



Smell activity



a Sensory Trust outdoor exploration activity



Sensory Trust

Follow your nose, explore the outside, sniffing different scents and guessing whether they are designed to attract or repel.



Aim

To explore our sense of smell and learn about the purpose of smells in nature.



Time

1 hour.



Number

Can be done individually, small groups or full classes.



KS

All ages.



What you will need

- * Smells! This activity has been designed to be done outdoors, so we would recommend discovering smells in the natural environment before you start.
- * You may also want to have some smells ready to help you introduce the activity and wake up people's sense of smell. If possible gather some plants with strong smells like kitchen herbs or flowers.
- * Alternatively, you could use some essential oils, put a few drops onto watercolour paper and place it in the bottom of a small pot with a lid.
- * We have also provided some worksheets that go with this activity, some for recording and others for understanding more about how we smell.
- * Clipboards will be useful for recording, especially if doing this activity outside.



Prep

Print the worksheets and assemble the different sources of smells, whether its putting samples into small pots or collecting plants to use.



Learning outcomes

- * Sensory exploration of smells.
- * Science: sense of smell.
- * Science: estimation and carrying out an experiment.



Why

This activity is great for waking up our sense of smell. It is a sense that isn't used as much in traditional lessons and can be an effective stimulus for all children. For some students, smell can be a trigger, so it's about providing a context and the structured opportunity to try things they perhaps otherwise wouldn't.



Expanding the activity

- * Talk about whether the smell is designed to attract or repel.
- * Talk about how the nose works and how smell is dispersed.
- * Talk about why some smells are designed to attract and repel.



Levels of engagement



Sensory

- * The main aim is to provide a stimulus for very sensory individuals. The reason we have recommended a pot with a smell at the bottom is because it is possible to get the young person's nose in the pot and really smell something – especially important for those who are hyposensitive.
- * Explore the outdoors finding different smells to share with your students. You may need to rip or crush leaves to release more of the smell. If it is a cold day breathe onto the natural material to warm it up and release the molecules before you inhale the scent.
- * Present each smell to the young person and perhaps note which smells generated a reaction. Some of them might be new so you may need to try them several times to get a true reaction. Remember head turning and pushing away are all responses.



Semi-formal

- * Explore the outdoors finding different smells to share with your students. You may need to rip or crush leaves to release more of the smell. If it is a cold day breathe onto the natural material to warm it up and release the molecules before you inhale the scent.
- * As an introduction, there is a simple worksheet that reminds students of the different senses and brings the focus onto smell by asking them about smells they like or hate – there's a communication board with some ideas if students need the prompt.
- * Find some smells outdoors. You could collect a range of leaves, and let the students take it in turns to smell them; you can discuss all together what you think about the smells. There is a recording sheet included where you can note whether they like or dislike the smell, whether they think the smell is designed to attract or repel, and then finally a space for them to write down the smell if you know what it is, for example, oak leaf.
- * Use the worksheets provided to understand smell further when you have explored outdoors. You can do this outside or back in the classroom.

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Formal

- * Explore the outdoors finding different smells to share with your students. You may need to rip or crush leaves to release more of the smell. If it is a cold day breathe onto the natural material to warm it up and release the molecules before you inhale the scent.
- * You may want to begin by sharing the Widgit worksheets provided. This gives the opportunity to look at the main senses, look at parts of the nose and think about how we smell. There is also a multiple choice 'what animal smells better' – the students can guess or look it up. The answers are as follows: 1. Bear (can smell 18 miles in search of food), 2. Elephant (can smell 12 miles in search of water) 3. Silk moth (can smell 6 miles in search of a mate).
- * Ask the students to take it in turns to find a smell outdoors. You can discuss all together what you think about the smell and even what it is. There is a recording sheet included where students can note what they think a smell is, if they like it, and whether it is designed to attract or repel.
- * Smell can be difficult to talk about as we don't have adequate language to describe and explain smells. Try thinking about what descriptive words you can come up with for smell. Or perhaps you can describe a smell using colours or movement?
- * Sometimes smells evoke memories or remind us of something else. Do any of the smells you have discovered make you think about another time or place?

Sensory Trust promotes and supports the creation and management of outdoor spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age or ability.

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