

# Observation

What is an observation?

## Concept Attainment Strategy

1) The teacher provides examples and non-examples of the concept. These can often be presented as a "Yes" (examples) and a "No" (non-examples).

2) Examples and non-examples are presented one set at a time.

Teacher has students focus on what the examples have in common (common attributes).. The teacher may provide other instructions, depending on age, complexity of the concept, and student familiarity with concept attainment. (eg. "Focus on the examples' properties rather than their locations").

Teacher also suggests to look at the non-examples and identify what attribute may be missing that makes it a non-example.

Developing opposite concepts (eg. cause and effect) can be accomplished by making a "Group A" and a "Group B." Group A becomes the example for one concept and Group B the non-examples of the other concept, and vice-versa.

3) As examples and non-examples are presented, students are asked to hypothesize about the concept. In other words, students try to identify the essential attributes of the concept (and all the examples. If a student thinks she knows what the attributes are, she should provide an example rather than state what the attributes are to give others the opportunity to keep thinking.

4) Teacher encourages students to share the thinking that occurred during the process.

eg. "I thought the examples were \_\_\_\_\_, but when you presented the \_\_\_\_\_ example, my hypothesis did not fit any more."

5) When the concept and essential attributes are identified,

the teacher can provide examples and non-examples for students to classify as examples or non-examples and justify their classification; the students can be asked to find or generate more examples.

# What is an Observation?



**Yes**

**The baby is  
wearing a  
yellow bow.**

**No**

**The baby's  
mother made  
the bow.**



**Yes**

**The baby is  
wearing a  
yellow bow.**

**The baby is  
smiling.**

**No**

**The baby's  
mother made  
the bow.**

**The baby is  
happy to see a  
kitten.**



Yes	No
The baby is wearing a yellow bow.	The baby's mother made the bow.
The baby is smiling.	The baby is happy to see a kitten.
The baby is on a blanket.	The blanket was a gift.



Yes	No
The baby is wearing a yellow bow.	The baby's mother made the bow.
The baby is smiling.	The baby is happy to see a kitten.
The baby is on a blanket.	The blanket was a gift.
Can you make another observation?	



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Yes

The plant is prickly.

No

I think this is calla a Burr



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Yes

The bark is rough.

No

This is an old tree.

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Yes

The mirror is smooth.

No

I can see myself in the mirror.



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Yes

Can you make another observation for any of the objects?



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**Yes**

**The lemon is  
sour.**

**No**

**Lemons grow  
on trees.**



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**Yes**

**No**

**The lemon is  
sour.**

**Lemons grow  
on trees.**

**The pepper is  
hot.**

**I don't like hot  
food.**

**Can you make an observation  
about the object below?**







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Yes	No
<b>The pond smells a bit stinky.</b>	<b>Ponds are important.</b>
<b>The city traffic smells like gas.</b>	<b>I live in a city</b>
<b>Can you make another observation?</b>	



Close your eyes  
and listen.

What  
observations can  
you make?

Yes	No
I can hear the teacher next door.	The teacher next door is Ms. Smith.

Close your eyes  
and listen.

What  
observations can  
you make?

Yes	No
I can hear the teacher next door.	The teacher next door is Ms. Smith.
I hear a buzzing.	I don't know where the buzzing is coming from

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Can you make another observation?	

*What is an  
Observation?*

*An observation  
is what we  
notice with our  
senses.*



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*What are some observations you could make if you were standing here?*

## **Students**

### **Educators**

1. *Use their senses, as appropriate, for making observations of objects, places and events in their surroundings*

**Provide intentional opportunities for students to actively use all of their senses (e.g., sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, etc.) in multiple different contexts.**

**Model how to safely use the senses to make observations (e.g., do not taste anything unless a trusted adult says it is okay; be aware of students' food or other allergies).**

1. *Use tools and instruments to extend their capacity to observe both qualitatively and quantitatively*

**Provide students with opportunities to practice using age-appropriate tools that extend their ability to observe (e.g., the proper use of magnifying lenses, microscopes, thermometers, rulers, measuring tapes, simple balance scales).**

1. *Observe in order to notice details (e.g., characteristics and properties of objects and events such as colour, shape, size, pattern, texture, temperature, duration)*