Sensory Food Education

Starter Programme
Teaching Manual: Reception and Key Stage 1

All about Flavour School

1. About the programme

What is Flavour School?

Flavour School is a programme of sensory food education lessons for children. This manual is designed for **Reception** and **Key Stage 1**, but the programme can be adapted for other age groups (including pre-school), settings (e.g. after-school clubs) and abilities. It can be delivered using minimal resources.

Flavour School is all about exploring food and flavour through the five senses: sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste. The programme provides fun and simple ways for children to learn about each of their senses and how they affect our eating experiences. It also helps children to develop vocabulary to express their experiences and preferences.

The aim is to nurture children's curiosity, confidence and willingness to try new foods. The ultimate goal is to empower children to have a positive relationship with food and eating. The focus is on helping children to better understand their eating experiences, and to approach new foods on their own terms, so they can be more confident and discerning eaters open to exploring and enjoying a wide range of foods and flavours.

Flavour School is a healthy eating intervention – the lessons prioritise the use of healthier, whole foods. Flavour School avoids telling children what they 'should' (or should not) eat to be healthy. However, each lesson is an opportunity to expose children to healthy foods, and to generate positive experiences and associations about them. The programme uses vegetables and fruits whenever possible, to help make these foods normal, familiar and interesting for children. Where other foods are featured, the priority is those that are healthier, less processed, made with relatively few ingredients, free from artificial colourings or flavourings, and preferably made with whole grains. Any branded products should be removed from their packaging and put in an unmarked dish.

What is it not?

Flavour School is not a cookery lesson, so it doesn't require teachers to be skilled cooks (it can be used to enhance cookery classes though). It is not about *making* children taste foods, or about assessing children on how much they know about food or the senses. The programme doesn't promote any food brands or specific diets (other than a healthy diet in line with national nutritional guidelines and including plenty of veg and fruit). It avoids using snacks and confectionery high in salt, sugar and fat, such as biscuits, crisps, cakes, breakfast cereals.

How to do Flavour School

The Flavour School programme in this manual is designed to be delivered as a standalone introduction to sensory food education. It is best to deliver the six sessions in the order described in this guide. Once teachers have delivered this programme, they will have a good idea of the core concepts, and will be able to create their own sensory food activities. Whether it's a first step into food education or used to enhance existing activities, there are lots of ways to build on this introduction to embed sensory food education into your school.

You could:

- Devise your own Flavour Adventures and activities
- Incorporate more sensory food education activities into other classes and initiatives
- Repeat the programme, or parts of it, later in the school year, with variations to the lessons
- Use sensory food education techniques to teach other subjects in the curriculum (e.g. English, Art, Maths)
- Connect to particular events, ideally food-related (e.g. summer fairs, picnics, food days/weeks)
- Include the senses in a school-wide approach to food education (e.g. across cookery, food growing, and/or using food in teaching other subjects)

2. About the charity

The charity Flavour School was founded in 2016 by a group of people brought together by a shared passion for improving kids' diets and relationships with food. The charity's mission is to promote sensory food education in the UK, as a route for children to healthier, happier relationships with food. We think every child should benefit from sensory food education – we're working on it! Our work focuses on developing and improving the Flavour School programme, and sharing it with schools and education specialists.

www.flavourschool.org.uk.

How to teach Flavour School

1. Overview of the Flavour School programme

The Flavour School *Starter Programme* is designed to be run once a week over six weeks, but you can adapt it to your delivery needs and timetables. Each "Flavour Adventure" lesson plan contains a 15-20 minute activity focused on one of the senses, to be delivered to groups of 5-8 children at a time. There is a focus on building a word bank throughout, to help grow the children's vocabulary for describing and sharing their sensory experiences.

Also, take time to talk over the Flavour Adventures in plenary. You might like to link into your curriculum with additional accompanying activities – the lessons plans include some ideas. Feel free to adapt these to suit your class and curriculum.

Each section has Things to Do – actions required to run the class, and *"Things to say"* – useful phrases you can use to guide the class. You can adapt and build on these, and improvise, according to the level of ability of your class, and the particular conversations that happen in your class. There is a suggested 'homework' for each Flavour Adventure. These are fun little activities for children to do at home and engage their parents in their Flavour School learnings. They should not be assessed or enforced; rather just give the children some ideas to explore at home and bring whatever stories they'd like to share back to class.

Lesson / week	Objectives	Foods/materials/equipment overview
1. Introduction to Flavour School and the senses; Sight	• Understand that all the senses affect our eating experiences, not just taste • Learn about our sense of sight and how it affects our eating experience • Learn and use new sight vocabulary	• Sight icon • General arts and crafts materials • Selection of whole vegetables and fruit with a variety of colours, shapes • Magnifying glasses
2. Touch	• Learn about our sense of touch and how it affects our eating experience • Learn and use new touch vocabulary	• Touch icon • Drawstring bag/cardboard box • 1 plate • Selection of whole vegetables and fruit with variety of textures/shapes
3. Smell	• Learn about our sense of smell and how it affects our eating experience • Grow vocabulary and confidence around olfaction (smelling)	• Smell icon • 3-4 strong-smelling foods, herbs/spices • 3-4 small 'smelling jars' + tin foil • Small chunks of fresh apple, cinnamon powder + a Tupperware
4. Hearing	• Learn about our sense of hearing and how it affects our eating experience • Learn and use new sound vocabulary	• Hearing icon • 2 plates • Selection of veg and fruit with range of textures, loud or quiet when eaten
5. Taste	• Learn about our sense of taste, and about the 5 basic tastes • Learn about how tastes can interact • Learn and use new taste vocabulary • Learn the difference between Taste and Flavour	• Taste icon • Small cups/glasses for all children • Plates, bowls, jugs • Dippy sticks or teaspoons • Foods to exemplify the 5 tastes • Sugar syrup prepared in advance • Lemons or lemon juice

6. Liking and Disliking	• Taste and rate a range of foods together, discussing what you like and what you don't, and why.	• A range of 6 vegetables and fruit to taste, in bitesize pieces

General equipment for every session	A space for Flavour School and a word bank
• Chopping board and knife, kept clean and secure • Food-safe surface sanitiser, kitchen roll, hand sanitiser • Water for the children to drink if they want it • Materials to build a word bank on a wall, e.g. Post-its, paper, or whiteboard	• Dedicate an area of classroom wall space to Flavour School to build a word bank throughout the programme, and to display things you've used or created • Children could also keep a Flavour School physical or digital diary to record experiences and words that they can then share at home

2. Golden Rules to follow throughout the programme

Golden Rule 1: No one has to try anything if they don't want to.

Children do not have to actively participate in Flavour Adventures if they don't want to. They don't *have* to touch, smell, listen to or taste any foods. In Flavour School we don't force, persuade or coax children into trying anything. Children reluctant to try can take part in other ways, for example helping you to build the word bank, and will often build confidence by watching others.

Golden Rule 2: No one has to like anything.

Everyone's experience is valid, and there is no wrong sensory experience. It's ok to like something no one else likes, or to dislike something everyone else likes, and it's important to respect the preferences of others. Different people like different things. Some love sour, others sweet. This diversity is to be celebrated, and each child's preferences and experiences are valid. Developing a vocabulary for negative responses is just as important and of equal value.

These can be surprising difficult to stick to. Role model and repeat the Golden Rules throughout.

