



# Sensory Awareness

Developing eagle eyes

**Time Needed:**

45 minutes

**Ages:** K-2, can be adapted for any grade level

**Season:** Any

**Materials:** blank paper, pencils

**Optional Materials:** pipe cleaners, clipboards, graph paper or smartboard

**Lesson Outline:**

- I. Introduction - 10 min
- II. Draw Map – 10 min
- III. Silent Observation and Journaling – 15 min
- IV. Wrap up – 10 min

**Overview:** Encourage your students to imagine what it would feel like to be an eagle for a day, relying on their sense to stay safe, find food and survive. Age appropriate activities will help students practice using their senses.

**Minnesota Science Standards**

**0.4.1.1.1** – Observe and compare plants and animals.

**1.1.1.1.2** – Recognize that describing things as accurately as possible is important in science because it enables people to compare their observations with those of others.

**2.1.1.2.1** – Raise questions about the natural world and seek answers by making careful observations, noting what happens when you interact with an object, and sharing answers with others.

## Background Information

Eagles are predators. They rely on their senses to find and capture their prey. Birds of prey primarily use their sense of sight to find food. Eagles have excellent vision and can see a fish in the river from a mile up or rabbit running on the hillside three miles away. Eagles' hearing is average, very similar to humans. Eagles have almost no sense of smell.

Encourage your students to imagine being an eagle for a day. What would it be like to rely on their senses when looking at their surroundings, finding food and shelter? To help students practice using their senses, walk them through the activities that are age appropriate.

## Vocabulary

- **Bird of prey** – a predatory bird; a bird that eats animals
- **Carnivore** – an animal that only eats meat; eagles are carnivores
- **Camouflage** - the use of any combination of materials, coloration or illumination for concealment or hiding
- **Predator** - an animal or bird that hunts and feeds on other living organisms
- **Prey** - an organism that is hunted by predator; a food source for [predators](#)

## Lesson Outline

### I. Introduction (10 min.) – Choose one activity based on students age

**Younger student activity:** *Find your Food*

#### Preparation:

Select a small area of the schoolyard with a variety of plants and trees.

Cut an assortment of colored pipe cleaners in thirds.

Tie the pipe cleaners to the vegetation within your selected area. Hide two pieces of pipe cleaner per student. These should be placed so that some are obvious and some are a little more hidden or camouflaged.

In this activity, students will need to put their senses to the test. Explain to the students that will be eagles looking for food. In this exercise, the pipe cleaners represent squirrels, which a common eagle food. Students should search the chosen area and find their food (one per student). Once they have found their food, return to the meeting point.

Ask the students to hold up their pipe cleaner; is there a pattern to which food was easiest to find?

Next, have the students repeat the process. Each student should go back to the selected area to find one more piece of food and meet back in the meeting place. Usually, the students find the brightly colored food in the first round and take longer to find more natural colored pipe cleaners the second round. This is one way that prey can avoid detection – camouflage.

Debrief questions:

- When was it most challenging to find prey?
- What colors were easiest to find?
- What are other ways that prey could avoid being found by the eagle?
- What animals use camouflage?

**Older student activity:** *Spot the Changes.*

This activity tests the observational skills of students.

Pair the students up and have them stand in 2 lines facing each other. Tell the students that they have 45 seconds to memorize how their partner looks. At the end of 45 seconds, have the students turn so their backs are to each other.

Now, each student should now change three things about themselves (tucking in their shirt, changing their hair, taking off glasses, etc).

When everyone is done “changing” have the students turn back to face their partner and try to name the changes they observe.

At the end, ask a few questions about the activity.

Was it hard or easy? What techniques did they use?

## **II. Draw a map (10 min)**

Explain to students that they will be going outside and spreading out from classmates. Pass out clipboards, blank paper and writing utensils to students.

Take students to the location you selected ahead of time. Tell students to draw a map on the blank paper of their surroundings.

## **III. Silent Journaling and Observation time (15 min)**

Have students take their map and a pencil and then find a spot to sit. (This activity can be shortened or lengthened depending on the attention span of students). Encourage students to utilize most of their senses (excluding taste for safety reasons).

While outside, students should mark on their map any birds (or other animals) that they see, hear, smell and feel.

If they want, they can also make notes on what they are feeling (grass, sun, etc).

**Extension:**

If the students have journals or as a writing exercise they can also write down notes about the animals and birds they observe – what does it look like? What is the animal doing?

(For this activity, it is not important that the students know what species they are observing but rather take the time to observe.)

**IV. Conclusions (10 minutes)**

Discuss observations with students

- What wildlife was spotted?
- What behaviors were seen?
- Where were most of the animals seen?
- What can students do to help wildlife?

**Other adaptations:**

- School yard map – have the students repeat this activity seasonally then compare and contrast. How do their observations change? Are there some things that remain constant throughout the year? Are the students using different techniques to write down what they are seeing?
- Have the students repeat this exercise at home. Are the results similar? How were the surroundings different?
- Have the students make a bar graph of the species seen using class data. What is the most common species noticed?
- Place the students in small groups to compare and discuss their maps. Using that information, have them predict where/when they are likely to see a specific critter.