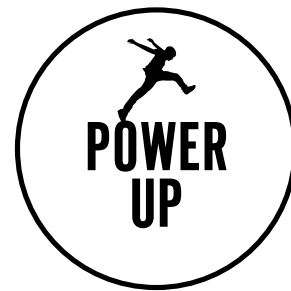


# TASTING EXPERT

5-6 year old



[1 OF 3]

## SUGGESTED DURATION

± 20 minutes (at activity leader's discretion). Ideally there should be one activity leader for every 8 to 10 kids, to encourage discussion (depending on group size and available material).

## GOALS

- Help children learn to discover foods using all 5 senses
- Discover aromas and the memories they can trigger, discover textures, be able to identify flavors, learn that the sense of smell plays a role in the taste of foods in the mouth, discover other sensations (e.g., spicy, bubbly)
- Learn more about their own personal tastes
- Develop an appropriate vocabulary to talk about different foods and their sensory characteristics.

## MATERIAL

### For the group:

- 1 **Sensory Chart Age 5–6** to be laminated (p. 3 of 3)

### Per child:

- One pair of foods (your choice) from the list of **Suggested foods** (p. 2 of 3).
- One paper napkin
- Dishware and cutlery for tasting sessions (small cups and plates, and utensils, as required)



**IMPORTANT: CHECK BEFOREHAND  
WHETHER ANY OF THE CHILDREN  
HAVE ALLERGIES.**

## HOW TO PROCEED

The activity leader follows the **Tasting steps** (p. 2 of 3) to guide the children in their sensory discovery of food pairs. The two foods are sampled at the same time (it is easier for younger children to express what they experience by comparing 2 foods).

For each step the activity leader proposes 2 tasting phases:

1. **Individual tasting:** Each child samples the food calmly, on their own. The activity leader asks questions to help them. This individual phase allows kids to explore foods without being unduly influenced by the others and to learn to trust their own instincts when it comes to their perceptions and preferences. For 5- and 6-year-olds this is a very short phase, but it is important nonetheless.
2. **Group discussion:** The activity leader asks the kids the questions again and invites them to answer out loud in front of the group. They can refer to the laminated **Sensory chart** as needed. Kids this age tend to make comparisons to describe sensations: "It's like a carrot", "It looks like a starry sky!" The activity leader can suggest a familiar word to help the children (crunchy, spotted), keeping in mind that each child perceives things differently.

The taste of a food is an experience that draws on all the senses! It is hard for a young child to break down the experience, one sense at a time. Her comments may be entirely spontaneous and in no particular order. It is important that the activity leader accept her comments without judgement and without insisting on any special order.

## KEY MESSAGES TO REPEAT DURING THE ACTIVITY

*"There is no right or wrong answer! Taste is personal—it varies from one person to the next. You may like, love, or hate a food. The important thing is to explore it with whatever senses you choose—your eyes, nose, fingers...!" Urge children to try a food, but never force them.*

## TAKING IT ONE STEP FURTHER

Repeat the same activity with another pair of foods from the list, invent a different food pairing, use 2 snack foods, etc.

# TASTING EXPERT

5-6 year old



[2 OF 3]

## SUGGESTED FOODS

Food pairs made up of one familiar food popular among kids and another less familiar and possibly less popular

### Examples:

- Half a strawberry vs. cranberry or other berry with a taste that kids may find unusual or surprising (e.g., blackcurrant, very tart)
- Cube of cheddar vs. cube of stronger local cheese, with a different texture or a soft-ripened cheese
- Half a slice of cucumber vs. slice of radish
- Slice of raw carrot vs. slice of raw beet
- Slice of white bread vs. slice of brown bread with crust
- Piece of milk chocolate vs. piece of dark chocolate (70% cacao, not too bitter)
- Piece of orange vs. piece of grapefruit
- Piece of Rice Krispie square vs. piece of brownie or other moist cake
- Apple juice vs. apple juice mixed with sparkling water
- Mint leaf vs. piece of cinnamon stick (do not bite the stick; scratch it with a fingernail and taste the cinnamon powder on fingers)

## TASTING STEPS

At each step the kids can refer to the **Sensory chart** or come up with other words that spring to mind during the tasting.