3. General guidance

Food safety and hygiene

1. **Avoid allergens:** Make sure you're aware of any food-related allergies, intolerances or restrictions the children might have (it's best to avoid nuts altogether). Try to avoid using any foods that a particular child can't have. It is much better to include all than exclude or differentiate for one.
2. **Clean hands:** Ensure all grown-ups wash their hands thoroughly before preparing/touching food. Remove rings and ideally work without nail varnish (it can be harder to see dirt under nails). Ensure all the children wash their hands with soap before the lessons, to establish a healthy approach to food handling and eating. Use hand sanitiser as needed during sessions, for example before topping up ingredients or after putting fingers in mouths.
3. **Clean equipment:** Ensure surfaces, utensils and crockery are clean. Have tools and equipment reserved solely for food and make sure they are clearly identified as such, stored and washed separately to others in your setting. Wear an apron if you have one.
4. **Handling utensils:** Use real utensils and use them safely. Play utensils are not suitable for real food - they are too light, weak, blunt or small. Keep sharp knives safe and secure. Children will copy what they see you doing, so handle foods and utensils (especially knives) carefully.
5. **Handle food as if the children will taste it:** Wash fruit and vegetables. Avoid cross-contamination. Avoid using any products to which participating children are allergic. Where possible, give children individual samples to taste and avoid double-dipping or sharing.
6. **Remove any branded packaging** and put foods into unmarked dishes.

Getting the most from the Flavour School programme

1. **Preparation and training:** The programme has been designed to be as easy as possible to put into practice without any formal training. Try to find time to try out the Flavour Adventure activities for yourself (e.g. with friends, family or other teachers) before your start the lessons with your class. It's important to be able to put yourself in the children's shoes – and it's fun!
2. **Timing of the programme**: You can run Flavour School at any time of year. Use local, seasonal veg and fruit if you can (e.g. summer is great for tomatoes, autumn for apples).
3. **Timing of the lessons:** Aim to run sessions when children are relaxed and able to focus on their senses and responses to foods. Where possible, it is best to run the sessions when the children are not super hungry.
4. **Talk about foods:** Use the correct names for each food, but also ask children what they call it at home. Have they seen it or tried it before? Where, how do they think it is grown or made?
5. **Involve children in clearing up,** as an opportunity to learn about food storage, composting, washing up etc. Some children may be more willing to touch or taste food samples after the lesson.
6. **Enjoy and have fun!** Focus on exploration, discussion, and enjoying discovering food and the senses together.

Teaching children of varying ages and abilities

1. **Feel free to adapt the Flavour School lessons and activities** to suit the ages and abilities of the children in your class. The key is to use fun activities help children to focus mindful attention on their sensory experiences of foods, and to share their experiences. Any activity that does this is fine!
2. **Word Bank:** Children in Reception, or who have reading difficulties, will need a lot of support to use and build the word bank. You may need to do most or all of the writing and recording, and to suggest and vocalise the words. In Year 1, encourage participation but offer plenty of support. By Year 2, many children will be able to contribute creatively to the word bank, and may be ready to do much of the writing and recording themselves.
3. **Sensory experience is universal, but expressing and describing can be challenging:** Be mindful of children struggling with language, or for whom English is an additional language, and provide appropriate support. Encourage word bank contributions in languages other than English. Add words to the word bank on the wall before Flavour School sessions to help children find words.

Introduction and Flavour Adventure 1: Sight

Welcome to Flavour School! All our senses contribute to our eating experience, from seeing the reddest, ripest strawberry, to the scent of fresh basil, and the crunch of a carrot. Six Flavour School sessions will take your class on a sensory tour to discover how much fun there is to be had exploring food with all our senses. You'll learn new words to describe sensory experiences, and grow confidence and curiosity for interacting with food. Repeat the Golden Rules!

1. Objectives

Introduce Flavour School and the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Children explore food visually and make drawings of what they see. Children learn and use new vocabulary to describe their sensory experiences. You'll start to build your Flavour School wall, and ensure the children understand how to use and build the word bank. You will need:

Materials/equipment:	Foods:
• Paper and colouring pens/pencils etc. for drawing • The 5 sense icons (see below) • Large plate or tray for the foods • Magnifying glasses	• A selection of veg, fruit, herbs and spices, with a range of fun visual properties - different colours, shapes, sizes, textures. • e.g. some of these: a cauliflower, a red and a green apple, pineapple, ginger root, savoy cabbage, basil plant, lime, kiwi, tomato, aubergine. You could use diverse types of apple or tomato. Some should be edible raw in case children want to taste them. Some familiar, some not. • Cut some bite-size pieces for the children to taste at the end if they like. • Arrange the whole fruits/vegetables/samples on the plate/tray, and cover with a clean tea towel. Have it ready, magnifying glasses nearby.

2. Teaching Instructions

- *"Things to say"*	➪ Things to do

A. Plenary Introduction (10-20 mins)

- *"Welcome to Flavour School! We'll use our five senses to explore foods and flavours."* - *"There are two important rules:* ***no one has to try anything*** *if they don't want to, and* ***no one has to like anything****."* [Elaborate as you see fit] - *"Our senses are how our bodies experience the world around us. Who can name one of our senses?* - *"All of our senses can affect our eating experience. We'll find out how in Flavour School."*	➪ Introduce Flavour School, the five senses, and the two Golden Rules. ➪ Put the 5 sense icons on your Flavour School wall. ➪ Have a general conversation about the five senses and what they can tell us about the world. See overleaf for some ideas for discussion. ➪ Talk about foods and their sensory properties e.g. colours, textures, shapes, flavours. Introduce the word bank.

B. Group activity: Looking and drawing (15-20 mins)

- *"What can sight tell us about things?"* [colour, shape, texture, freshness, ripeness, damage/bruising] - *"I love the purple colour of this aubergine, and its round, curvy shape like Mr. Greedy."* [for example] - *"Can you tell what things taste like from their colour? Do all green things taste the same?"* - *"Look at this kiwi – outside it is brown and furry, but inside it is green and juicy with little black seeds."* - *"In nature, red is often the colour of ripeness. Can you think of any fruits where redness means yumminess?"* - *"What is this bit on the tip of the fruit? It is the flower that the fruit grew out of."*	➪ Place your tray of foods in the middle of the group. ➪ Talk together about shapes, colours and textures you see. Are your samples familiar or unfamiliar to the group? ➪ Invite the children to examine the foods more closely, using magnifying glasses if they like. ➪ Cut open one of the foods, and draw attention to the textures, shapes and colours within. ➪ Support the children to draw pictures using the colours, shapes and textures of the foods. ➪ Look for flower remnants on the tip of fruits. You could show a time lapse video of a fruit growing in the plenary. ➪ Photograph children's drawings for your Flavour School wall (let them take their drawings home to show family)

Sight: our eyes can tell us about:	**Hearing: our ears can tell us about:**	**Touch: our hands and mouth can tell us about:**	**Smell: our nose can tell us about:**
- State: liquid, compact, fizzy, runny, gloopy - Form/shape: spherical, flat, oblong, wide, thin - Surface/consistency/texture: Shiny, grainy, matte, clear, murky - Colour: none, dark, light, golden, purple - Condition: ripeness (colour, size), mould, bruising	- Texture: crunch, crisp, squish, hard, soft - Eating environment: noisy, quiet, clatter, chatter, music	- Consistency: fat, thread, plump, runny, creamy, grainy, smooth, sticky - Texture: crunch, crisp, squish, hard, soft, sharp, furry, spiky - Temperature: hot, warm, tepid, cold, cool	- Flavour: peppery, sweet, perfume, fruity, soapy, spicy, sharp, pungent - Quality/condition: fresh, musty, rancid, rotten - Eating environment: clean, dirty, fresh, stinky
Taste: our tongues can tell us about: The five basic tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, umami (and maybe more!)			

