# Grade: PreK-K

# Guiding Question

By using our senses, what do we observe that is similar and different between our classroom and outside?

# Timing 10-15 minutes

# MA STE Standards addressed in activity

PreK-LS1-2(MA): Explain that most animals have five senses they use to gather information about the world around them.

PreK-LS1-3(MA): Use their five senses in their exploration and play to gather information.

**Sensory Observations Activity Plan**

**Materials Needed**

**Poster paper for three classroom charts:**

*Observations of our classroom* (man-made indoor space)

*Observations of our playground* (man-made outdoor space)

*Observations of a garden or wooded area* (naturalized space)

# Overview

In this lesson students practice using their senses (minus taste) to make observations of their environments. This is an opportunity to review or introduce the 5 human senses and how making careful observations using those senses is the most important part of what a scientist does. You will want to have three charts labeled, as noted above, where you can record the students’ observations. See the examples at the end of this activity.

# Procedure

1. Tell the students that they are going to practice using their senses to make observations in different places (classroom, school yard, garden/wooded area) so they can compare what is similar and what is different in each location.
2. Review or introduce the 5 human senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste).
3. Have the children use each of their senses around the classroom (explain why taste isn’t being used due to safety) to make observations to share with their classmates. You can make this a fun experience by planting interesting textures around the classroom, introducing new sounds and smells. Have the students try to isolate one sense at a time—closing ears, eyes, holding nose, touching with their elbow instead of their hands—to see how these tweaks change any of their observations.
4. Do the same kinds of observations in some outdoor areas near the school—preferably a man-made versus more natural area. Though closing their eyes while focusing on listening could be interesting in this context too.
5. Record observations for each of their senses in each context on a poster in the classroom.
6. Discuss with students the differences and similarities they see across contexts to answer the *Guiding Question*.

Observation Chart Examples of things children might notice:

*Observations of our Classroom*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sight | Sound | Touch | Smell |
| * Bright colors
* Lights
 | * Buzz of the lights
* Doors shutting
* Chairs moving on the floor
* Bells
* Paper shuffling
* Laughter/talk
 | * Smooth surface of tables/chairs
* Rough surface of carpet
* Squishy toys
* Hard wooden toys
 | * Markers
* Crayons
* Snacks
* Glue
 |

*Observations of our Playground*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sight | Sound | Touch | Smell |
| * Playground toys
* Asphalt
* Wood chips
* Grass
 | * Laughter/talk
* Squeak of swings
* Wind blowing
* Clanking
* Banging
 | * Cold, hard metal
* Soft grass/soil
* Rough wood
 | * Grass
* Asphalt
 |

*Observations of a Garden or Woods*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sight | Sound | Touch | Smell |
| * Green leaves
* Flower colors
* Birds
* Mushrooms
 | * Birds singing
* Wind in leaves
 | * Fuzzy leaves
* Rough tree bark
 | * Earth
* Flowers
 |