



NEW!
for 2015

sensory expeditions



A hands-on practical guide to inclusive museum experiences

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about

This Sensory Expeditions book was created to help you make more of your visits to museum and heritage sites. The activities focus on exploring the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. The activities have been designed with and for people with learning disabilities, but we hope they will enhance the visitor experience for a wide range of audiences.

This activities book has been developed as part of the research project “Interactive sensory objects developed for and by people with learning disabilities”. The activities have evolved through a series of collaborative workshops with people with learning disabilities, support workers, multimedia advocacy specialists, engineers, and artists.

This activities book was developed by members of the Sensory Objects projects team. For more information on the project see the Sensory Objects blog at:

<http://www.sensoryobjects.com>



Sensory Objects event at Speke hall in Liverpool



Sensory Objects event at the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading



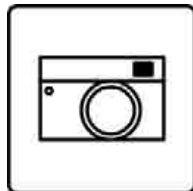
Sensory Objects event at the British Museum in London where the Tower Group demonstrated their 'sensory labels' to the public

how to use this activities book

Each chapter in this book contains short, illustrated activities to get you started with exploring the senses in museum and heritage sites. Symbols at the top of pages indicate whether you should make notes or sketch, take a photo or a video, record a sound or use a computer.



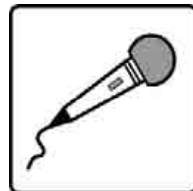
Draw or sketch



Take a photo



Take a video



Record a sound



Use a computer

The activities can be used in an individual visit to a museum or heritage site, or as part of an organised group activity. We encourage you to explore and experiment, to see what works well for you, and then post your experiences on our blog to share them with others.

acknowledgements

Arts and Humanities Research Council (Grant number AH/J004987/1)
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Speke Hall, The National Trust
The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)
The British Museum

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Arts & Humanities
Research Council

things you'll need

equipment

activity

notepad and pencil

A small notepad, sticky labels or Post-it notes for making sketches and notes of things which are of interest.

1, 2, 4, 5, 6

camera or video

A basic digital camera or a camera on a mobile phone for taking pictures of things which are of interest, and for later reflection. An instant film camera (such as a Fuji or Polaroid) could also be used, and has the added advantage that the instant pictures can more easily be shared with other people.

1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Basic digital video camera for recording object of interest. Using a video has the advantage of being able to capture movement and sound. Most modern mobile phones and digital cameras now have a recording facility, although they are usually much more limited in recording capacity.

device for recording sound

A basic sound recorder (digital ones are best, as the sound can more easily be edited) or a mobile phone.

2, 3

A microphone stand can help to produce much clearer sounds as you are capturing them, as you can eliminate unwanted 'noises' made by handling the device or microphone. If you want to collect clear recordings as you walk around your site, use a microphone 'boom'.

laptop computer or tablet

A laptop or tablet computer for displaying images or video recordings to others, for uploading images and video clips to a website and for editing sound.

4

data projector

A data projector and projection screen (or large white-painted wall) might be available at your venue, and is helpful if you wish to later display the images or video clips to a whole group. You will need a room where the lights can be turned down to a low level. 4

water blaster or bicycle pump

To collect smells from the venue you are visiting, you can use a water blaster or bicycle pump to 'suck' up the smells. The water blaster works particularly well, is simple to use, and cheap to buy. 5

plastic bags, labels and ties for bags

Plastic bags and ties are needed to store smells collected in some activities, and labels for labelling each individual smell. Ordinary plastic food bags work well for storing the smells, and standard adhesive paper labels or tie labels can be used to label the smell. 5

crayons for taking a rubbing of texture

Plain wax crayons and sheets of thin plain paper for making a rubbing of textures. 6

access to a kitchen

Access to a kitchen, and some basic ingredients for making biscuits and decorating biscuits (see recipe). Alternatively, you could buy some readymade biscuits (e.g. Rich Tea) for the activity. 7

cardboard box

A plain cardboard box which is big enough to store all of your sensory object that you collect. One the size of a shoe box would be fine, though bigger ones can also be used. It be helpful to first consider what things you might like to include inside your sensory box, and then decide on a box that will be large enough to accommodate them all.