### 3. Look at it!

- *Have you ever seen this food before? Does it look appetizing?*
- *How would you describe it (color, shape, size, look, etc.)?*

Blind taste tests are not recommended at this age as they can make young children feel insecure.

### 4. Touch it with your fingers, lips, and tongue!

- *Do you like the feel of it?*
- *How would you describe the texture? Which of the foods is heavier? Is it cold or hot?*

### 5. Smell it!

- *Do you like the smell of it? Why?*
- *How would you describe the smell? Does it remind you of anything, like a food or dish, a place you've been before, a person?*

### 6. Taste it!

- *Pinch your nose while tasting the food. Continue chewing, then unpinch your nose. Does it taste different now? Your nose plays an important role in how foods taste!*
- *Did you like the flavor(s)? Why? Did you think it tasted salty? acidic? bitter? sweet?*
- *What other feelings did you notice in your mouth? Was it spicy? bubbly?*
- *Did you like the texture? Why? Did you recognize the same texture you described in Step 2?*

### 7. Survey (show of hands)

- *Who preferred Food A? Who preferred Food B?*

Young children often find it hard to choose. Taking a stance is part of the learning process.

## ACTIVITY LEADER'S ATTITUDE

The activity leader creates a calm and welcoming atmosphere, is smiling and pleasant, encourages group discussion and individual participation, and makes sure each child's tastes are respected, whatever they may be.

The activity leader respects the pace of each child. For example one child may spontaneously taste the food while for another, just touching it with their fingers may already be a challenge.

The activity leader samples the foods together with the children, to help put them at ease, and expresses her appreciation. If she doesn't like the food, she should feel free to say so, but should show her willingness to use her other senses to set an example, e.g., "I don't really like this food, but I'm going to get a sense of it by smelling it with my nose."

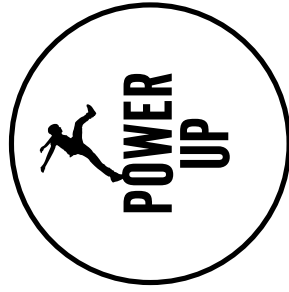


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# TASTING EXPERT SENSORY CHART

Age  
**5-6**



[3 OF 3]

APPRECIATION OF FLAVOR*	DESCRIPTION OF FLAVORS AND OTHER SENSATIONS	DESCRIPTION OF TEXTURES	
I don't like it 	<b>SALTY</b> like salt 	<b>LUMPY</b> texture like oatmeal 	<b>DRY</b> texture like crackers 
I like it a bit 	<b>SOUR</b> like lemons 	<b>CRUNCHY</b> texture like carrots 	<b>FLESHY</b> texture like cantaloupe 
I like it a lot 	<b>BITTER</b> like dark chocolate 	<b>STRINGY</b> texture like celery 	<b>CRISPY</b> texture like chips 
I love it! 	<b>SWEET</b> like sugar 	<b>MELT-IN-YOUR-MOUTH</b> texture like chocolate 	<b>JUICY</b> texture like watermelon 
<p><i>*The flavor of a food is an experience that involves all the senses.</i></p> <p>Note: Participants can also describe the smell, which may remind them of Grandma's cottage, Christmas cookies, a walk in the woods in the fall, or other memories. They can also name the source of the smell (it smells like mint, roses, toast, etc.) These are all ways to help kids express and develop their tastes!</p>	<b>SPICY</b> like radish 	<b>SOFT</b> texture like bread 	<b>CREAMY</b> texture like yogurt 
	<b>BUBBLY</b> like sparkling water 	<b>RUBBERY</b> texture like shrimp 	<b>SMOOTH</b> texture like pudding 