

Using Your Senses to Experience Nature

Connect - You use your senses everyday to experience the world around you. When you're out in your schoolyard garden, playing outside, and even when you have the window open in your home, you are experiencing nature with your senses. Observational skills are key to science exploration and understanding each of your senses helps you be a good scientist while you explore and experience nature.

Teach - Discuss all five senses using the descriptions below. Explain to students that when they are experiencing most things, they are using multiple senses. For example, when you're exploring the garden, you might see a wasp. Touching a wasp would be dangerous because it could sting you, but using your eyes to observe its actions could be fun and help you learn how wasps are helpful insects in the garden.

Sight: using your eyes to see

- There are some things in nature that might be best experienced with your eyes, because they look beautiful, would be dangerous to touch or taste, are hard to experience through hearing, or smell unpleasant.
- *Examples in nature* - sunset or sunrise, spiders, centipedes, wasps, skunk, etc.

Sound: using your ears to hear

- There are some things in nature best experienced with your ears, because they are too small or far away to see, make pleasant noises, or are fun to listen to.
- *Examples in nature* - wind blowing through leaves, crickets chirping, birds singing, etc.

Taste: using your mouth and tongue to experience flavor

- There are some things in nature best experienced through taste because, it is a vegetable or fruit and it tastes sweet or savory
- *Examples in nature* - any vegetable or fruit growing in your garden!

Touch: using your hands and body to feel

- There are some things in nature that are best experienced by feeling or touching, because it has an interesting texture, it feels warm, or it is fun to crumble in your fingers
- *Examples in nature* - bark on a tree, soil, a smooth rock heated in the sun, etc.

Smell: using your nose to detect scent

- There are some things in nature that are best experienced by scent because they have a pleasant smell
- *Examples in nature* - soil after it has rained, flowers, herbs

Active Engagement - Use the "Using Your Senses to Experience Nature Matching Worksheet" to have students recall what they've learned about using their senses to explore and experience nature.

Link - Ask students to spend time outside or in the garden. Instruct them to use all five senses to explore their surroundings. After exploring for 10-15 minutes, have them report what they saw, heard, touched, and smelled. If they are in the garden encourage them taste a vegetable growing. If they're not in their garden, suggest that they pack a vegetable snack to eat while they explore.



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Matching Worksheet

Each picture on the left is something you can find in nature. Draw a line from each object to the photo of the sense you would use to best experience it.