assorted materials for sensory box

There is no limit to what you could include in your sensory box: photographs, illustrations, drawings, paintings, messages (handwritten or typed), materials such as cloth, straw, clay models, etc., etc. 8

objects for making sounds

For the sound-making activities, you will need an assortment of objects with which to make sounds. 4

talking Postcards

Talking postcards available from: 8

<http://www.tts-group.co.uk/shops/tts/Products/PD1727047/Talk-Time-Postcards-A6-10-Second/>

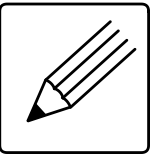
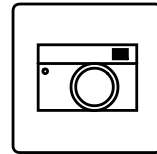
1. sensory expedition

In this activity you will explore the museum or heritage site you are visiting using **as many of your senses as possible**, collecting ideas and examples of where you used the different senses.

Think about the museum or heritage site in a sensory way, and look out for things that are visually interesting or have texture, sound, taste or smell.



what to do on the expedition



Whilst you are at the museum or heritage site, try to find things that are interesting to look at, or have an interesting texture, sound, taste or smell.

If you have a camera or a notepad and pencil then take a picture or make a sketch of things which you like to look at, or can smell, have a taste, a texture or make a sound.

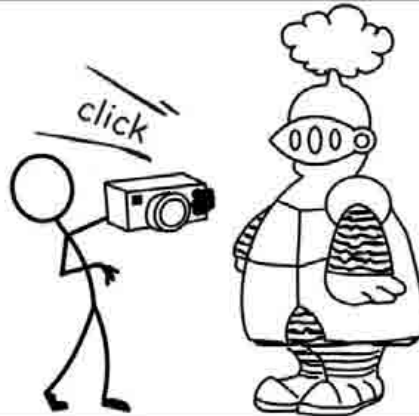


Taking a photograph of the afternoon tea.

The comic strip that follows is a summary of the sensory expedition.

SENSORY EXPEDITION

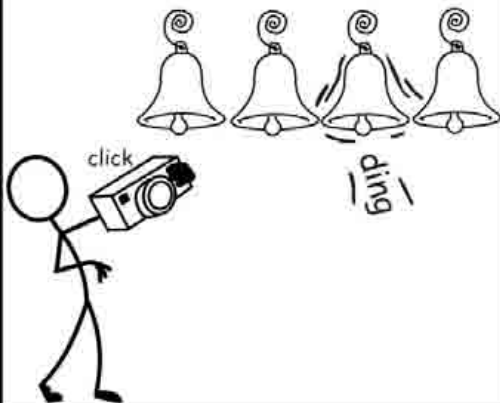
LOOK AROUND AND TAKE PICTURES OF THINGS THAT INTEREST YOU



Match the symbols below to the comic strip. For example, which frame is touch being used?



TAKE PICTURES OF THINGS WHICH MIGHT SOUND GOOD TO YOU



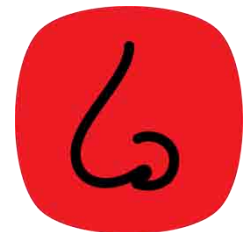
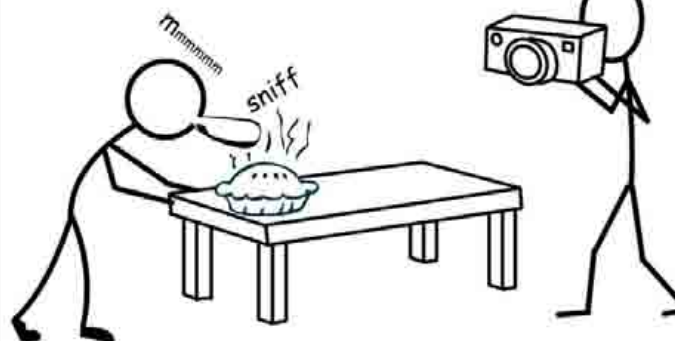
... THINGS WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO TASTE ...



