

Sniff: Teachers' notes and tips: upper-intermediate

1. Pre-reading tasks

- a. Elicit the five senses: taste, sight, touch, hearing and smell. Tell students the lesson will be about smell.

Tip: use realia

It would be great to bring in some smells; ground coffee, flowers, vinegar, perfumed soap, mothballs, nails varnish etc. Get students to sniff them, do they agree which ones smell nice? (You could try some blind-smelling too).

- b. Ask students to think about
- i their favourite smell.
 - ii a smell that reminds them of their childhood.
 - iii a smell they don't like.

Tip: do an example first

My favourite smell is vanilla. Boiled cabbage or custard reminds me of when I was a schoolgirl, and I really hate the smell of petrol. Give students time to do this - the more time they have to think about this the more they will enjoy the reading.

- c. Put students into pairs and ask them to compare their smells – monitor and listen out for any amusing comments to share with everyone.
- d. We may imagine a life without sight but what about not being able to smell? Put students into small groups and ask them what are the disadvantages of not smelling, and are there any advantages? Students write their ideas on the worksheet.

Tip: be sensitive to the subject

There may well be students in the class with disabilities. That doesn't mean the subject can't be discussed but be aware of Joanna's comment in the second to last paragraph.

2. Reading tasks

- a. Give each student a copy of the text to read as quickly as possible –they know Joanna can't smell, but what else can't she do? (Answer: taste)

- b. Students read the text more slowly and compare their ideas with those in the text. Did they think of the same things? Any surprises?

Tip: avoid ‘testing’ comprehension questions

Comparing their ideas with those found in the text is still a form of comprehension and helps students to understand the text. And don’t forget to get them to react to the content too.

3. Post-reading tasks

- a. *Smell* is an interesting word. Not only is it both a noun and a verb but it’s a normal verb and copula verb too (it refers back to the subject). Write *He smells* on the board and ask students to identify the two meanings.
- b. Students re-read the text and record *smell* synonyms on the worksheet.

Smell as a noun	Smell as a verb
aroma / scent / stink / odour / perfume	to sniff / to inhale / to pong

- c. Ask students which noun can also be a verb? (stink) Which verb can also refer back to the subject? (pong)
- d. Now students have to match the nouns and verbs with an appropriate object. Provide students with dictionaries so that they can check meaning (including which are positive, negative or neutral words) and find collocations.
- e. Refer students back to their original smells and to make a sentence using the new nouns.

Tip: do an example first

I think vanilla is a lovely *aroma*, the *smell* of boiled cabbage or custard reminds me of when I was a schoolgirl, and petrol *stinks*!

- f. Either for homework or in class get students to make a list of nouns and verbs which are synonyms for *sight*. A thesaurus is ideal for this, or a good dictionary.
- g. Then tell students to imagine they have another disability that is not so obvious to others: they are colour blind. They cannot tell the difference between red and green. How did they realise they had this disability?

What are the advantages and disadvantages? How can they prove this? What is the reaction of others? Students should make notes to these questions.

- h. Now the students have to write a magazine article similar to that about Joanna. They need to include the answers to the above questions (each one can be a paragraph) and a range of vocabulary for *sight*.

Tip: link the reading to a writing task

The students really have to put themselves in the shoes of a colour-blind person and use their imagination. Providing challenging writing tasks can be motivating - but help the weaker ones.

Tip: link the reading to a speaking activity

Perhaps students can take a significant time from their lives (the day they realised they were different?) and prepare a role-play. It can be improvised or scripted.