



Do you ever wonder how a butterfly gets its colors? Or how turtles hibernate? For over 160 years, the Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum has served a unique role in the city of Chicago connecting people of all ages to nature and science through immersive exhibits, fun family events, important conservation research and in-depth education programs, inspiring the wonder in all of us.

Every day, the Nature Museum supports parents and educators to build their comfort with and confidence in teaching science. We know that empowered and supported educators lead to more time spent on science and to higher quality learning for students. Here are a few top tips from the Nature Museum Education Department to use during this activity or anytime you are leading nature and science explorations:

- ❑ **You don't need to know all the content!** Science is a process of curiosity, wonder, and exploration.
- ❑ **Spark curiosity and foster wonder!** Add questions and observations to a wonder wall so you can come back and investigate them later!
- ❑ **Help your scientist make connections and drive their own learning!** Ask open-ended questions like: “What do you see that makes you say that?” and “What do you notice?”
- ❑ **Build routines for learning – and repeat them daily or weekly.** Things like nature journals, a wonder wall, and drawing for understanding are practices that you can come back to again and again.
- ❑ **Foster social-emotional learning through local nature!** Take some time outside each day—or bring nature indoors—to practice mindfulness and experience wonder, awe, creativity, connection, and feelings of joy and calm.

Visit the [Nature Museum blog](#) for more tips and how to's.

## 5 Senses Walk

**Description:** Students will use four of their five senses to make observations about the natural world around them on a guided nature walk.

### **Materials:**

- Senses Walk Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OT3X8gkzj4E&t=4s>

### *Optional*

- *Leaf Rubbing Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIZEP-iL8oU&t=3s>*
- *Leaves or other textured natural objects*
- *Paper*
- *Crayons*

**ENGAGE**

1. Share with students that, today, they are going to be naturalists. Naturalists are scientists who study the nature around them. They make observations about the nature around them using their 5 senses.
2. Discuss the five senses with students by naming each sense then pointing to the body part that helps with that sense (*ears = hear, eyes = see, nose = smell, mouth = taste, fingers = touch*). What do our ears help us to do? What about our eyes? Our nose? Our mouth? Our hands or fingers?

**PREPARE TO EXPLORE**

3. To prepare for your walk, watch the [5 Senses Walk video](#). Then discuss:
  - What did Nicole do on her 5 Senses Walk?
  - What senses did she use?
  - What might we see if we went on a 5 Senses Walk?
4. Tell students that, now, we'll go on a 5 Senses Walk outside our space. Set expectations and guidelines before going outside (e.g. an adult will be the line leader, we can touch and smell, see and listen but we will not taste, we'll use our walking feet, we'll be kind to plants and animals; only picking brown or head plants or very small amounts of green plants, giving animals space, etc.).

**EXPLORE**

5. Lead students on a 5 senses walk outside. As you walk, make 4 stops--1 stop to focus on each sense (except taste). After each stop, bring the group back together to share what they were able to observe.
  - For seeing, encourage students to look closely. You might consider asking: *What colors do you notice? Does this look like anything you've seen before? Do the plants in this area look the same or different? Do you see any animals?*
  - For hearing, encourage students to close their eyes, quiet their voices, and listen closely. *What sounds are they hearing? Are there human-made sounds? Are there natural sounds? What might those sounds tell us about what is around us?*
  - For smelling, invite students to take a deep breath in. *What do they smell?* Then, encourage students to do some exploration of their own. In the fall, you might pick a seed head or flowerhead and rub it in your fingers, then have students smell. *How would they describe the smell?*
  - For touch, encourage students to use gentle hands to feel different plants or surfaces. *How would they describe what they touched--rough, smooth, bumpy, etc?*
6. (Optional) Before coming in (or along your walk), invite students to collect a few natural objects with an interesting texture, really focusing in on their sense of touch. Students might look for things like leaves, pieces of tree bark, twigs, pinecones, etc. Bring those natural items back inside with you. Then, check out the Extensions and Variations section for a Leaf Rubbing activity to focus more on texture!



### **REFLECT and SHARE**

7. Back inside, ask students to share some of their favorite things they observed. Were they able to notice things they typically wouldn't have by focusing in sense by sense? What were those things?
8. Encourage students to continue to use their senses to explore the nature around them!

### **Extensions and Variations:**

- If you are unable to be outside, use the 5 Senses Walk video or the [Wildflower Walk video](#) as your Nature Walk. Invite students to make observations along the way.
- Use natural objects to explore texture through art! Check out this [Leaf Rubbing video](#) to see how.