

Putting it all together

Sensory Isolation

Overview: Each student collects data using all senses (except taste), one at a time...in isolation. Then the group as a whole develops a descriptive vocabulary list.

Materials:

Marker and Tablet for teacher to record students' descriptions, Timer, Journals and pencils for students (optional.)

Time: 15 minutes

Action:

- Find a comfortable place in the lawn for students to sit far enough apart that they cannot reach out and touch a fellow student. Tell the class that the majority of the lesson will take place with their eyes shut.
- Select a time (20-45 seconds) for students to collect data while isolating each of the four senses by first listening, then touching, smelling, and finally looking. At the end of each observation segment, ask students to describe observations, not just try to identify what they notice.
- To begin, once you have shared the directions, ask students to close their eyes and listen. At the end of the time period --without opening their eyes---ask them to use adjectives to describe what they have heard, as you record their responses.
- Now, eyes still closed, shift focus to observations with their sense of touch. Again record their descriptions.
- Next, have them focus on their sense of smell. Finally, ask them to open their eyes and make visual observations for the final 20 to 45 seconds. Record observations. What new characteristics or observations can they make with the combination of senses?

Informal Assessment: Sharing observations: The teacher has a record of the students' sensory observations from each sense. Students, depending on age, may write their observations in their journal as well.

Management Strategies: You have a rich list of student observations to use for a variety of writing assignments (poems, personal narratives, creative writing) and possibly future investigations to conduct.

*If you conduct this lesson in or near a school garden, you may have an opportunity to have students collect data from taste observations under your leadership.