

One of the most exciting things about geography is fieldwork and it doesn't have to be done in a field and it doesn't have to feel like work either. It's exploring. Fieldwork always kicks off with a good hypothesis – that's a statement that you are going to test, or an enquiry question you want to investigate. So, it seems pretty noisy round here, so how about, 'Is the noise on this street higher than the level recommended by the World Health Organisation?'

After an enquiry question, you need some evidence. I've downloaded an app onto my phone to measure sound levels in this area, so it's time to get some data. It's always good to do a risk assessment before you start. I'm safe behind this railing. (Car alarm blares. Dog barks. Siren wails. Horn beeps. Siren wails. Crow caws. Sudden silence.) Now, let's turn all this data into something useful. This is my primary data, recorded over the last few hours. In fieldwork, you always want to present data in a clear way. So here I've used a line graph. I'm plotting the readings on the graph with time of reading on the X axis and sound level on the Y axis. The average decibel level outside over the last few hours is 75 decibels and the World Health Organisation recommends no more than 70 decibels in shopping and traffic areas. (Siren wails. Dog barks.) I think I'll go somewhere a bit quieter to work out the conclusion.

So the answer to my... (Birds cry.) The answer to my enquiry question is yes, the volume of noise is higher than recommended levels set by the World Health Organisation, but not here, just 100 yards away. Every stage of fieldwork is connected. Without the right hypothesis or enquiry question, you won't develop the right method to get the right data. Without data, no presentation, no analysis, no conclusion. And no evaluation. And my evaluation is that my data would have been more useful and accurate if I had recorded it at various times of the day when the volume of traffic changed, and that's what I'll do next time.