



## What could it be?

**Curriculum Idea:** Senses – We have five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. We can use different senses to learn different things. When one sense doesn't work as well, we can use other senses. Investigating by using different senses is a good way to gather information and for "finding out."

**Related Episodes:** Five Senses, The Sloth Must be Crazy

**Age Range:** 3-6

**Subject:** Life Science, Physiology

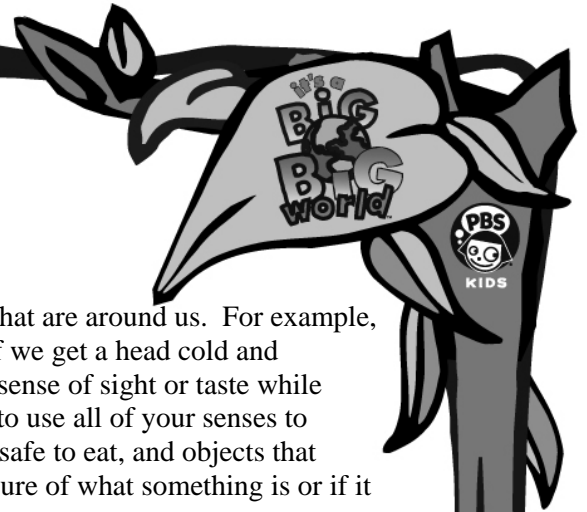
**Skills:** Critical thinking, Investigative skills, Using five senses, Comparison, Language description

**Materials:** Cloth to use as blindfold, various household objects for child to identify including things that they can smell, taste, touch and hear (such as: piece of fruit, cracker, lidded container with dry rice/pasta in it, rattle/bells, clean laundry, flower/plant, sandpaper, peeled hard-boiled egg, piece of Jell-O, wet bar of soap, soft and brushy strong smelling herbs like cilantro, piece of grass, frozen peas, whole clove of garlic, pumice stone, shells, silly putty, grapes with skin peeled off), towel to cover objects, paper, pen/pencil

**Directions:** Before you begin this activity with your child, prepare the items that you are going to ask him to identify. (Be sure to select objects that are age-appropriate for your child and take into account any allergies.) Hide them beneath a towel so he cannot see them. Next, make a chart to track his observations about each object. For example:

Object	Smell	Touch	Taste	Sound
#1				
#2				
#3				

Then, have your child sit near the objects and talk with him about the senses that he uses everyday. Most people can use their sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste to learn about things all around them. However, there are sometimes when we can't use one of our senses, either temporarily or permanently.



In those instances, we can use our other senses to tell us about things that are around us. For example, when it is dark, we may rely more on our sense of hearing or touch. If we get a head cold and temporarily lose our sense of smell, we may need to rely more on our sense of sight or taste while eating foods. Remind him that there are sometimes when it isn't safe to use all of your senses to investigate an object. For example, there are many plants that are not safe to eat, and objects that could be very hot or cold are not safe to touch. Anytime that he is unsure of what something is or if it is safe, he should ask an adult.

Tell him that you are going to temporarily take away his sense of sight and ask him to use his other senses to identify objects. State that each of our senses functions in different ways and can tell us different things. By trying to use them one at a time, we can learn more about how they each work separately as well as how they work together. Put the blindfold on him and then take out the first object you have hidden. As you go through each object, ask him what he is observing from each of his senses. For example, how does this object smell, feel, sound, and taste (tell him that you will let him know if it is safe to use his sense of taste on each object). Ask the questions in a different order each time. You might put the first object into his hands and ask him how it feels before moving on to other senses. When you get to the next object, hold it in front of him so he can use his sense of smell first, or shake it so he using his sense of hearing first.

Keep track of your child's observations on your chart. Remember to go through his senses in a different order each time. For example:

Object #1: How does it:	Smell?	Object #2:	How does it:	Sound?
	Feel?			Smell?
	Taste?			Feel?
	Sound?			Taste?

**Talk About It:** After your child experiences each object, cover the objects back up with the cloth, take the blindfold off, and discuss the way your child experienced Object #1. Talk about the description he gave based on each of his senses, and then ask him what he thinks the object was. Do this with each object. Ask questions such as, "How does the smell and the taste of the object go together? What kinds of things do you know that are crunchy like this one?" This will help reinforce your child's discovery of each of our senses separately, as well as allowing him to think about how they might work together.

**Take It Further:** Stage a taste test for your child where you take away his sense of sight and of smell. Blindfold him and have him pinch his nose as you give him different things to taste, such as chocolate sauce (sweet), lemon juice (sour), soy sauce (salty), and black tea (bitter). Have him describe each taste. Then, with his nose unplugged, repeat the process and compare the difference in his observations. Talk about how our sense of smell and taste interact to help us enjoy delicious foods!

Different animals rely more on some senses than on others. For example, turtles have a very good sense of smell, but a poor sense of hearing. Bats have a very good sense of hearing and can hear sounds that we can't. Help your child look in a book or online to learn about the different senses that his favorite animal relies on.