

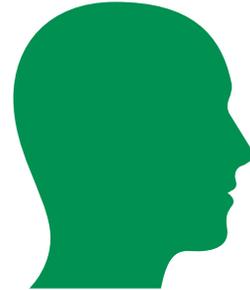
Name that Scent

Can you identify an item by its scent alone?



Materials:

- 5-10 numbered canisters with holes in the lid
- 5-10 scents (ex. extracts, soaps, natural materials, play-doh, etc.)
- Printed pictures of the scents



Preparation:

- Add scents to numbered canisters, taking note of which number is for each scent.
- For liquid extracts or soaps, consider adding scent to a cotton ball to absorb liquid.



Try This:

1. Choose a numbered canister and smell.
2. Make a hypothesis about what item produces that scent.
3. Find the picture of the item you smell.
4. Choose another canister and repeat the experiment until you've identified all of the scents.
5. Find out if your hypotheses were correct.

Want to Know More?

Smell is one of the 5 senses that we use to experience the world. Your ability to smell comes from specialized cells, located in your nose, called olfactory sensory neurons. When these cells are stimulated by a scent or odor, they send a message to the olfactory bulb in your brain, which identifies the smell. These specialized cells are only located in one other place in your body - the area connecting the roof of your throat to your nose. These are often activated when you eat. Chewing food releases aromas that stimulate these cells and help your brain identify the food's flavor. You may have noticed that when you have a stuffy nose, it is harder to taste the food you eat. This is because the olfactory neurons in this area of your throat and nose may be blocked from stimulation. Without your sense of smell, many foods would be hard to distinguish from each other.

Humans have a relatively small olfactory bulb in our brains. Other animals that rely on their sense of smell for survival, like rats and mice, have large olfactory bulbs compared to the rest of their brain.

Some people can't smell, either due to injury or they may be born that way. The inability to smell is called anosmia.

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Facilitator Guide



Learning Objectives:

- Using your sense of smell to identify objects or scents.
- Your sense of smell is possible because of communication between specialized cells in your nose and mouth and your brain.

Leading Questions:

- What does each item smell like?
- Do you think your sense of sight helps you to identify a smell?

Hospital Accommodations:

- For an extra challenge, ask participants to guess the scent before showing pictures of possible answers.

Key Words:

Scent - a smell or odor, detected by specialized cells in a human's body.

Olfactory Sensory Neurons - specialized cells in a human's nose and mouth that are stimulated by scents. These cells communicate with the olfactory bulb in your brain.

Anosmia - the inability to smell.