3. Teaching and Learning support

Homework:

Show your drawings to your family/ people at home. Tell them about Flavour School, and what you learned today about the five senses. Practice looking really carefully at the world around you and noticing differences and similarities.

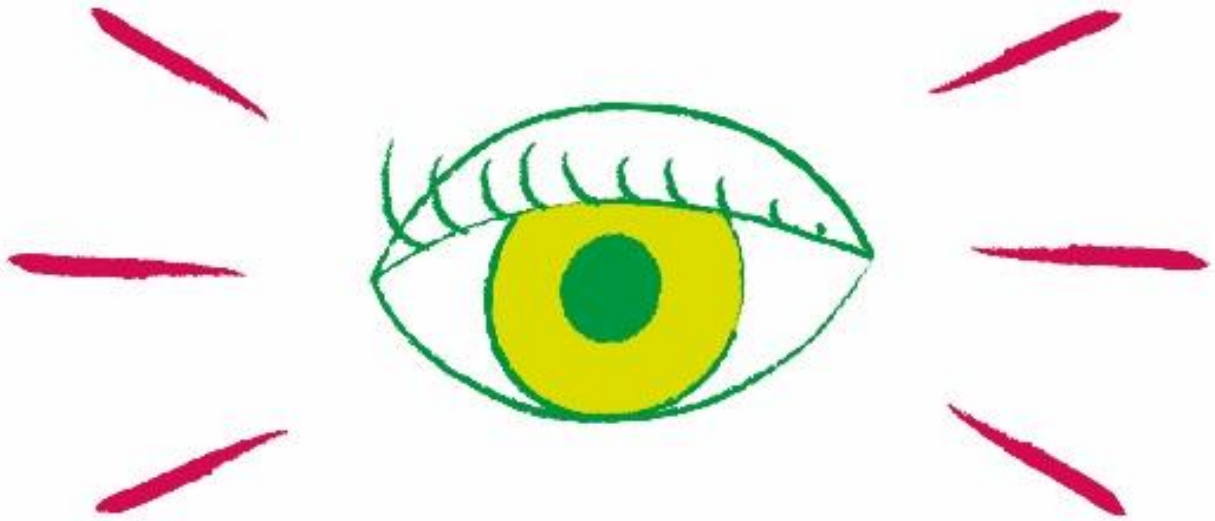
Curriculum links

Art and Design: use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination;
English: learn and use new vocabulary.
Science: observing closely, using simple equipment; identifying and classifying.
PSHE: learn how our body works, learn to understand our sensory experiences and respect each other's experiences.

4. Sensory words and expressions to help build your sight word bank

Round	Vast	Red, Blue, Green etc	Ripe/unripe
Sphere	Tiny	Stripy	Fizzy
Oval	Small	Matt	Cooked/Raw
Oblong	Diamond	Shiny	Chopped
Rectangle	Twisted	Spotty	Whole
Triangle	Bendy	Even/uneven	Segment
Wide	Straight	Symmetrical	Dark
Big	Forked	Mottled	Golden
Egg-shaped	Thin	Multi-coloured	Bright

5. SIGHT icon (full page printable version at the end of the manual)



Flavour Adventure 2: Touch

Rough, knobbly, squishy, crunchy! Touch is an important part of eating - from picking berries to crunching crackers. Children often find certain textures particularly appealing or repellent. Use the session to encourage a curious attitude, so that even disliked textures can be approached in a spirit of exploration and fun. Repeat the Golden Rules!

1. Outline and Objectives

Children focus on their sense of touch, by feeling hidden vegetables and fruits with their hands, and exploring the different textures inside and outside. Children think about how touch informs their eating experience. Children learn and use new vocabulary to describe touch sensations. Children familiarise with vegetables and fruit. You will need:

Materials/equipment:	Foods:
• The TOUCH icon, on the wall • Post-its/paper/whiteboard to record a word bank for the session • A drawstring bag or a cardboard box with a small hand-sized hole cut in the side. Put the food samples into the bag/box in advance, so the children don't know what is inside	• A selection of whole vegetables and fruit • Look for variety of textures and shapes (e.g. broccoli, ginger root, plum), and things with very different textures inside and out (e.g. kiwi, pineapple, orange) • Some should be edible raw in case children want to taste. Cut some bitesize chunks before the class

2. Teaching Instructions – Touch Adventure

Group size: 5-8; Time: 15-20 minutes per group

- *"Things to say"*	➪ Things to do

Feeling without seeing

- *"Today in Flavour School we are going to explore our sense of touch."* - *"We can touch things using different parts of our body. We often use our hands and our mouth for food."* - *"It's quite big, with smooth skin. It's a bit soft, but not squishy. It's curved and fatter at one end. The other end has a prickly stalky bit."* [e.g. an aubergine] - *"Feel an object in the bag/box and describe. Don't name it - just describe how it feels."* - *"Can anyone else guess what [Gita] is feeling?"*	➪ **Demonstrate the Touch Adventure:** Put your hand in the bag/box and find a food item. Explore it with your hand for a few seconds. Describe how it feels, without naming it. Is it hard or squishy, long or round? Is it hard like wood, rough like a tennis ball? ➪ The children can try to guess, but it's not a guessing game; aim to cultivate feeling and describing vocabulary. ➪ The children take turns to feel and describe a food in the bag. Let each child touch and describe, then reveal the food to the group, and pass it around to touch. Are your samples familiar or unfamiliar to the group?

Outside and Inside

- *"Do you think this feels the same on the inside? Let's cut it open and find out!"* - *"Who would like to touch the inside?"* - *"We can touch with our mouths as well as our hands. Try it if you like!"* - *"Is it squishy or crunchy? Juicy or dry?"* - *"Does it feel the same in your hand and your mouth?"* - *"What does your favourite food feel like to touch?"*	➪ Cut some of the foods to show the children the inside (e.g. slice kiwi or orange in half). Encourage the children to compare inside with outside. ➪ For anyone who'd like to try the texture in their mouths, offer the bite size chunks you prepared earlier. ➪ Build the word bank and expand the conversation to other foods they have touched and how they feel. Aim to facilitate discussion amongst the children, not just with the teacher.

3. Teaching and Learning support

Plenary Activity

Take time to talk around the Touch Adventure as a whole class. You could work in a cross-curricular activity to reinforce the session, use the learning creatively, and link into your curriculum.

Let the children lead discussion, but here are some things to talk about if they need prompting:
Different things touch can tell us: hot/cold, hard/soft, slippery, rough and so on.
Textures: Children often have strong feelings about texture, indeed it is often more important than taste to liking and disliking. Do they like smooth textured food? What about chunky? Crunchy, crispy?
Spicy 'taste': Some foods, like chilli, make our mouths feel very hot, even though they are not physically hot. This is because they contain a chemical called 'capsaicin', which triggers the nerves which sense temperature/burning. Note that your lips can feel chilli burn, but lips cannot taste salt or sugar. So the spicy 'taste' is really a touch sensation!

Activity ideas (or create your own!)
Art/design – Touch sculpture: Choose a list of touch words describing e.g. shapes and textures. Build sculptures or collages which feature those touch sensations. Explore them with closed eyes and try to find the sensations in the list.
English – Touch poem: Support the children to write poems about the touch and texture sensations from the Touch Adventure, or from a favourite dish or meal (or even a specially disliked one). Use the word bank and build it as you go.

