Animal Sense of Smell
(NatureScope Amazing Mammals I: Page 8-9)

Fifth Grade Core: Standard 5 Objective 2
Describe how some characteristics could give a species a survival advantage in a particular environment.

Activity 1: The Nose Knows
1. Before the activity, make ten (or more) scent containers using empty film canisters and cotton balls. First soak each cotton ball in a different flavoring or scent (lemon, vanilla, orange, maple, root beer) and put each in a canister. You can also use chocolate chips, orange peel, pine needles, or other fragrant items.
2. Tell the students that they're going to see if they can recognize different odors.
3. Have them sit in a circle and pass around each canister one at a time.
4. Either have the students write what they think it is or discuss it after everyone has had a chance to smell.
5. To finish this activity, discuss why it would be important for animals to have a good sense of smell—how it would be an adaptation (smell predators, loses its prey, eat rotten food, and won’t recognize its baby or relatives).

Activity 2: Keeping Track of Baby
1. Before the activity, get enough scents to have a different scent for each pair of students in the class. Put a number on the lid of the film canister and the same number on the bottom of the canister.
2. Divide the group into two teams: one team is the mammal mothers and the other is the mammal babies group.
3. Explain that each species of mammal has a scent that is different from those of other mammals. Also tell them that mammal mothers instinctively know their baby’s scent.
4. “Mothers” stand at one end of the room and “babies” stand at other end of the room. Give the mothers a film canister with a scent in it (every mother needs a different scent that matches with a baby). They have to memorize the scent. Then, they keep the canister lid.
5. Give the bottom of the canister (with the scent still inside) to the babies.
6. Now, the mothers try to remember their scent and find their baby!
7. After the game is played, discuss how a good sense of smell is an adaptation for animals.