

living-things

A senses walk outdoors

Lesson at a glance

Open indoors by guessing outdoor sounds and naming eyes, ears, hands and nose — taste stays indoors. Model one full noticing cycle with a leaf and magnifier, then lead a short school-garden walk with three stops: looking, listening-and-smelling, then gentle fingertip touch. Back inside after hand washing, children point to eye/ear/hand/nose sketches and say one finding. Close by linking their notices to how grown-ups who mind plants use the same senses.

Learning objectives

- Use sight, hearing, touch and smell to notice something in the school garden
- Tell the class or a partner what one sense noticed outdoors

Before the bell – prep

Walk the route once and pick three stop spots inside school grounds (hedge, grass, wall/planter). Basket of magnifiers ready; optional gloves if ground looks messy. One real leaf or laminated leaf photo for the indoor model. Sketch eye, ear, hand, nose on a pad or mini whiteboard you can take to the door circle.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
chunky magnifying glass	1	pair	school kit	children make a viewing circle with finger and thumb to peep through
child-sized gloves	1	pupil	classroom	children use one bare fingertip only on teacher-checked safe surfaces and wash hands straight after
fresh leaf or laminated leaf photo	1	class	outdoors/ nature	use the classroom window view of the yard or a leaf already in a classroom nature tray
basket or tray for magnifiers and gloves	1	class	classroom	a cardboard box lid
mini whiteboard or door-side pad with marker	1	class	classroom	sketch eye, ear, hand and nose on the classroom board or IWB if the circle is indoors

**Safety watch-point**

No tasting or picking; stay in one short line and count heads each stop. Steer clear of nettles, litter and dog mess. One gentle fingertip only; wash hands as soon as you return.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Stand by the door or window so the outdoors feels near. Take two or three sound guesses with hands up; smile at every one. Gently remind: four senses come outside today — we do not taste outdoors.
- **Look and Wonder:** Point to eyes, ears, hands and nose as you name looking, listening, touching and smelling. Say the no-taste rule aloud. Model one noticing cycle with the leaf and magnifier: I wonder... I look... I noticed... Then cup an ear and name one real room or yard sound. Coats on; gloves stay in the basket for now.
- **Our Senses Walk:** Lead a short line; count heads at every stop. Stop 1: magnifiers out, looking only — revoice what children point to. Stop 2: magnifiers away, freeze and listen, then a gentle sniff of safe air near soil or grass. Stop 3: one fingertip on teacher-checked safe surfaces; hands off faces until wash. If weather is wild, run the same four senses at the doorway or window box.
- **What Did We Notice:** After hand washing, sit in a quick circle. Show the four sense sketches. Invite children to point first, then say I saw... I heard... I felt... or I smelled... Revoice and doodle one word under each sketch. Offer a partner whisper or a choice prompt for shy talkers.
- **Make-Sense Talk:** Stay concrete with today's list. Link damp soil to a gardener feeling if plants need water; a leaf look to checking plants look well; a flower smell to noticing herbs. Hands-up close: which sense helped you most today?

What it should show

Most Junior/Senior Infants will name one real outdoor finding tied to a sense — a bird or wind sound, a green leaf or flower, cool/damp grass, soil smell. Pointing to the matching body-part sketch plus one word is success; full sentences are a bonus. If a child claims they "tasted the air", gently steer back to the four outdoor senses.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **I tasted the air / I can taste the garden.** — Point back to the eye, ear, hand and nose sketches: outdoors we keep tasting for food time. Invite them to pick one of the four and say what that sense found instead.
- **Senses are only for fun games indoors.** — Use one child's real finding: you felt damp soil — grown-ups who mind plants feel the soil the same way to know if plants need water.

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Accept one clear noticing as full success; offer a choice prompt (eyes or ears?) or a partner whisper before sharing. • Children who find noise hard can focus on looking and touching first.	• Confident talkers may whisper a second finding to you at a later stop.	• Ask which sense told them something their eyes alone would miss, using today's class list of findings.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: sentence starters I saw... I heard... I felt... I smelled... support partner and class sharing after the walk.