Homework:

Find and explore some objects with interesting textures and shapes, and learn words to describe them. If you can, bring a favourite/picture of a favourite to class and tell us about its touch sensations.

Curriculum links:
English: learn and use new vocabulary
Science: observing closely, using simple equipment; identifying and classifying
PSHE: learn how our senses work, understand and analyse our sensory experiences

4. Touch words and expressions to help build your word bank

Fuzzy Smooth Silky Bumpy Hard Soft	Grainy Runny Sticky Oily Lumpy Crunchy	Fibrous Flaky Powdery Rough Rubbery Springy	Wet Dry Furry Coarse Velvety Solid	Chewy Slimy Sticks to teeth Melt in the mouth Leathery Spiky	Round Cottony Juicy Woolly Crumbly Square
"Prickly and jagged." "Slippy." "Squidgy and spongey." "Like sandpaper"					

5. TOUCH icon (full page printable version at the end of the manual)

Flavour Adventure 3: Smell

Earthy! Floral! Sharp! Pungent! Smells whet the appetite and evoke memories. They also tell us about how a food might taste. But did you know we have two senses of smell?! There is orthonasal/front smell - sniffing, and retronasal/back smell, which is smelling the food in your mouth via the back of the throat. Many flavours depend on the nose - even though they *feel like* a taste in our mouth. Olfaction (smelling) is as important as taste in eating. Repeat the Golden Rules!

1. Outline and Objectives

The children focus on their sense of smell, and think about how it contributes to their experience of food and flavour. They explore scents "nose first" with hidden smells, and do a sensory activity to learn about retronasal olfaction. Children grow their vocabulary and confidence around olfaction (smelling), and learn some scientific words. You will need:

Materials/equipment:	Foods:
• The SMELL icon on the wall • Post-its/paper/whiteboard to record a word bank for the session • Pre-build the word bank, because describing smells is difficult (use the word bank ideas below). • 3 or 4 small opaque 'smelling jars', e.g. icing sugar shakers, or cups covered with tin foil, with holes in the top. Children should be able to smell, but not see. • Put one food in each 'smelling jar' • 1 food storage box with lid	• 3 or 4 strong-smelling veg, fruit, herbs or spices e.g. ground cinnamon, cloves, orange or lemon rind, cardamom, rosemary, thyme, star anise, mint, vanilla, basil, lemongrass. Include some familiar scents. • Many foods will give a better smell if you bash them up a bit to help release their scents • An apple, cut into 1cm cubes. Cut enough for each child to have 1+ each, and put in the food storage box. • Ground cinnamon (check it is nice and smelly). Sprinkle a little cinnamon over the apple cubes in the food storage box and shake, lid on. Keep the lid on to hide the scent.

2. Teaching Instructions

- *"Things to say"*	➪ Things to do

Front smell / orthonasal olfaction (10 mins)

- *"Today in Flavour School, we are going to explore 'olfaction'. Does anyone know what olfaction is? [Smelling!]. What do we use to smell?" (Nose!)* - *"Orthonasal olfaction, or 'front smell' is when we sniff the air. We feel it in our nose" [Sniff the air]*	➪ **Demonstrate the Front Smell Adventure:** Pick up a smelling jar, and inhale the scent. Try to describe it, without naming it. This is surprisingly difficult. Is it fresh or heavy, sharp or rich, earthy or floral? Does it remind you of a place, a person or a favourite dish? ➪ Pass the smelling jars around the group. Instruct the children to smell them, but not to open them.

- *"Hmmm, this smells spicy and strong! It reminds me of Christmas at my nan's house." [e.g. cloves]* - *"What is your favourite food smell? What do those smells remind you of?"*	➪ Do they recognise the smells? Discuss the sample smells, other notable smells, and any memories they evoke.

Back smell / retronasal olfaction (5 mins)

- *"Retronasal smell, or 'back smell' happens when we chew food. Smells go up into our nose through the back of our throat."* - *"Strangely, we experience this as a flavour in our mouths, not as a smell in our nose."* - *"Hold your nose and take one of these apple bits, pop it in your mouth, and chew. What can you taste?* - *"Now let go of your nose. Now what can you taste?"* - *"Lots of the flavour in our mouth when we eat is actually coming from retronasal olfaction!"*	➪ **Demonstrate the Back Smell Adventure:** Quietly get a cinnamon-apple bit. Hold your nose and pop the apple bit into your mouth. After a few seconds, release your nose. You'll suddenly taste the cinnamon. ➪ Instruct the group to hold their noses. Join in to demonstrate. Give each a cinnamon-coated apple cube. ➪ Tell them to chew for a bit, then release their noses. A cinnamon taste appears, as if by magic! ➪ Build the word bank as you go. Help children to learn the new science words 'olfaction', 'orthonasal' and 'retronasal'.

3. Teaching and Learning support

Plenary Activity

Take time to talk around the Smell Adventure as a whole class. Optionally, work in an activity to reinforce the learning from the session, use the learning creatively, and link into your curriculum.

Let the children lead discussion, but here are some things to talk about if they need prompting:
Back smell and flavour: We have learned that retronasal olfaction/back smell is a very important part of flavour. Quality of smells: We can recognise thousands of smells, but it can be difficult to describe them with words.
Smells, memories and emotions: Smells can often be strongly associated with emotions and memories of people and places, and our descriptions of smells often reflect this.

Activity idea (or create your own!)

Computing/maths – Sorting a smell collection: Working in groups, the children find a collection of objects with notable smells (good and bad, e.g. pencil shavings, sock). Line up all the smelly objects in any order on a long table. Take and smell two neighbouring objects. The nicer smelling one goes back on the right, the less nice on the left. Take turns to repeat, until few changes of position occur. This is a simple sorting algorithm! If two or more children smell and rate different pairs of objects at the same time, it becomes a parallel sorting algorithm.

English – A smell story: Children choose a favourite food smell and write/tell a little story about what it reminds them of, and why they love it.

Homework:

Teach your family/people at home about orthonasal and retronasal olfaction (front and back smell). Try comparing how your dinner tastes, with and without holding your nose. See if those at home will try too. Try to find a food smell you have never smelled before. Tell us about your search, using some fun smell words!

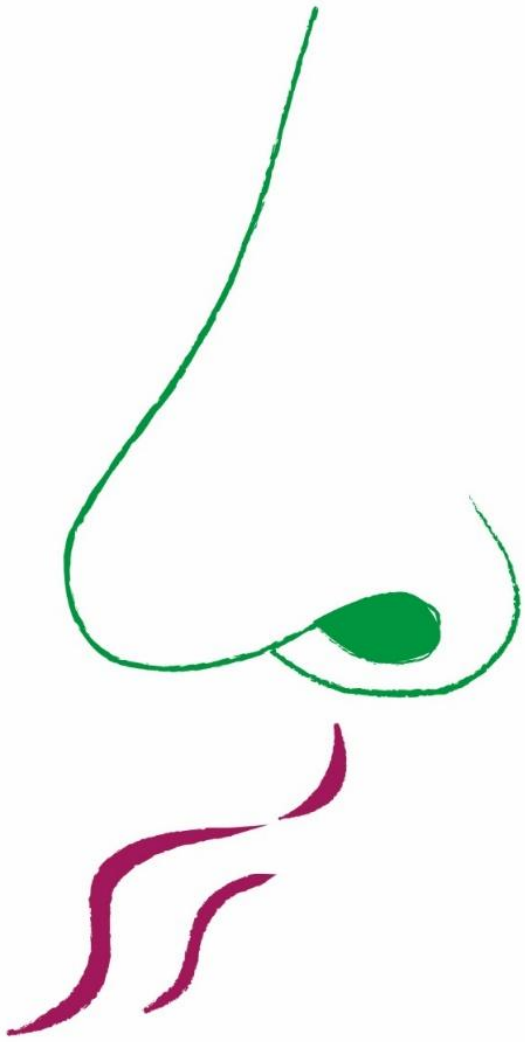
Curriculum links:

Science: performing simple tests; identifying and classifying; learning to use scientific vocabulary
English/Literacy: acquire a wide vocabulary; discussing word meanings; use discussion to learn
PSHE: learn new facts about how our bodies work, teach something new to family members

4. Smell words and expressions to help build your word bank

Perfumed	Lemony	Buttery	Curry	Zesty
Fresh	Grassy	Stale	Musty	Light
Fruity	Pungent	Sickly	Clean	Heavy
Floral	Strong	Vinegary	Dirty	Summery
Liquorice	Weak	Garlicky	Sweet	Wintry
Vanilla	Bready	Meaty	Harsh	Aromatic
Herbal	Cheesy	Spicy	Christmassy	
"We put this in tea at home" "It smells like my grandmother's kitchen" "The smell when you open the rice cooker"				

5. SMELL icon full page printable version at the end of the manual)



Flavour Adventure 4: Hearing

Crunch! Sizzle! Squelch! Hearing is part of eating - from preparing foods to chewing them. Sounds tell us about texture and temperature, and play a big role in the sensory environment in which we eat. Consider the difference between music and muted chatter in a nice restaurant versus the clamour and clatter of the school canteen at lunch! Repeat the Golden Rules!

1. Outline and Objectives

Children listen to the sounds in their mouth, when chewing foods with diverse textures. Children learn to focus on their sense of hearing, and appreciate its contribution to their eating experience. They learn and use new vocabulary to describe the sounds they hear. You will need:

Materials/equipment:	Foods:
• The HEARING icon, on the wall • Post-its/paper/whiteboard to grow the word bank for the session. • 2 plates (1 for 'loud foods', 1 for 'quiet foods')	• A selection of veg and fruit with varied textures to make different noises when you chew them. At least one loud and one quiet food. • Cut the veg and fruit into bitesize bits before the class. • 'Loud foods': e.g. cucumber, raw carrot, sliced raw cabbage, apples, celery • 'Quiet foods': e.g. berries, ripe banana, ripe pear, kiwi, cooked carrot, cooked apple

2. Teaching Instructions

- *"Things to say"*	⇨ Things to do

Introduction – just listening (5 mins)

- *"First, we are going to close our eyes, be silent, and just listen. Find as many sounds as you can just by listening to the world around you."*	⇨ The children close their eyes and listen in silence for 10-20 seconds. What sounds did they hear? ⇨ Introduce words to focus discussion on sensory properties (e.g. quiet, scratchy, rhythmic), rather than naming the source (e.g. a pencil writing).

Sounds of chewing load and quiet foods (10-15 mins)

If a child doesn't want to put samples in their mouths, they can squash foods with their hands, or just watch and listen.

- *"In today's Flavour Adventure, we will be listening to the sounds in our mouths when we eat!* - *"Block your ears with your fingers and close your eyes while you chew. Think about the sounds in your mouth."* - *"What sounds can hear in your mouth?"* - *"What do they remind you of?"* - *"Do you think you could guess the sounds of a food just by looking at it, or touching it? How?"* - *"What is the noisiest meal you can imagine?"* - *"Sounds in the world around us can also affect our eating experience."*	➪ **Demonstrate:** Put a 'quiet food' in your mouth. Then block your ears with your fingers/hands. Chew and listen in silence for 5-10 seconds, and then describe the sounds you hear in your mouth. ➪ Use the word bank. Use simile as well as sound words (e.g. "Squelch, squelch. Sounds like jumping in a puddle"). ➪ Offer a 'quiet food' to all, and support the children to block their ears and close their eyes as they chew it. Encourage children to silently listen for 5-10 seconds. ➪ Encourage invention of onomatopoeia (e.g. 'clush'), as well as real words. ➪ Repeat with a 'loud food'.

3. Learning and teaching support

Plenary Activity

Take some time to talk around the Hearing Adventure as a whole class. Optionally, work in an activity to reinforce the session, use the learning creatively, and link into your curriculum.

Let the children lead discussion, but here are some things to talk about if they need prompting:
Sounds of food: What sounds did we encounter today when listening to our food**?**
The eating environment: What sounds do the children hear when they eat at home? What about in the school canteen?
Multi-sensory experiences: Do sound words appear in the word banks for other senses? Maybe there is a 'crunch' or a 'squish' in both touch and sound? These are the same phenomena, being sensed with two different senses. When else does this happen?

Activity ideas (or create your own!)
Music – Sound Song: Create and sing a sound song using the sound the words you learned today! Add makeshift instruments from around the classroom to imitate sounds you've heard.
Phonics – Onomatopoeia: Many of the words used to describe sounds actually resemble those sounds. It's also fun to make up words to describe sounds (e.g. 'crunkle, splursh'). This is a great opportunity for creative phonics teaching.
The Senses – Hearing: Explore hearing in more detail, in a curriculum segment about the senses.

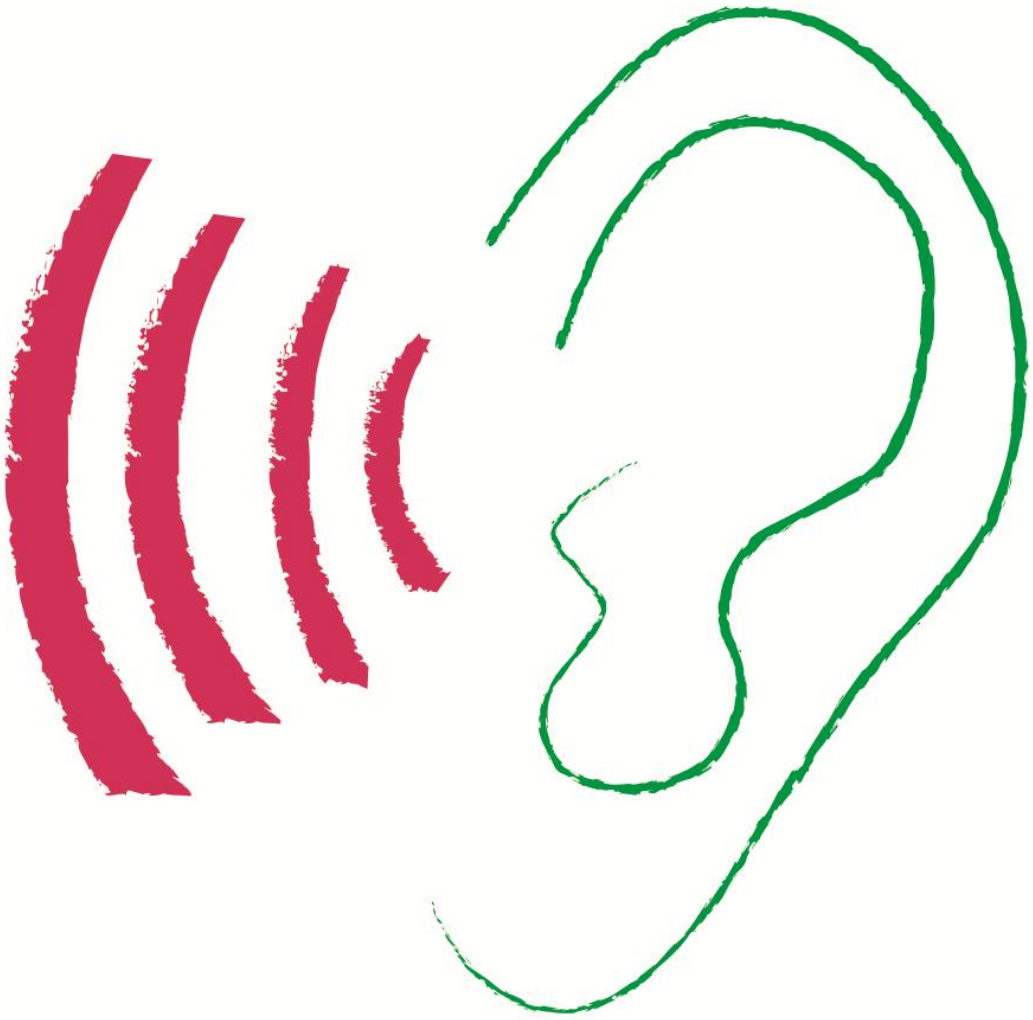
Homework
During a meal at home, get your family/people at home to listen to the sounds of different foods in their mouths, and talk about them, like you did today in Flavour School. When you eat at home, out and about, and in the school canteen, take time to listen carefully to the sounds around you. Closing your eyes can help you to hear more sounds. Tell us about the mealtime sounds you have found.

