

Lesson Plan: The Five Senses Adventure

Materials Needed:

- A comfortable place to sit (cushion, rug, or chair)
- One small piece of a favorite food (e.g., a raisin, a small piece of chocolate, a single berry)
- A small, interesting object with a distinct texture (e.g., a smooth stone, a soft piece of fabric, a pinecone)
- Paper and coloring supplies (crayons, markers, or colored pencils)
- A clear jar with a lid (optional, for an alternative activity)
- Glitter and water (optional, for the jar activity)

Lesson Information

- **Subject:** Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) / Mindfulness
- **Student:** Olivia (Age 10)
- **Time Allotment:** 30-45 minutes
- **Focus:** This lesson introduces mindfulness through a hands-on, creative application of the five senses, helping Olivia learn to ground herself in the present moment.

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Olivia will be able to:

- Define "mindfulness" in her own words as "paying attention to the now."
- Demonstrate the "Five Senses Grounding" technique as a tool to calm her mind.
- Create a visual representation (a drawing or a "mindfulness jar") that explains what she experienced during the activity.

2. Alignment with Standards (SEL Competencies)

- **Self-Awareness:** Identifying one's own thoughts, feelings, and sensations in the moment.
- **Self-Management:** Using calming strategies to manage stress and focus attention.

3. Instructional Plan & Activities

Part 1: The Introduction - What is a "Busy Brain"? (5 minutes)

1. **Engage:** Start with a relatable question. "Olivia, have you ever felt like your brain is a buzzing beehive or has a hundred tabs open, just like a computer? Thoughts about yesterday, worries about tomorrow, ideas for a game... all buzzing around at once?"
2. **Explain:** "That's totally normal! Our brains are amazing but can get very busy. Mindfulness is a superpower that helps us gently calm the buzz. It's not about *stopping* your thoughts, but just noticing them and paying attention to one thing right *now*. Today, we're going on an adventure to practice this using our five senses as our map."

Part 2: The Main Activity - The Five Senses Adventure (15 minutes)

Guide Olivia through this grounding exercise. Speak in a calm, gentle voice. Encourage her to close her eyes for some parts if she feels comfortable.

1. **Step 5: SIGHT.** "First, let's use our eyes. Look around the room slowly. I want you to find **five** things you've never really *noticed* before. It could be the way light hits the wall, a tiny pattern on the rug, or a book on the shelf. Can you name them for me?" (Give her plenty of time to look and discover).
2. **Step 4: TOUCH.** "Great! Now, let's explore touch. Please pick up the special object you chose. Close your eyes and explore it with your fingers. Find **four** things you can feel. Is it smooth or bumpy? Heavy or light? Warm or cool?"
3. **Step 3: HEARING.** "Okay, now let's use our superpower hearing. Let's get very still and quiet for a moment. Try to listen for **three** different sounds. Maybe one is close by, like your own breathing, and maybe one is far away, like a bird outside. What can you hear?"
4. **Step 2: SMELL.** "Let's tune into our sense of smell. Take a slow, gentle breath in through your nose. What are **two** things you can smell right now? It might be the smell of the room, your clothes, or maybe nothing at all, and that's okay too!"
5. **Step 1: TASTE.** "Finally, the best part! Pick up your piece of food. We're going to be a 'food scientist' and investigate it. Before you eat it, look at it closely. What does it look like? Now, put it in your mouth but don't chew yet. What does it feel like? Slowly begin to chew, and notice all the flavors that pop out. This is called 'mindful eating.' What was that like?"

Part 3: Creative Application - My Mindfulness Map (10-15 minutes)

This part helps solidify the learning through creativity. Offer Olivia a choice:

- **Option A: Five Senses Drawing.** "On your piece of paper, let's create a 'Mindfulness Map' of your adventure. You can draw or write the 5 things you saw, the 4 things you felt, the 3 things you heard, the 2 things you smelled, and the 1 thing you tasted. This is your personal map for how to find a calm moment."
- **Option B: The Mind-in-a-Jar.** "This jar is like our mind. Let's add some glitter. Each piece of glitter is a thought, a worry, or an idea." (Add glitter to the water-filled jar and seal it). "Shake it up. See how busy and cloudy it gets? That's our 'busy brain.' Now, let's set it down and watch. As we take a few slow breaths, the glitter slowly settles. Our thoughts don't disappear, but they get calmer and clearer. This jar can be a tool you use anytime you feel your mind is 'shaken up'."

4. Assessment (Informal)

- **Verbal Check-in:** Ask, "So, if you had to explain mindfulness to a friend, what would you say it is?" (Look for answers like "paying attention" or "noticing things right now").
- **Observation:** Note Olivia's level of engagement and focus during the Five Senses activity. Was she able to identify items for each sense?
- **Creative Output:** Review her drawing or her explanation of the glitter jar. Does it reflect the concepts discussed in the lesson (e.g., a connection between the senses and feeling calm)?

5. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For Support:** If Olivia struggles to find items for each sense, gently offer prompts (e.g., "What about the feeling of your feet on the floor?"). The activity can be shortened to 3-2-1 if her attention wanes.

- **For Extension:** Encourage her to write a short poem or story about her 'Mindfulness Map.' She could also try the Five Senses activity in a different environment, like outside, and compare the experience.
- **Inclusivity:** The activity is designed around universal human senses and personal observation, making it adaptable to any environment. The choice in the creative portion allows her to express herself in the way she feels most comfortable.

6. Lesson Closure & Takeaway (5 minutes)

"You did an amazing job on your adventure today! You just learned a real-life superpower that you can use anywhere, anytime. When you feel that 'busy brain' feeling starting, you can just pause and quietly find..."

**5 things you can see,
4 things you can feel,
3 things you can hear,
2 things you can smell,
and 1 good thought about yourself.**

"That is your secret map back to a calm and focused mind. Well done!"