

# Summer Scavenger Hunt!



Scientists and artists are experts at noticing things. When they find something interesting or surprising, they look closely, making sketches or notes from their observations. The natural world can surprise and delight us. Head out on your own sensory scavenger hunt. What will you discover?

The more you look, the more you see. Take a notebook, camera or sketchpad and share your finds with us [@ScienceAtLife](#).

## SAFETY

Make sure you take an adult outside with you.

- ☐ Find a strong smell. Is it a pleasant smell, or stinky?

Describe how it makes you feel:

- ☐ Which flower smells best to you? What colour is it?

Draw it, or take a photograph.

- ☐ Can you detect a subtle smell? Where did you find it? Describe the smell:



## Did you know?

Engineers have created the electronic nose, inspired by how animals can smell. These "E-noses" can be used to judge how fresh food is and its flavour, without having to eat it!

## Do you ever find yourself noticing?

Musical instruments like recorders, drums and double bass often mimic sounds from nature. For instance, recorders may echo birdsong, while drums emulate heartbeat, and double bass sounds a bit like thunder.



- ☐ Listen closely. Can you hear a sound you didn't notice straight away? Describe how it makes you feel:

- ☐ Create your own sounds using objects around you. Can you make a tune? Or a beat?

- ☐ What is the loudest sound you can hear? Is it natural, or man-made? Describe how it sounds:

- ☐ Point out something colourful.  
Can you spot any patterns?

Describe how the colours make you feel:

- ☐ Can you find any wildlife? Look on the ground, on water, or up in the sky.  
Can you draw what you find? Or take a photograph of it?

- ☐ Look for your reflection. This might be on a watery surface, or in a window.

Where did you see yourself?

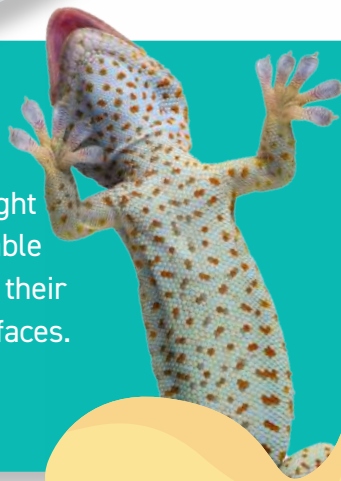
## Harnessing nature to travel faster...

Engineers noticed that kingfishers dive into water with barely a splash. This bird's beak inspired them to streamline the front of bullet trains, making high speed travel more efficient.



## Sticky situations, hairy applications!

Geckos can support 20 times their body weight and remain stuck to a surface! This remarkable capability is due to the microscopic hairs on their feet, which help attach them strongly to surfaces. Inspired by this, engineers are developing rescue robots that can climb up walls.



- ☐ Find a tree, flower, or other plant. How many different textures does it have?

Describe how they feel to touch:

- ☐ Can you find shade underneath a tree? Which is warmest to touch, the grass in the shade, or the grass in the sun?

- ☐ Stand still and close your eyes. Can you feel a breeze? Or the warmth of the sunshine? How about when you face the other way?

- ☐ Wait for some rain. Can you catch raindrops on your tongue?

Describe how they taste:

- ☐ Find a great spot for a picnic. What's your favourite food that you took with you?

- ☐ Close your eyes. Now take a bite of your favourite food. Really focus on all of those tasty flavours.

Describe how this makes you feel:

## Why are lemons sour?

Acidic food contains an abundance of hydrogen ions ( $H^+$ ). When you eat a lemon, sour taste receptors on your tongue are triggered by these ions, resulting in a neural response to your brain, which interprets the food as sour.



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