Curriculum links
English: discussing word meanings; acquire a wide vocabulary; use discussion in order to learn
PSHE: understand hearing and sound; teach something new to family members
Science: performing simple tests; identifying and classifying

4. Hearing words and expressions to help build your word bank

Noisy Quiet Silent Crispy	Whisper Crunch Glugging Swallow	Rustle Gurgle Pop Squeak	Dribble Squelch Squish Crackle	Splinter Bite Hiss Click
"It's like crunching rocks in my mouth." "Like playing football on a muddy field." "Like walking on snow."				

5. HEARING icon (full page printable version at the end of the manual)



Flavour Adventure 5: Taste

Salty! Sweet! Sour! Taste is the sense people associate the most with eating. Each of our tongues is covered with about 10,000 taste buds, which detect at least five different kinds of tastes; salty, bitter, sweet, sour and umami. Umami is the 'savoury' taste and can also enhance other tastes. 'Flavour' is a broader term, including the basic tastes and the contributions of our other senses, such as retronasal smell. There is quite a lot more food/crockery to prepare for this lesson, but it will be worth it! You may find that some children are more willing to try foods than earlier in the programme. It's an exciting lesson where children can be brave with their senses (but don't have to taste anything if they don't want to). Repeat the Golden Rules!

1. Outline and Objectives

Children learn to focus on their sense of taste and what it can tell them about their food experiences. They identify the five basic tastes, and then analyse a selection of foods in terms of their basic tastes; they learn and use new vocabulary to describe tastes; they revisit the contribution of retronasal smell to flavour. You will need:

Materials/equipment:	Foods:
• The TASTE icon, on the wall • Post-its/paper/whiteboard to grow the word bank for the session • 5 plates/bowls - put each of the 5 basic taste example foods on its own plate. • Colour dot stickers or coloured paper, with 5 colours (one for each basic taste) • Plenty of dippy sticks or teaspoons and kitchen roll or napkins for the children • A plate/bowl and serving spoon for each of the foods in your Taste Buffet	• Foods to identify the 5 basic tastes: 50g of salt (salty), 50g sugar (sweet), 25g plain cocoa powder (bitter), small tube of concentrated tomato puree (umami), 3 lemons (sour) cut into little pieces. • Taste Buffet of other foods strong in each of the 5 tastes (see below for examples). Enough for each child to taste at least once • Remove any packaging. Put each food on its own plate or bowl

2. Teaching Instructions

- *"Things to say"*	➪ Things to do

The Five Basic Tastes (5 mins)

- *"Today in Flavour School we are exploring taste. What do we use to taste?" [tongue, mouth]* - *"Our tongues can only sense five main tastes: salty, bitter, sour, sweet and umami/savoury."* - *"You might not know about the umami taste. The rich taste of chicken broth is very umami."*	➪ Introduce the sense of taste and 5 basic tastes. ➪ Pass around the plate with the lemon ('sour'). Ask the children to identify the dominant taste. ➪ Stress that the children should take tiny tastes, because the foods are very strong tasting. ➪ Repeat with the remaining 4 tastes/plates. ➪ Try combining tastes, e.g. lemon with sugar or salt, and talk about how they affect each other.

- *"Does sugar make lemon less sour? And salt?"*	

Taste Explorers activity (10-15 mins)

- *"Now that we have identified the five basic tastes, let's be Taste Explorers."* - *"Use the colour stickers to label the foods by how they taste. Which ones are salty? Which are sweet?"* - *"Do any foods have more than one taste?" E.g. "This one has lots of yellow and red stickers, so we found both sour and sweet tastes."* - *"Do sweet and bitter go well together? Salty and sour?"* - *"Strong bitter tastes are often the hardest to like. But a little bit of bitter can make foods more interesting. Often, people develop a liking for bitter as their tastes develop (e.g. coffee, tonic water)."*	➪ Lay out your Taste Buffet dishes on a table. ➪ Assign a sticker colour to each basic taste. E.g. yellow for sour, red for sweet etc. You'll use the stickers to label the Taste Buffet foods. ➪ Give an example – taste a food from your Taste Buffet. Use one or more stickers to label which taste(s) it has. ➪ Support the children to explore and categorise the food samples by taste, using the colour dot stickers. ➪ Look at the colour dots they have been labelled with, and talk about the classifications together. Which tastes do the children enjoy most? And least?

3. Learning and teaching support

Plenary Activity

Take time to talk around the Taste Adventure as a whole class. Optionally, work in a cross-curricular activity to reinforce the session, use the learning creatively, and link into your curriculum.

Let the children lead discussion, but here are some things to talk about if they need prompting:
Tastes of foods: Which tastes are found in which kinds of foods? E.g. Fruit is often sweet. Salty is rare except when salt is added. Umami is mostly less known than the other tastes, but is very important to create delicious food. Do different children have different preferences and favourite tastes? Some may love sour tastes, while others favour savoury/salty tastes. Others love sweetness. Fewer children like bitterness. They are all correct – for them.

Accompanying activity ideas (or create your own!)

Tongues and tasters – Find out about your pupils' taste sensitivity. Get some 'bitter taste strips', which are little bits of paper infused with a chemical – you can find them online. Give one to each child (and yourself), taste them. Some children (about 25%) will taste nothing much at all. Most (about 50%) will get a slight bitter taste. The rest (about 25%) will taste a very strong bitter taste. This latter group are known as 'supertasters', and they have more bitter taste buds than other people. They may be more selective in what they eat, too.

Curriculum links:

Science: grouping and classifying things, carrying out simple comparative tests
English: learn vocabulary about taste
PSHE: understanding how our sense of taste works

Homework:
Tell your family/people at home about the five basic tastes. When you eat dinner, try to identify the basic tastes in your food. Ask your family about what they can taste. Try all holding your noses, to find out which flavours in your dinner disappear – these flavours are really retronasal scents.

