

Our senses help us investigate

Lesson at a glance

Open by inviting pupils to close their eyes and notice what they can still hear, feel or smell. Name the five senses on the child-body interactive, then set tasting aside for safety. In groups, pupils explore a feely-bag, sound jar and smell pot one sense at a time, jotting science words as they go. They finish careful observations on the Investigation Journal page and share which sense gave the most useful clue.

Learning objectives

- Use one sense at a time to make a careful observation
- Record an observation in science words
- Say which sense gave the most useful information

Before the bell – prep

Build about six identical kits the day before: one closed feely-bag (pebble, pine cone, sponge, block or spoon), one taped sound jar (rice, beads, cotton wool or coin), one smell pot (vanilla pad, dried mint/rosemary or lemon zest — allergy-check first). Place one full kit and Investigation Journal pages on each table before the bell.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
feely-bag with one mystery object (pebble, sponge, pine cone, wooden block or similar)	1	group	classroom	a clean sock knotted at the top with a classroom object inside
lidded sound jar (rice, paperclips, cotton wool, beads or a coin inside)	1	group	classroom	a clean yoghurt pot with a card lid taped on
smell pot (cotton pad with vanilla, dried mint, lemon zest or plain soap shavings)	1	group	supermarket	a small paper cup with a cotton pad and a safe kitchen scent
tray to hold each group's three-piece kit	1	group	classroom	a shallow box lid or large book as a base
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	a plain page with headings Sense and My careful observation
spare feely-bag for teacher model	1	class	classroom	use one group's bag briefly at the front before they begin

Safety watch-point

No tasting today. Allergy-check smell pots; avoid nut oils, strong perfume and anything that could irritate eyes. Wash hands after touch and smell work; reseal smell pots so scents do not linger.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Keep it light: two or three quick answers about what pupils still notice with eyes closed. Do not name or hand out the kit yet. Link gently to scientists noticing carefully before they decide what something is.
- **Our senses for investigating:** Point briefly to eyes, ears, hands, nose and tongue on yourselves. Hold full definitions of observation and science words for the worked model just before kit work — do not stack all three on the board now. Head off racing to name objects: praise describing first.
- **Name the senses on the body:** Drive the child-body interactive on the IWB; drag eyes, ears, hands, nose and tongue as the class calls each part. After hands, note we feel with skin all over. After tongue, say tasting stays for food time today — investigate with touch, sound and smell only. Keep to about five minutes.
- **Table kit: touch, sound and smell:** Model once with a spare feely-bag: think aloud cold, hard, smooth and jot those words before any name. Send groups to table kits; coach science words (rough, hollow, quiet rattle, soft thud, sweet, fresh). Remind them to jot one word per item while the kit is in hand. Stand where you can see all tables.
- **Record careful observations:** Pupils turn jotted words into a full observation: the sense used plus science words. Circulate with spoken stems — 'With my hands I noticed...', 'The sound was...', 'The smell was...'. If a child wrote only a guess like 'stone', ask for two feel or sound words beside it.
- **Share our science words:** Whole-class talk from the board prompts. Collect two or three group answers on which sense was most useful and one science word that helped someone else picture the find. Revoice everyday talk into clearer words (bumpy → rough; loud shake → sharp rattle).

What it should show

Pupils should produce short science-word observations (e.g. cold, hard, smooth; quiet rattle; gentle sweet smell) rather than only naming the object. Most will find touch strongest for shape and texture, hearing for hidden movement, smell for materials they cannot see. A group that only writes guesses has skipped describing — send them back to add feel, sound or smell words.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **I already know what it is — I'll just write 'stone' or 'rice'.** — Praise the guess, then ask for two science words beside it. Model: 'Cold, hard, smooth — now we have an observation others can picture, even before we name it.'
- **Using all my senses at once is better, so I'll peek in the bag while I shake it.** — Stop the peek gently and restate the job: one sense at a time so the clue is clear. Ask which single sense they will use first and watch that choice.



Lesson 3

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Offer spoken stems at the teacher table ('With my hands I noticed...') and accept two science words or a dictated phrase instead of a full sentence. • Let the pupil handle one kit item only (feely-bag) while a partner covers sound or smell.	• Ask for one extra science word per item, or whisper which sense gave the clearest clue and why.	• Challenge them to explain why a different sense would suit a different job (e.g. smell when you cannot touch safely), using one example from their journal page.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to English oral language: build a shared bank of precise describing words (rough, hollow, gentle) pupils can reuse in recounts.

