Using our Five Senses

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Standard I:** Students will develop a sense of self.

**Objective 3:** Develop and use skills to communicate ideas, information, and feelings.

**Activity:** My Brain and My 5 Senses by Meri-Lyn Stark, Park City Elementary Science Coordinator, October 2003

**K-2 Learning Goals:** Display a sense of curiosity.

**Process Skills:** Observation, prediction, and communication.

**Background Information:** Children should be able to identify the sense organs as the eyes, ears, nose, mouth or tongue and skin or hands. The sense organs are the “information gatherers” which send sensory information via nerves to the brain.

We need light in order to see. The pupil in the eye adjusts to the amount of light in a room to allow as much light as possible to reach the retina in the eye. That is why the pupil dilates in darkness – it is attempting to allow as much light as possible to get to the retina.

Sounds are really air vibrations, which reach the ear, causing vibrations in the ear as well. When one has an ear infection, sounds are muffled because the air vibrations cannot move as freely through the liquid, which often collects in an infected ear.

The senses of smell and taste must often work together. In order to properly taste something, it is necessary to also be able to smell it. That is why when one has a cold, foods often taste blander.

The sense of touch includes the senses of pressure, pain and temperature. We usually associate the sense of touch with the fingers because they are the most sensitive due to the high concentration of nerve endings in the fingers. This should not overshadow the fact that the entire body, via the skin, is sensitive to and can send information to the brain through the sense of touch.

**Materials:**

- Book – *Look, Look, Look* by Tana Hoban or *Look Again* by Tana Hoban
- Film canisters filled with rice, beans & small nails
- Socks filled with large Lego, large rock, wooden clothes pin and small flashlight
- Cotton balls soaked in peppermint extract and lemon or orange extract
Two brown jelly beans (root beer and chocolate pudding) per student

**Invitation to Learn:** Display overhead transparency of the brain and the 5 senses. Remind students that we use different parts of our body to see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Listen and help me decide which part of the body goes with the words I hold up. “We use our ears to ________” “We use our eyes to ______” “We use our nose to ______” “We use our mouth and tongue to ______” “We use our hands and skin to ______.” Hold up sentence strip with correct word for each response. Leave to mount on word wall unless already there.


**Possible Extensions/Adaptations:** Sight – have students carefully look at their own eyes using mirrors. Then have them study a partner’s eyes. Discuss the similarities and differences. Make a class eye color graph. Hearing – fill small individual glass bottles with various amounts of colored water. Strike each jar with a mallet and listen for the different sounds. Have class arrange from highest to lowest pitch. Smell – use scented markers to draw pictures of objects with distinct scents. Taste – have the students sort pictures of various food items by how they think they will taste: sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. Touch – Do crayon rubbings over different textures, sidewalk, carpet, brick or block etc.

**Assessment Suggestion:** Formative assessment should include observation of student participation and communication. “Seeing is Believing” activity page may be used as a summative assessment.

**Additional Resources:** See science literacy tub materials provided through PCEF grant.

**Family Connections:** Through classroom newsletters, inform parents when classroom lessons on 5 senses are complete. Suggest that as they travel or just walk in their neighborhoods they encourage their children to explore the environment using their senses. Discuss odors they smell in different locations, Discuss things they see in different locations. Discuss sounds they hear in different locations. Discuss objects that may be touched when visiting different locations. When eating out discuss which foods are salty, sour, bitter and sweet.
Five Senses

We have five senses. We use them to see, hear, smell, touch, and taste things in the world around us.
Seeing Is Believing

we see with our eyes.
Draw what you see now.

Sometimes we use our senses together.

Color the senses you could use for each one.

Eye, Nose, Ear, Hand

Drum, Eyes, Nose, Ear, Hand

Bag, Eyes, Nose, Ear, Hand

Popcorn, Eyes, Nose, Ear, Hand