Taste Buffet - example foods to use (but feel free to improvise):

Salty: soy sauce, salted pretzels, olives (in brine), salted rice crackers

Bitter: grapefruit, kale, parsley, bitter melon, very dark chocolate (min 85% cocoa)

Sour: tamarind, lime, vinegar, gherkins, pickled onions, lemons, oranges

Sweet: grapes, dried fruits like raisins, sweetcorn, raw carrot, strawberries

Umami: Marmite/Vegemite, miso paste, soy sauce, parmesan cheese, mushrooms

4. Taste words to help build your word bank

Salty	Meaty	Smoky	Savoury
Bitter	Sugary	Zesty	Delicious
Sour	Spicy	Tangy	Bittersweet
Sweet	Nutty	Bland	Buttery
Umami	Earthy	Fruity	Fishy
Metallic	Hot	Cooling	
Peppery	Cold	Plain	

"It tastes like poison! I want some more!" (lemon)

5. TASTE icon (full page printable version at the end of the manual)

Flavour Adventure 6: Liking and Disliking!

We all have our very own likes and dislikes. In this activity, we will learn to approach our flavour and texture preferences with a curious and exploratory spirit – even disliking can be fun! Using our new sensory skills, we'll taste a range of fruit and veg, discuss their flavours and textures, and each rate them using emoji-style drawings on our 'Tasting Cards' (see below); use a smiley face for good, a frowny for bad, and a flat face for ok. Most children enjoy tasting in this context, even when they dislike things. You can repeat this activity as often as you like, broadening the children's food horizons every time.

1. Objectives

Children reinforce and build on what they have learned across the first five sessions. Children practise skilfully using all their senses to explore and analyse food. They discover that disliking is not so bad and can even be fun. Children explore lots of new and familiar foods and flavours, and learn that through exploratory tasting, they can map out their likes and dislikes and discover delicious new foods. You will need:

Materials/equipment:	Foods:
• In advance: Print out and cut the Tasting Cards in colour (see below and end of manual for printable versions), one for each child participating • Ensure each child has a pencil or pen	• Choose three fruit and three veg to taste (ready-to-eat). Aim for a mix of familiar items with some more unusual produce which many children will not have tried before. • In advance, cut the fruit and veg into small bitesize pieces, enough for one piece of each food for each child.

2. Teaching Instructions (group size 6-8)

➪ Set up the activity in advance. Place a Tasting Card for each child who will participate, plus yourself. Place a fruit/veg sample on each colour dot on the Tasting Card, so each child has all six samples. Use the same dot colour-food scheme for all children, so all the settings are identical. Tell each child to sit in front of their tasting card.

➪ This is a tasting activity, but tasting is completely optional. Remind the children of the Golden Rules, and remind yourself not to persuade and cajole the children to taste. No-one has to taste if they don't want to; just demonstrate, share enthusiasm, and join in - let the children approach on their own terms.

➪ No-one has to like. Disliking is validated with a place in the activity – the frown emoji face. Avoid praising liking or tutting at disliking. This activity is for the children to enjoy exploring foods and find out about themselves and their preferences, not to make them like foods. This low-pressure approach helps children to feel open to tasting.

➪ Write your names on your Tasting Cards. Introduce the activity by demonstrating. Taste one of the foods, chew a bit and share your appraisal. Is it sweet? Sour? Is it crunchy or squishy? Loud or quiet? Do you like it or dislike it?

➪ Demonstrate drawing an emoji face on your card (on the colour dot you took the food from) to express your rating. Write the name of the food as well, to map out your preferences, and if you like some descriptive words (e.g. 'sour').

➪ Invite the children to taste, discuss and rate the same food you tried (from the same colour dot on their own Tasting Card). Get them to draw their emoji face, and write the name of the food, just as you did. If they choose not to taste a given food, they just leave that colour dot blank. Allow the children to get as creative as they like with their emoji faces.

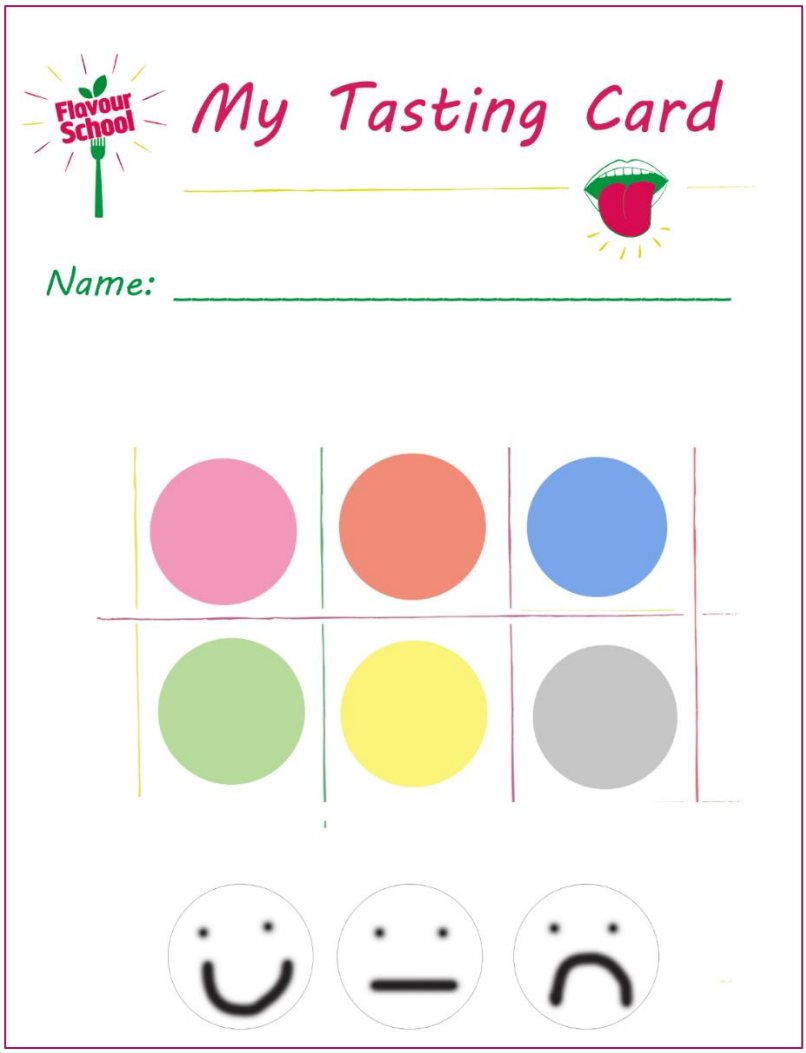
➪ Work your way through all six foods together, tasting, discussing and rating – and noting on your Tasting Cards. Support children with drawing and writing as necessary.

➪ Count all the group's ratings together, to find out which foods were most liked and disliked. Did anyone try anything new today? Which foods were new? Did the children like them or dislike them?

Homework

Take your Tasting Cards home, and tell your family/people at home about the foods you tasted. If you like, play the tasting activity together at home.