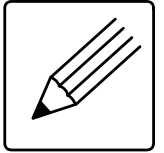
... THINGS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TOUCH








... AND THINGS YOU LIKE TO SMELL.



which senses did you use?



Use this worksheet to make a note of which senses you used during the expedition, and where the senses were used. You can then use this worksheet to remind you of where you used your different senses for other activities.

	What did you see?	
	Were there things you would like to have touched?	
	Were there things you would like to have smelled?	
	Were there things you would like to have tasted?	
	What did you hear?	

2. collecting sounds

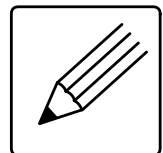
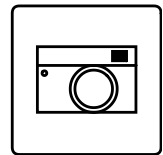
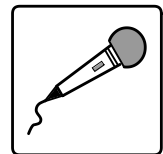


In this activity you will collect sounds from around the museum or heritage site, and create some of your own sounds which will remind you of things that you have seen (but might not have heard).

Listen for interesting sounds, and use a sound recorder to record the ones which you like the most.

You could also make a sketch or take a photograph of where each sound came from.

For example you might record sounds from a stately home: footsteps as you walk across a floor, or the sound of a creaking door or clock chimes.



The comic strip that follows is a summary of collecting sounds.

COLLECTING SOUNDS

LISTEN FOR SOUNDS



DING

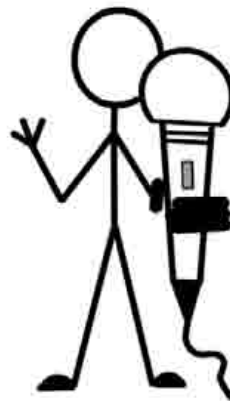
LISTEN

... AND MAKE A NOTE OR SKETCH OF WHAT THEY ARE.



SKETCH

IF YOU HAVE ONE, USE A SOUND RECORDER ...



... TO RECORD THE SOUNDS



RECORD

YOU COULD **PLAY** THEM BACK AND CHOOSE YOUR FAVOURITE SOUNDS LATER ON.

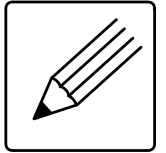


PLAY



**What sounds did
you hear?**

**Which sounds did
you like the most?**



**What made the
sounds?**

3. making sounds



For this part of the activity, you will create your own 'Foley' sound effects using everyday objects. For example, you could make the sound of horses walking on cobblestones by clapping together two coconut shells, or make the sound of crackling fire by popping bubble wrap.



Unless you have a stand to hold the microphone or recording device steady, it is best to work with another person when making sound effects, so that one person can hold the microphone steady whilst the other produces the effects.

making the sound of horses hooves on cobblestones.

This sound effect requires a pair of hollowed-out coconut shells. Clapping the two open ends together makes a very realistic sound of hooves on cobble stones. If you vary the speed and angle of the shells, the sound is more authentic. Try holding the shells at different distances from the recorder and see what distance produces the best effect.

making the sound of crackling fire.

There are several ways of accomplishing this. You can either squeeze bubblewrap, or use a piece of stiff cellophane - in either case, hold fairly close to the microphone for a clear effect. Both of these materials produce crackling sounds, and could be used together for an interesting effect. You might like to think of other ways or other materials that could be used to produce a similar sound effect.

walking on gravel.

For this, you will need a small box of gravel! You can either place the box on the floor and walk on the spot whilst recording, or slip a pair of shoes over your hands and walk on the gravel that way.

sword fighting.

You can make realistic sword fighting sounds hitting together a pair of large kitchen utensils, such as a soup ladle and roasting fork. They need to be metal for this to work!

make your own kitchen/parlour/dining room audio clip.

A more interesting sound clip could be made by staging a scene that reflects the venue that you (or your group) are visiting. For instance, if you are visiting a stately home you could recreate the sounds made by a dining room full of people. If you are with a group, each group member could take the part of a person in the room, such as a guest, a maid or servant, and produce the sounds which that person would have made. This does not need to be scripted!



