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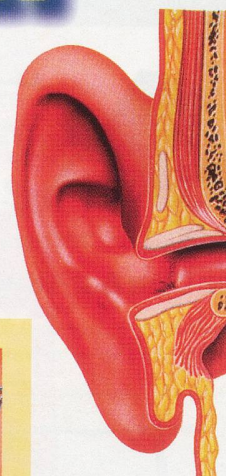
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Hello Children

The smallest bone in the body is called the stirrup. It is in the middle ear and is part of the system that carries sound signals to the brain. At only 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch) long, the stirrup is about the size of a grain of rice. The footplate of the stirrup bone is attached to a membrane called the oval window, which leads to the inner ear. It is connected to two other very small bones called the hammer and the anvil. All three of these bones are joined to the eardrum, where sound is collected before it is sent in the form of nerve signals to the brain. The ear is a very important organ for keeping our sense of balance. Without a sense of balance, we could not hold our body steady, and we would stagger and fall when we tried to move.



FACT FILE

Some people suffer from motion sickness when they travel by boat, car, train or airplane. Motion sickness is caused by excessive stimulation of the vestibular organs. But researchers do not know why some people develop motion sickness more easily than others.



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