
SQUAMISH RIVERS

Stream Sense

Grades: K-4

Subject, Science, Fine Arts,
Language Arts

Time required: 2, 50 minute
periods & prep time

Key Concepts:

*Fish and wildlife need a
healthy habitat.*

*You can help make your
watershed a good place for
people and wildlife.*

Objectives:

*Students will recognize how
their senses provide them with
details about stream
ecosystems .*

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Key Words:

Observation, sense organs

Skills:

Gathering information



Background:

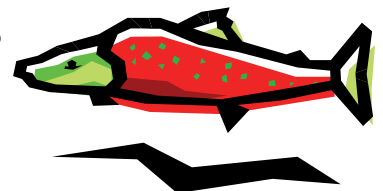
Sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin—are needed to detect the surrounding environment. With information it receives through the senses, the brain interprets what we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel. In addition to translating the information it receives, the brain also relates these details to memories and thought processes. In this way, recognition and learning take place.

In most humans, sight is the predominate sense organ. When an individual uses all of his or her senses to investigate the environment, the brain receives a broader range of information. This information provides the opportunity for more thorough learning.

A stream provides an ideal opportunity for students to use all their senses. People hear water rushing over rocks and lapping at the banks. They feel a breeze against their skin, and hear insects buzzing and chirping among the willows. The air around the stream feels moist and carries a variety of particles

Materials

- Touch and feel bags (with materials that could be found near a stream)
- Graphics supplied—photocopied
- Pencils and crayons, clipboards



Stream Sense

Background continued:

from flowers, damp earth, and chemicals in the water to their noses. Along the banks and in shallow portions of the stream, a variety of materials of different shapes and textures can be touched.

It is important to protect the senses. Safety rules should be followed when students explore a stream.

Procedure:

1. Review the five senses (sight, sound, touch, feel, and taste). Discuss how they are used in daily life. Ask student about previous trips or visits to natural areas such as streams. How were their senses involved in these visits?
2. Ask students to describe how they observe things. Do they think it is possible to observe using all their senses?
3. Distribute touch and feel bags to groups of students. The bags should include items commonly found nearby a stream such as a cattail, a pebble, a shell, twig, etc. Ask students to identify the objects inside by touch alone.
4. Tell students they will be visiting a stream and will be recording how they use their senses to observe the stream. Review the Stream Safety rules with students.
5. At the stream, hand out copies of the Sensory Observation Sheet. Explain that when they record their observations, students should draw or write things as they perceive them.
6. Ask students to find a quiet spot near the stream; have students sit very still to look, listen, smell and feel. Remind them to use

all their senses! Have students complete their observations sheets.

7. Explain that when they record their observations, they should draw or write things as they perceive them. For example, when they look at things, they should describe shapes and colours; when they hear things, they write imitations of the sounds or draw what is sounds like; etc.
8. Throughout the trip, remind students to use their senses!
9. Discuss with students what they saw, felt, heard, and smelled while at the stream. Was it what they expected?

Extensions:

1. Create a “sensory guide” to the stream or river for other people when they visit the stream
2. Pick a site or sound and find out more about it – what animal makes that sound? Or, what type of plant or tree did they see and smell?

Evaluation:

Have students:

1. Complete the sensory observation form with words and/or drawings

Community Connections:

1. Pick a nearby stream to monitor over the school year with the senses. What changes did you find?

Resource:

This activity has been adapted from “Stream Sense” from Project WET (1996), used with permission.



Stream Walk Safety Rules

Notes for the Teacher:

1. Visit the stream first to determine if it is safe for students to visit. Check stream depth, velocity, and temperature. Also look for walking conditions, potentially dangerous wildlife, poisonous plants, etc.
2. Bring along a first-aid kit.
3. Define stream walk boundaries; make sure students understand that staying within the boundaries protects wildlife and students.
4. Locate a place where students can wash hands after the visit.


Rules for the Students:

1. Students should stay with their assigned buddies.
2. Students should wear old athletic shoes or boots because they will likely get wet and muddy.
3. Students should not enter the stream without supervision.
4. Students should not touch wildlife or taste anything (plants or water) unless permitted by teacher.


Stream Sense Observation Sheet

Name: _____


Sights



Smells



Touch



Sounds

