

2: Using Your Senses

Based on the Alabama quarter reverse



OBJECTIVES

Students will read an age-appropriate text to learn about the woman featured on Alabama’s quarter reverse, Helen Keller. They will also conduct a science exploration of the five senses.



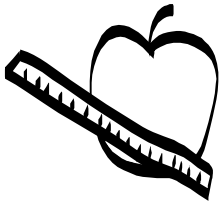
MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Alabama quarter reverse
- 1 class map of the United States of America
- 1 copy of an age-appropriate text that relates to the life of Helen Keller, such as:
 - *Young Helen Keller: Woman of Courage* by Anne Benjamin
 - *A Picture Book of Helen Keller* by David A. Adler
 - *A Girl Named Helen Keller* by Margo Lundell
 - *Helen Keller: Courage in the Dark* by Johanna Hurwitz
- Chart paper
- Markers
- 1 set of headphones per student (optional)
- 4 paper bags per group of students
- Small items to place in the paper bags (1 item per bag), such as:
 - Coins
 - Pine cones
 - Cotton balls
 - Peppermint, cinnamon stick, or, if necessary, other items that are recognizable but not allergenic to your students
 - Dominoes
 - Batteries
 - Checker pieces
- Copies of the “What’s in the Bag” worksheet
- Copies of “The Spirit of Courage” worksheet



PREPARATIONS

- Make an overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Alabama quarter reverse.
- Locate a text that relates to the life of Helen Keller (see examples under “Materials”).



Exploring the Five Senses

- Make copies of the “What’s in the Bag?” worksheet (1 copy per student).
- Make copies of “The Spirit of Courage” worksheet (1 copy per student).
- Number the bags from 1 to 4.
- Put an item in each bag, making sure that bags with the same number contain the same objects.



GROUPING

- Whole group
- Small groups



CLASS TIME

Two or three 20- to 30-minute sessions



CONNECTIONS

- Language Arts
- Science
- Social Studies



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Reverse (back)
- Helen Keller
- Blind
- Deaf
- Courage
- Brave
- Braille
- The five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing)



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

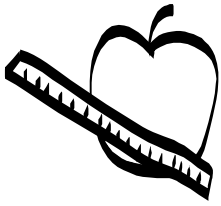
Students should have a basic knowledge of the five senses.



STEPS

Session 1

1. Describe the 50 State Quarters® Program for background information, if necessary, using the example of your own state, if available. Then display the transparency or photocopy of the Alabama quarter reverse. Locate Alabama on a classroom map. Note its position in relation to your school’s location.
2. With the students, examine the design on this coin’s reverse. Ask students to point out what they see on this coin, paying particular attention to the image of Helen Keller, the braille writing, and the words “Spirit of Courage.” Ask students if they know who the woman is on the coin.



Using Your Senses

3. Select an appropriate children's text about the life of Helen Keller and, as a group, preview the text and illustrations. Invite students to generate predictions about what is occurring at different points in the story.
4. Read this story aloud to the group. During the reading attend to any unfamiliar vocabulary.

Session 2 (and 3 if necessary)

1. With the students, revisit the story about Helen Keller. In discussing the loss of Helen Keller's sight and hearing, ask students if they've ever been in a dark place where there was very little light. How were they able to find their way around? Students should mention the use of different senses to move through the room.

Note: This is a good opportunity to introduce or review the 5 senses with students.

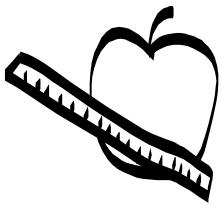
2. Discuss whether students have ever known anyone who is missing their vision or hearing. Explain that the class will explore what senses could be relied on if the sense of sight or hearing couldn't be used.
3. Divide the students into groups of four and assign each group to a science station.
4. At the science stations, distribute four numbered paper bags, each containing a different item (ideas for these items are listed in the Materials section). Each group's bags should contain the same items.
5. Distribute a "What's in the Bag?" worksheet, and a set of headphones to each student. Explain that the students will close their eyes and wear the headphones as they make observations about the items in the paper bags to make use of their senses other than sight and hearing.

Note: At this point, introduce the idea that in a science exploration like this, one should never use the sense of taste, because the item may not be good for your body.

6. Using an item not utilized in the science stations, model how students are to make observations.
7. Give students a short period of time to fill in their observations of each item on their worksheet, and alert them when it is time to rotate their bag to the next student in the group.

Note: Beginning writers may need to employ inventive spelling or illustrations to describe what is in the bag.

8. When students have made observations of the items in all four bags, review the observation sheets as a class. Ask students what they wrote in each blank.
9. After discussing student guesses, reveal the items in the bags one at a time. Have the students draw a picture of what was in each bag on their worksheets.



Using Your Senses

10. As a group discuss the five senses and adaptations people make to compensate for missing senses.
11. Revisit the Alabama quarter and look at the words that say “Spirit of Courage.” Prompt students to think about the difficulty of the exploration they just conducted and discuss why Helen Keller is considered courageous.
12. As a class, discuss times when students feel they were brave. List responses on the board.
13. Distribute the “Spirit of Courage” worksheet and have students choose a time when they were brave. Have them complete the sentence on this worksheet and draw a picture to accompany their writing.



ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

- For advanced students, place 2 items in each bag that have similar physical qualities (such as a postcard and a photograph, or a marble and a gumball). Have students use their senses of smell and touch to try to tell the differences between the items in the bag. Once the two items have been revealed, have your students explain (whether through written or oral expression) their experience with this puzzle.
- Introduce students to braille as a method of communication that requires the sense of touch. Share a sample of braille text (such as the braille alphabet) and instruct your students to write their names in braille using raised circular objects such as Cheerios, M&Ms, or metal washers.



DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

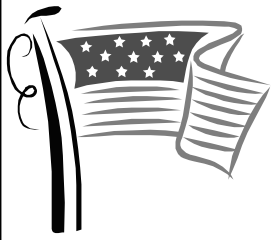
- Students can dictate their sentences about their courageous experience to their teacher and trace over those letters, before illustrating their words.
- Make connections to the strategies used by exceptional students within the school or classroom to make the lesson more meaningful for the students.



HPC CONNECTIONS

For another coin-related science activity, invite your students to use their keen senses of observation to “Check Out Your Change!” You can find this and other fun classroom activities in the Teacher Feature Stockroom (in the Teachers’ section) on HPC (http://www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?FileContents=/kids/teachers/TF_CheckOutYourChange.cfm).


NAME _____



What's in the Bag? (1)



DIRECTIONS

Fill in the blanks with words that describe what you **feel**, **smell**, and **think** about the items in each bag. In the box, draw  and label a picture of what is really in each bag.

Bag 1: This item feels



_____.

It smells



_____.

I think there is a _____
in this bag.

Bag 2: This item feels



_____.

It smells



_____.

I think there is a _____
in this bag.


NAME _____



What's in the Bag? (2)



DIRECTIONS

Fill in the blanks with words that describe what you **feel**, **smell**, and **think** about the items in each bag. In the box, draw  and label a picture of what is really in each bag.

Bag 3: This item feels



_____.

It smells



_____.

I think there is a _____
in this bag.

A large, empty rectangular box intended for drawing and labeling the contents of Bag 3.

Bag 4: This item feels



_____.

It smells



_____.

I think there is a _____
in this bag.

A large, empty rectangular box intended for drawing and labeling the contents of Bag 4.

NAME _____



The Spirit of Courage

I was brave when



Alabama Quarter Reverse

