

Our five senses: exploring the world

Lesson at a glance

Open by asking pupils to close their eyes and notice what they can still hear or feel. Name the five senses one by one while children point on their own bodies, then match sense labels to a child diagram on the diagram-labeller interactive. Groups rotate through three core carousel stations (touch feely bags, sight with magnifiers, and smell or taste after the allergy check), naming the sense and one finding each time. After handwash, they draw or label at least two sense-and-finding pairs on the Investigation Journal page and close with a quick talk on which sense the class uses most.

Learning objectives

- Name the five senses and match each to the body part that uses it
- Use at least two senses to explore objects and say what each sense found out

Before the bell – prep

Check the class allergy list and send a home note if running Taste. Set three core stations the day before: three feely bags (sponge, wooden block, soft fabric, pine cone/conker), a sight tray with leaf, shell, fabric scrap, spoon plus two magnifiers, and either smell pots (lemon peel, mint, coffee, soap) or one clean fruit cup per child. Print the Investigation Journal page and open the diagram-labeller on the IWB.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
feely bag or pillowcase with safe objects (sponge, wooden block, soft fabric, pine cone or conker)	3	class	classroom	three cardboard boxes with a hand-hole cut in the side, or three open trays of the same objects so several children can feel at once
sealed clear jars or tubs for sound (rice, dry pasta, cotton wool, paperclips)	4	class	classroom	clean yoghurt pots with tape over the lids
lidded smell pots (lemon peel, mint or mint tea bag, coffee grounds or beans, mild soap)	4	class	supermarket	cotton wool with a drop of vanilla essence, orange peel, crushed herbs from home
magnifiers	3	class	school kit	one shared magnifier or a clear plastic bottle base used as a simple lens with adult help
look-closely tray objects (leaf, shell, fabric scrap, shiny spoon)	1	class	classroom	any four safe classroom objects with interesting detail
washed fruit pieces in individual clean cups (after allergy check)	1	pupil	supermarket	if tasting is not possible for the class, run four stations only and talk about taste using a picture of fruit (no food shared)
station name cards (Touch, Hearing, Smell, Sight, Taste)	5	class	classroom	chalkboard labels or sticky notes
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	a blank page with the teacher saying what to record
drinking water and spare cups	1	class	classroom	pupils use their own water bottles
hand soap and access to a sink or hand wipes	1	class	classroom	fragrance-free hand wipes

Safety watch-point

Check allergies before any taste station. No sharing fruit cups; smell pots are for sniffing only. Supervise Taste closely and wash hands after touch and taste.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Invite a brief eyes-closed moment, then ask what they could still hear or feel. Keep it light and curious — do not name all five senses yet.
- **Our five senses:** Reveal each sense-body pair aloud while pupils point on themselves: eyes-sight, ears-hearing, nose-smell, tongue-taste, hands and skin-touch. Model one full notice cycle with a pine cone or conker before the carousel: wonder, predict, touch with eyes closed, name the sense and one finding.
- **Point to the parts:** Drive the diagram-labeller on the IWB in explore mode. Invite volunteers to drag, or drag yourself from class calls. As each label lands, name the body part clearly — especially ‘taste uses the tongue inside the mouth’.
- **Senses carousel:** Model one station action at the front, then send three small groups for two solid rotations of 3–4 minutes. Stand where you can see all stations; supervise Taste closely. Circulate with: ‘Which sense are you using? What did it tell you? Which body part did the work?’ End with handwash and a quick oral harvest of two or three sense-and-finding pairs.
- **What my senses found:** Hand out the Investigation Journal only after the oral harvest so every child has language to reuse. Ask them to draw or label at least two stations: the sense and one thing they found out. Pictures and labels fully count; offer the starters ‘I used my sense of... I found out...’ aloud.
- **Which sense do we use most?:** Partner talk, then whole-class share. Accept ‘sight’, then push gently: when do we need hearing, smell or touch to stay safe around school? Revoice answers so the five sense words are heard again.

What it should show

Most 1st-class pupils will name at least three of the five senses and match them to eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and hands/skin. At stations they typically say findings such as ‘touch — bumpy’, ‘sight — shiny lines on the shell’, or ‘smell — lemony’. Affirm clear sense-plus-finding pairs; gently redirect anyone who only describes the object without naming the sense.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Pupils think we only use one sense at a time.** — Hold up a familiar example: ‘When we notice a bird, we often see it and hear it together.’ Ask which two senses helped at one carousel station.
- **Pupils say taste is the sense we use most in the classroom.** — Smile and ask when taste really happens at school — usually lunch, not lessons — unless today’s fruit station counts as a special science moment.
- **Pupils match taste to the mouth or lips instead of the tongue.** — On the diagram-labeller, place the taste label and say clearly: ‘Taste uses the tongue inside the mouth.’ Have them point to their own tongue.



Lesson 4

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
Let the pupil point on their own body while a partner names the sense; accept drawing-only journal responses with the oral starters 'I used my sense of... I found out...'.	Prompt a second finding at the same station, or ask which body part did the work and whether another sense could help too.	Add a third sense on the journal page, or note a moment when two senses worked together (for example seeing and touching the same object).

Cross-curricular hook

Links to SPHE body awareness and oral language — pupils rehearse clear 'I noticed...' sentences from real sensory findings.