The comic strip that follows is a summary of making sounds.

MAKING SOUNDS

YOU WILL NEED TO USE
A SOUND RECORDER ...



... TO RECORD SOUNDS THAT YOU WILL
MAKE YOURSELF.



crunch
crunch



FOR EXAMPLE YOU CAN USE COCONUT
SHELLS TO MAKE THE SOUNDS OF
HORSES HOOVES ...



OR BLOW THROUGH A STRAW INTO A
CUP OF WATER TO MAKE THE SOUND OF
BOILING WATER.

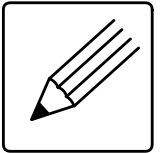




What sounds did you make?

Which sounds did you enjoy making the most?

Play back the sounds on a computer and share them with others.



other sounds you could try making

See if you can find things that will make the following sounds:

- An arrow hitting a tree
- The noise of farmyard animals
- The sounds of people sitting down to dinner and eating, the sounds of cutlery or plates
- A ghost!
- Trees rustling in the wind
- A creaky door opening
- Walking on a gravel path or cobble stones

What other noises can you think of that could be heard at your museum or heritage site? How could you make those sounds?

4. movie sound track



If you have access to a projector or TV, then a really fun follow-on activity is to make your own sound effects for a movie. It doesn't have to be a silent film - any short film clip with the sound turned down will work. This activity works really well with a group of people, where everyone can take part and make sound effects for the movie.

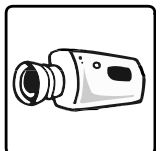
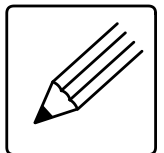


The image above shows members of Reading Mencap making a soundtrack to an old movie of a tractor in a field. They used ordinary everyday objects and improvised with them to make sounds that reminded them of the noises made by a tractor.

how to make you own movie sound effects

A short movie clip works well for this exercise - you could play one from Youtube, or one of the many other movie sites.

1. Start by playing your chosen movie clip. If it has sound, then make sure you turn the sound down first so that it is not audible. Whilst you are watching the clip, look for opportunities where you could add your own sound.
2. When you have chosen which sound you want to make, you will need to collect some objects with which to make the sounds.
3. Play back the movie again, and try making some of the sounds using the equipment you have collected. This will take several attempts, but it is usually good fun finding out what works!
4. When you have had one or two runs through the movie, then it is a good idea to either video your movie + soundtrack or just record the soundtrack. You can do this by pointing your video camera at the screen where your movie is playing, so you can capture the movie and record your sound track at the same time. If you record only the sound, then you can play it back over the movie and watch the movie clip with your own sound added.



5. collecting smells



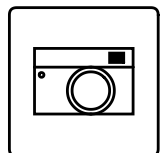
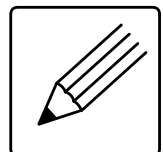
In this activity you will collect smells from around the museum or heritage site, and think about how you could make some of your own.

You can easily collect smells from around you using a bicycle pump or a water blaster and an ordinary plastic bag (see images below).



left: an inexpensive waterblaster; right a standard bicycle pump.

Use the pump or waterblaster to suck up the smell, and then blow it into a plastic bag. Seal the bag with tape, string or an elastic band and label it so that you know what it contains. Take a phot of all the bags of smells you collect.



The comic strip that follows is a summary of collecting smells.

