VIII

Verbs of the Senses

TVerbs of the senses—such as "**see**," "**hear**," "**taste**," "**smell**," and "**feel**"—have both literal and figurative uses, and understanding these can add depth to language comprehension and usage. At an advanced level, it's crucial to recognize how these verbs can operate as both **stative** and **dynamic** verbs, and how they can be used **metaphorically** or **idiomatically**.

Stative vs. Dynamic Usage

Stative: These verbs describe a state or condition when referring to perception or senses.
For example: "I see the Eiffel Tower" (perception) or "This feels soft" (sensation).

Dynamic: When these verbs describe an action or process, they often take a progressive form.
For example: "I am tasting the wine" (the action of trying the flavor) or "She is feeling the fabric" (actively touching to assess).

Figurative and Metaphorical Use

These verbs often extend beyond literal sensory perception to convey emotions, mental processes, or abstract concepts. For instance, "I see your point" (understand) or "This experience left a bad taste in my mouth" (bad experience).

Idiomatic Expressions

Verbs of the senses are frequently used in idioms and fixed expressions, where they might not directly relate to the physical senses.
For example: "I smell a rat" (suspect something is wrong) or "I hear you" (I understand and empathize).

Sensory Verbs and Adjectives

Often paired with adjectives to describe experiences, these verbs can convey nuanced perceptions and emotional states, such as "The victory tastes sweet" or "The silence feels eerie."

Perceptual and Experiential Contexts

Verbs of the senses can describe both the external sensory experience and internal, subjective interpretation.
"I see red when I'm angry." (Expresses an emotional reaction rather than actual visual perception)

Multiple Meanings in Sensory Verbs

Many verbs of the senses have multiple meanings and can be used in different contexts to express varied concepts.
"See" can mean to understand intellectually, not just to perceive visually.
"Feel" can extend to emotional states or opinions, not just tactile sensations.

Verbs of the Senses with Examples:

See: Beyond visual perception, "see" can indicate understanding ("Now I see what you mean"), foreseeing or predicting ("I can't see this ending well"), or experiencing ("I've seen better days").

Hear: Apart from auditory experiences, "hear" can refer to receiving news ("I heard you got the job") or being legally acknowledged ("The case will be heard next week").

Taste: Beyond flavor, "taste" can describe a brief experience of something ("She tasted fame early in her career") or refer to aesthetic judgment ("He has good taste in music").

Smell: Besides olfactory sensation, "smell" can imply suspicion ("Something smells fishy") or indicate sensing without direct evidence ("He can smell fear").

Feel: More than touch or emotion, "feel" can express opinion or intuition ("I feel that we should take a different route") or represent a more abstract sense of experiencing ("The city feels alive at night").

Verbs of the Senses Exercise 1:

Choose the correct answer.

1.Which sentence uses a stative verb?
a) She is thinking deeply.
b) He is smelling the roses.
c) The soup tastes delicious.

2. "The new car _____ great."
a) is looking
b) looks
c) is looked

3. Which form is correct to describe a habitual action?
a) I am usually hearing this noise at night.
b) I usually hear this noise at night.
c) I am usually heard this noise at night.

4. He _____ like he knows the answer."
a) sounds
b) is sounding
c) has sounded

5. "She _____ the loud music from the concert down the road."
a) can listen
b) is listening
c) can hear

6. We _____ the texture of the new fabric. It's so soft!"
a) feel
b) are feeling
c) are feel

7. I'm so sorry to _____ the awful news. I hope you are coping ok.
a) listen to
b) see
c) hear

8. "They _____ like they are tired."
a) look
b) are looking
c) looks

9. He _____ cold in the winter morning air.
a) feels
b) feel
c) is feeling

10. The milk _____ off. Don't drink it!
a) is smelling
b) smells
c) has smelt

Verbs of the Senses Exercise 2:

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs of the senses (look/see/taste/feel/smell/touch/watch).

1. Every painting in the gallery tells a story, making visitors _____ they could understand the artist's mind.

2. The old library _____ of leather and wood, a scent that reminds visitors of the past.

3. In the bustling market, the spices _____ vibrant, and the merchant encouraged his customers to _____ the flavors..

4. The violinist's melody echoed through the air, causing the audience to _____ a range of emotions.

5. The ancient tapestry _____ delicate under the historian's careful _____ .

6. The critic predicted the movie would win awards, his experience letting him _____ its potential.

7. At sunrise, the mountain _____ majestic, its beauty making hikers _____ in awe.

8. After the rain, the streets _____ wet last night, reflecting the city lights.

9. After _____ the full game of football on TV, he decided to go for a walk.

10. The vintage wine _____ rich and complex, indicating years of careful aging.



Verbs of the senses: answer key

Grammar practice · B2 Upper-intermediate

Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. c) The soup tastes delicious.
2. a) is looking or b) looks
3. b) I usually hear this noise at night.
4. a) sounds
5. c) can hear
6. b) are feeling
7. c) hear
8. a) look
9. a) feels or c) is feeling
10. b) smells

Exercise 2

1. feel
2. smells
3. looked … taste
4. feel
5. feels / felt … touch
6. see
7. looks / looked … feel
8. looked
9. watching
10. tasted / tastes