the wave form from each instrumnt looks very similar, exposure to the difference in timbre (orange arrow in figure 4) leads to the ability to distinguish instruments. Less noticeable differences include color harmony and attack decay rates. Color harmony refers to the way notes relate to each other in chords. Attack decay rates refer to the number of samples and the interaction between the waveform and the texture of the sound. Texture Figure 5. Texture perception Texture is very context-related, relates to the cognitive separation of pitched objects.[31] In music, texture is often referred to as the difference between unison, polyphony and homophony, but it can also relate (for example) to a busy office, a crowd of people, or a sound which might be referred to as "cacophony". However texture refers to more than this. The texture of an orchestral piece is very different from the texture of a brass quintet because of the difference in places between the textures of the individual instruments. The texture of a market place is very different from a school hall because of the differences in the various sound sources. Spatial location Spatial location (see: Sound localization) represents the cognitive placement of a sound in an environmental context; including the placement of a sound on both the horizontal and vertical plane, the distance from the sound source and the characteristics of the sonic environment.[31][32] In a thick texture, it is possible to identify multiple sound sources using a combination of spatial location and timbre identification. This is the main reason why we can pick the sound of an oboe in an orchestra and the words of a single person at a cocktail party. Pressure Sound measurementsCharacteristicSymbols Sound pressure p SPL/LPA Particle velocity v SVL Particle displacement δ Soudn intensity I SIL Sound power P SWL LWA Sound energy W Sound energy density w Sound exposure E SEL Acoustic impedance Z Audio frequency AF Transmission loss TLtve Sound pressure is the difference, in a given medium, between average local pressure and the pressure in the sound wave. A square of this difference (i.e., a square of the deviation from the equilibrium pressure)) is usually averaged over time and/or space, and a square root of the average provides a rmean square (RMS) value. For example, 1 Pa RMS sound pressure (94 dBSPIL) in atmospheric air implies that the actual pressure in the sound wave oscillates between

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