

BE A NATURALIST! SENSES INVESTIGATION LESSON DETAILS

Senses Investigation

(45 minutes)

STEP ONE. Begin activity with a discussion of the term naturalist. *What is a naturalist? What does a naturalist do? Lewis and Clark were naturalists on their expedition--what sorts of things did they do?*

STEP TWO. Ask students to read page 5 in the *What's in Your World?* booklet.

STEP THREE. Discuss the tools that a naturalist uses to study the natural world. Review the five senses and the naturalist skills of journaling, drawing and mapping.
How do these tools help a naturalist study and understand the natural world?

STEP FOUR. Now tell the students that they will be practicing using their naturalist skills in a senses investigation--using their sense of taste, sight, touch, smell and hearing.

STEP FIVE. Taste: Blind Taste Test- Tell the students that you will be handing them something and they have to figure out what it is without using their sense of sight. Have students sit in a circle and blindfold each student. Tell the students that the blindfolds may not completely prevent them from using their eyes, but the blindfolds are friendly reminders to not use your eyes.

Hand each student a jelly bean and ask for observations--*how does it smell?*

How does it feel?

Ask the students to give you good descriptive words, not what the object actually is. Now ask the students if they think there is another sense they could use to identify the object.

Taste!

Tell them to go ahead and taste the object.

How does it taste?

What is the object?

What flavor do you think the jelly bean is?

STEP SIX. Touch: *Mystery Bags*--Before lesson, have three bags with three different natural items set up in the classroom. Tell the students that the bags are *mystery bags* and you have an item in each bag--*what sense do they think they will use to figure out what is in the box? Touch!*

Ask students to place their hand in the *mystery bags* one at a time to identify the objects inside of them. After all the students have gone, ask for words describing the objects in each box. Reveal the object dramatically--*was it what they thought was in the box?*

STEP SEVEN. Smell: Hand out numbered film canisters filled with different scents to the students. Ask the students to identify the smells of each of the numbered film canisters. Use the following questions for discussion jumping points.

Without seeing what you smell can you tell what it is?

What types of things smell good?

What types of things smell bad?

What types of smells are outside today?

STEP EIGHT. Hearing (outside): Sounds-- Ask students to sit quietly for 2 minutes with their eyes closed. Tell students to count how many noises they hear during this time on their fingers. *What were the noises?*

STEP NINE. Sight (outside): Ask students to look at a hillside for 30 seconds. Then ask students to close their eyes. Ask the students questions about the hillside and see if they can remember what they saw.

Were there clouds in the sky? (Eyes still closed) have them point to where the closest tree/bush is, etc.

