

LET'S USE OUR SENSES!

An activity to do after reading *Apt. 3* by Ezra Jack Keats

Description

Use your senses and sharpen your observation skills to get to know your neighborhood in this activity inspired by *Apt. 3* by Ezra Jack Keats.

Audience

3–6+ years, with adult supervision

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Your body
- Notepad or paper
- Pencil, crayon, or colored pencils

Guiding questions

- 1 Our senses give us many clues about what is happening around us, just like Ben and Sam discovered when they ventured out of their apartment. Did you know you have five different senses? What senses do you use on a daily basis?
- 2 How can focusing on individual senses help us understand a place better?

Instructions

- 1 Find a comfortable space to sit, either inside or surrounding your home. Have a caregiver set a timer for two minutes. Close your eyes. Focus on **listening**. What are the different sounds you hear? Listen for natural sounds (birds, wind, trees). What are the man-made sounds (trucks, airplanes)? How does this change when you move to different spots around your home?
- 2 Set the timer again for two minutes and focus on **touch**: Using your hands, touch different surfaces or objects in your home. What words can you use to describe them (bumpy, smooth, rough)? Place a piece of paper over a surface and rub the side of a crayon on the paper. How many textures can you find?
- 3 Reset the timer three more times, to explore **smell**, **sight** and **taste** in different places around your home. What scents do you smell? What colors do you see? What are some of your favorite tastes? Use paper and colored pencils or crayons to illustrate your observations. How might you illustrate the sounds you hear? How can you use color and different weighted strokes to visualize what you sensed?

For example, a rumbling garbage truck might look like a bunch of tight, grey circles rolling along the bottom of the page; the smell of the bakery down the street might look like yellow sunbursts.

- 4 Now, with the information that you gathered from your adventures inside and out, what did you learn about the place you live in? What was something surprising that you noticed? What was something new that you had never thought about before? Share this with a trusted friend or adult.

Share your work

We'd love to see your work! Share your creation with the Chicago Architecture Center on Facebook or Instagram, using the hashtag #ChiArchitecture

Take it a step further!

Architects need to be deeply aware of how our senses are impacted by their design of places where we spend a lot of our time. Take some time to sketch an imagined space that people can experience with all of their senses. Choose where you would want to design that space, either outdoors or indoors, and describe how people would use their senses there. Could there be really soft walls to touch? Are sounds really loud in this space? Do you see people laughing? Use your imagination!

Many more challenges await. Visit our website architecture.org/learn where we regularly post new activities.