3. TASTING CARD (printable version at the end of the manual)

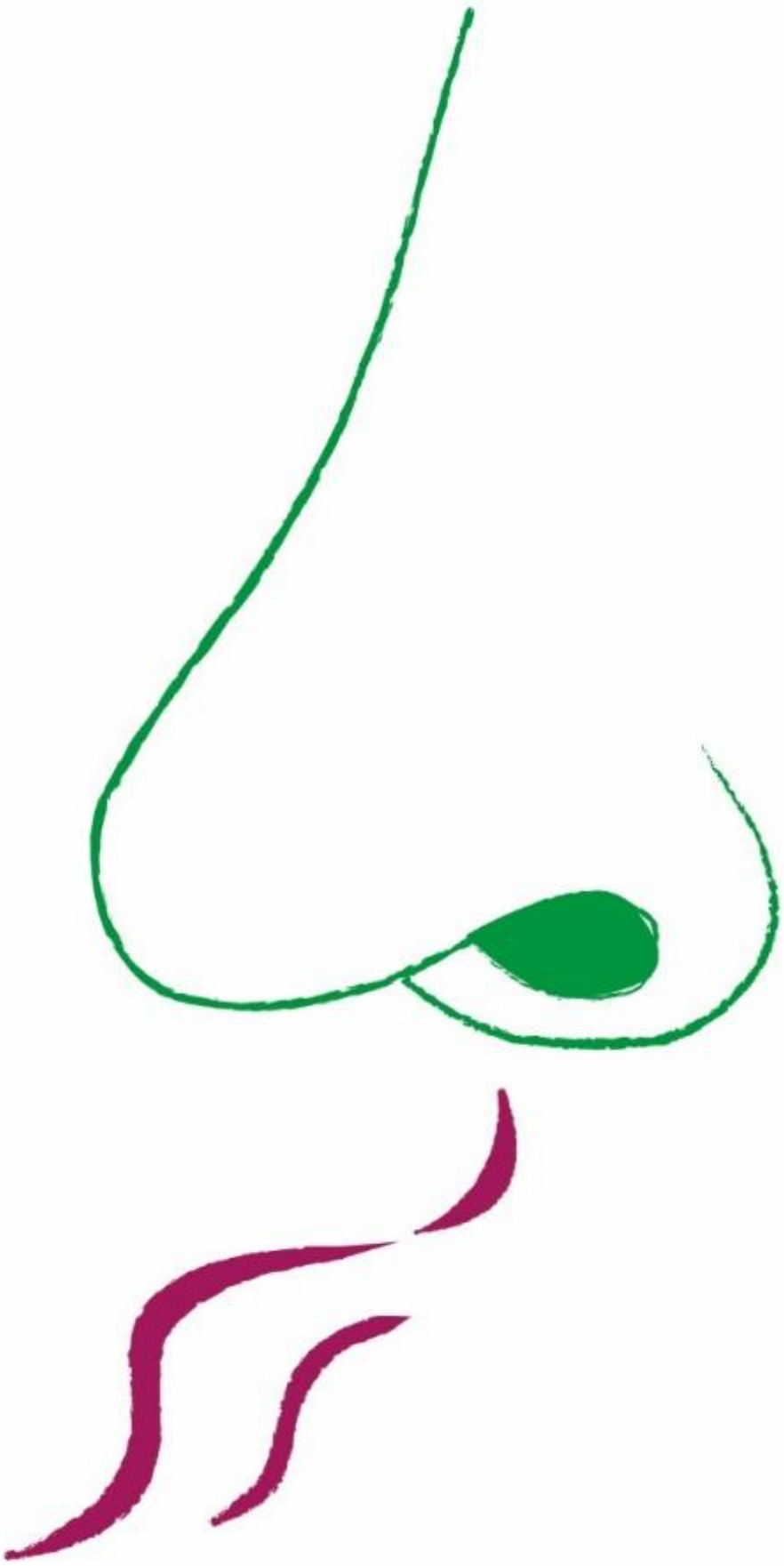


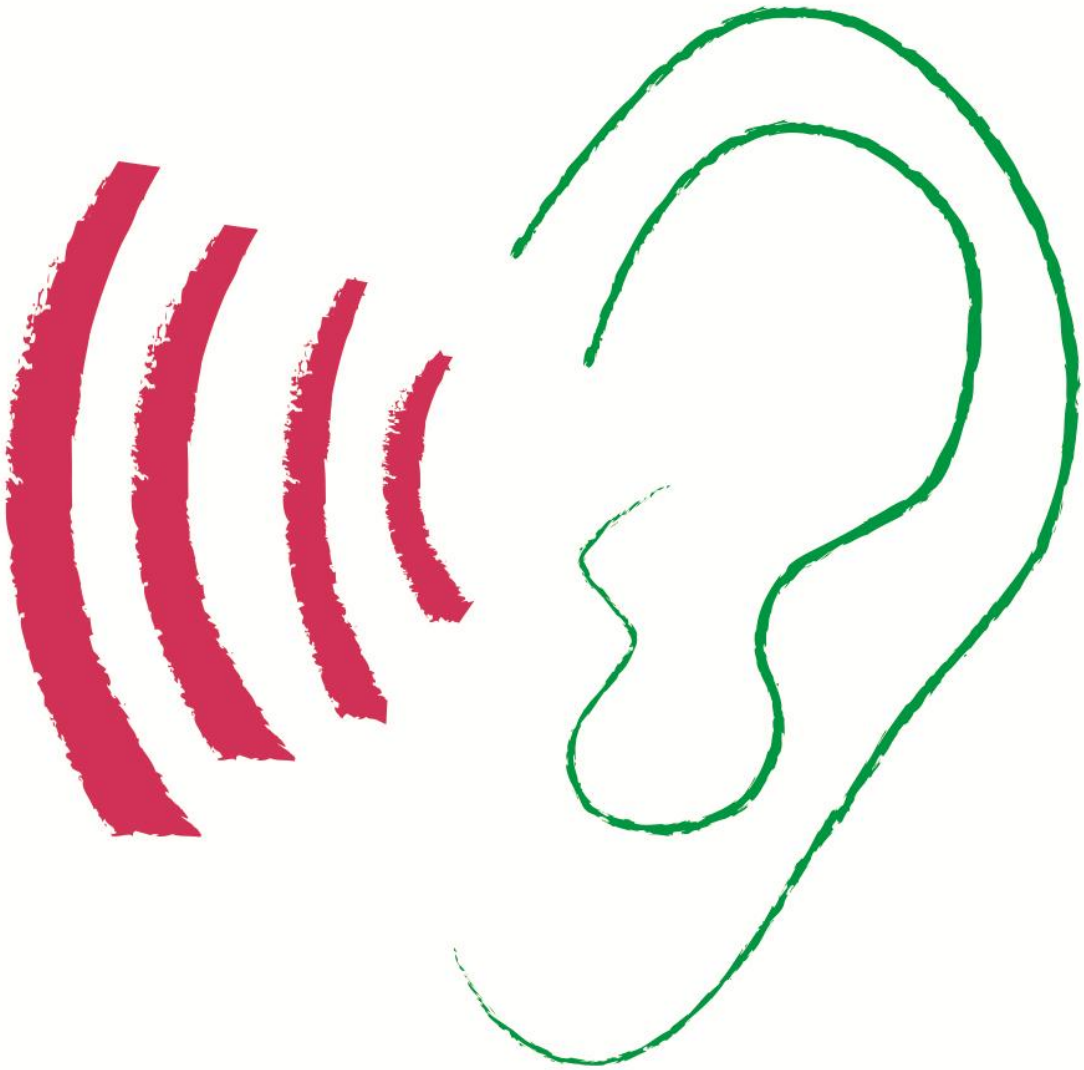
The following pages contain printable taste icons for Flavour Adventures 1-5. For Flavour Adventure 6, print enough copies of page 29 to give each child in the lesson their own Tasting Card.

1. SIGHT

2. TOUCH

3. SMELL





5. TASTE

6. TASTING CARDS

Sensory Food Education

Starter Programme
Teaching Manual - Reception and Key Stage 1

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