



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2009 Volume VI: The Brain in Health and Disease

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## **Sensing Our Five Senses**

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by Carol Boynton

We rely on our five senses to provide information about the world around us. The thought of a holiday dinner brings to mind the delight of many senses - the smell of dinner cooking, the sound of holiday music, the taste of fresh baked sweets, and more. Experiences like this engage our combined senses. In fact, at every moment of our day, at least one of our senses is hard at work, supplying our brain with needed information to make decisions, be safe, enjoy ourselves, and become smarter.

This unit is designed to get first grade students involved in hands-on sensorial experiments. My hypothesis is that young students need to actively participate as scientists, not just observe demonstrations by the teacher or look at examples in books. Too many young children today are exposed to "information" from the world of computers, television, video games, and other synthesized media. Their knowledge is based on limited sensorial experiences, or even experiences with the wrong sense, for example seeing food being cooked on television or watching someone petting a dog. This curriculum unit will provide learning through true sensorial experiences. By giving students a chance to have these experiences, their brains will truly "grow smarter" as a result.

(Developed for Science, grade 1; recommended for Science, grades K-2)

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