COLLECTING SMELLS

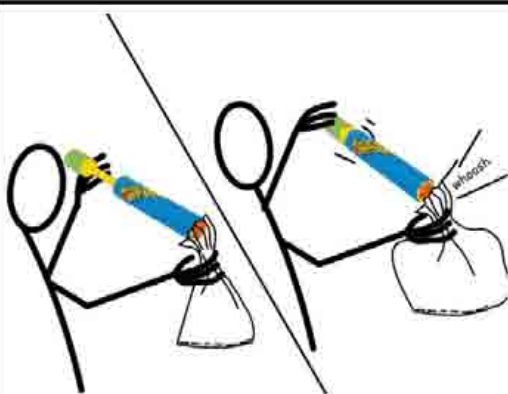
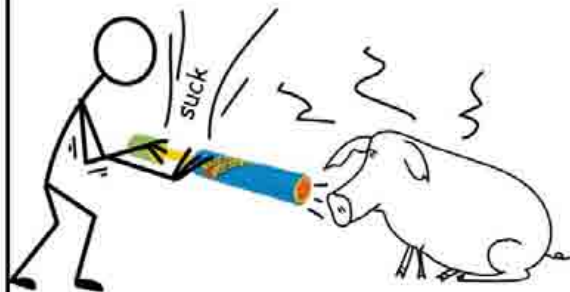
SMELLS CAN COME
FROM MANY PLACES



YOU CAN COLLECT THEM USING A
SUCKER AND PLASTIC BAG!



FIRST SUCK THE SMELL
INTO THE SUCKER ---



THEN BLOW THE SMELL OUT
INTO A BAG.

tie at top

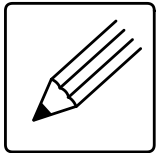
label

TIE THE BAG
AND LABEL IT
SO YOU
KNOW WHAT
IS IN IT!



Make a note of which smells you liked the most and which you liked the least.
Do you know where the smells came from or what made them?

	<p>What smells did you like the most?</p> <p>Which smells did you like the least?</p>	
	<p>What made the smells?</p> <p>Where did the smells come from?</p>	



6. collecting textures

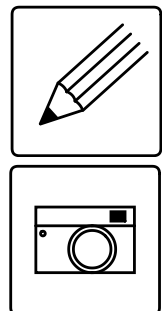


In this activity you will collect textures and patterns from the surfaces, make some biscuits using these textures and add flavours that remind you of things you have experienced.

You can feel the texture of all things around you - wooden objects, clothing, hair, carpet - everything you touch. In this activity, you will collect textures or surface patterns, and decorate biscuits with them.

making a rubbing of a texture

If you like the look or feel of a surface or texture, you can make a rubbing using a crayon and piece of paper, but the paper must not be too thick. You could also take photographs of the texture.

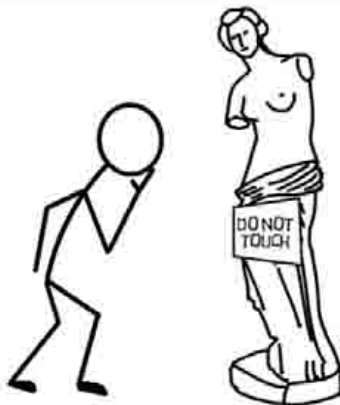


The comic strip that follows is a summary of the texture activity.

COLLECTING TEXTURES

COLLECT TEXTURES OR SURFACE PATTERNS FROM AROUND YOU.

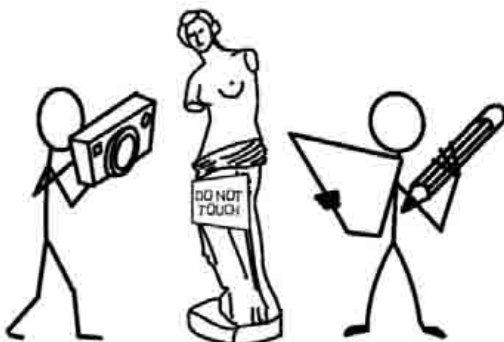
LOOK FOR THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO TOUCH, BUT NOT ALLOWED TO ...



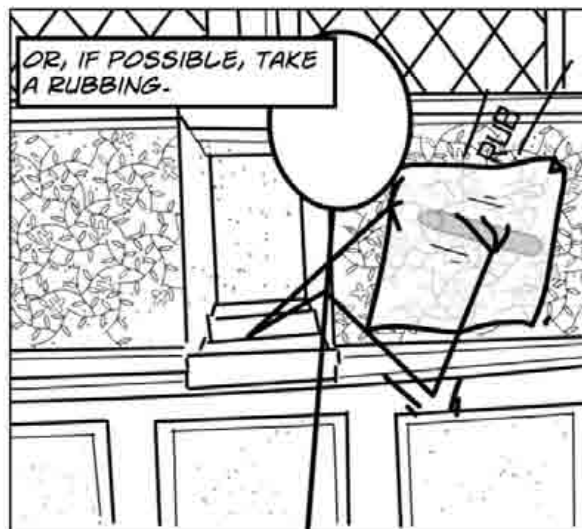
... AND THINGS YOU ARE ALLOWED TO TOUCH!



SKETCH OR PHOTOGRAPH THEM ...



OR, IF POSSIBLE, TAKE A RUBBING.



7. baking textures



For this part of the activity, you will bake your own biscuits using ideas you have collected about surfaces and textures in the museum or heritage site. If you don't have access to an oven you could just use readymade plain biscuits (e.g. Rich Tea) and decorate them with icing patterns.

Use photographs or rubbings of any patterns or textures that appeal to you - you can then use these in this activity to make and decorate some biscuits.

basic biscuit dough recipe (makes about 30 biscuits)

- Preparation time: 5 minutes
- Cooking time: 15 minutes
- Vegetarian

ingredients

250g butter, softened
140g caster sugar
1 egg yolk
2 tsp (5ml) vanilla extract



In this recipe vanilla is used to flavour the biscuits. **What other flavours could you use instead? What flavours would remind you of the museum or heritage site?**

method

1. Heat oven to 180°C / 160°C fan oven / gas mark 4.
2. Mix 250g softened butter and 140g caster sugar in a large bowl with a wooden spoon.
3. Add 1 egg yolk and 2 tsp vanilla extract and briefly beat to combine and any food colour you wish.
4. Sift over 300g plain flour and stir until the mixture is well combined - you might need to get your hands in at the end to give everything a really good mix and press the dough together.
5. Use cutters of shapes to make biscuits referring to your collection of textures press in patterns and textures that remind you of your texture collection expedition.
6. Put the biscuits into the oven for 15 mins. When cooked, remove the biscuits from the oven and allow them to cool down.



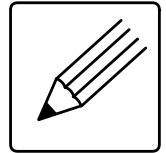
7. Once cool, decorate! You could use ready-made tubes of icing or mix your own with icing sugar and water and food colouring.
8. When the biscuits have been decorated, photograph them and then eat them!





**Which textures did
you like the most?**

**Which textures did
you like the least?**



**Which tastes did
you like the most?**

8. sensory labels



what is a sensory label?

Most museums and heritage sites provide information about objects on display using **textual** labels. A 'sensory label' can be thought of as a sensory replacement for a textual label, making use of other senses such as sound, texture and smells. For this activity, you can make you own sensory label using a 'talking postcard' which can be purchased from the link below.



You will also need a **standard plain postcard**.

how to make your own sensory label



1. Start by thinking of an idea for your label: you could choose an object in a museum, or you could make the sensory label about yourself or something you have experienced. You will then decorate your sensory label using this theme that relates to your chosen object or idea.
2. Decorate the label with pictures that you have drawn yourself, or photographs, or images cut out from a magazine, etc.
3. The talking postcards allow you to record a short sound clip (about 10 seconds). So you will need to think of a sound that relates to your object or yourself, find a quiet place to record the sound and then record it onto the card by pressing the red button on the rear of the card.
4. It is a good idea to cover the red button with a standard postcard to prevent accidental recording once you are happy with your recorded sound.
5. Choose a texture, such as some cloth, paper, foil, etc., that relates to the object or yourself and add to the card.
6. In the little bag that comes with the card you could add a smell such as an essential oil on cotton wool, or some other smell that relates to your object, or which you personally like.
7. Remember to switch the card off to save the battery.

talking Postcards

You can buy talking postcards from:

<http://www.tts-group.co.uk/shops/tts/Products/PD1727047/Talk-Time-Postcards-A6-10-Second/>

examples of sensory labels

The images below show some of the sensory labels developed by the Tower Group in London. Notice that some of the pictures and textures are a bit bigger than the card - this is fine!

