

## 42 - Tongue

What is your tongue used for? Can you think of anything? Sure you can...like licking ice cream, making faces, and tasting things. Do you know how do taste buds work? You may be wondering what's the deal with those little white bumps all over your tongue? In fact, there are some other surprising usages for your tongue that are pretty gross. Ewwww!

Plus in our additional resources section of this newsletter is a link to a free very interesting podcast and article about the history of Silent Letters, from our friends at Quick and Dirty Tips and Grammar Girl!

So, what exactly is your tongue? Your tongue is a very flexible organ, made of eight muscles which allow you to bend it, roll it, and move it in many directions to form words, sounds, or even clicking noises with the roof of your mouth. These muscles also help you chew food, swallow, and even clean your teeth.

Have you ever gone to the Doctor and had them put one of those wooden sticks, which is called a tongue compressor, on your tongue? When they tell you to open wide, it's to allow them to see your papillae and tongue, which can indicate certain health conditions. Papillae—they're the little white bumps all over your tongue. Everyone has papillae. In fact, these bumps contain your taste buds, which helps you taste food!

### Activities

1. **Tongue Test** – Wash your hands. Stick out your tongue as far as it can go. Grab your tongue with your clean fingers. Try saying something while holding your tongue like your name, the days of the weeks or even try to sing a song. Is this easy? Are the words pronounced clearly?

2. **Tongue Map** - draw an outline of a giant tongue on a piece of white paper with a red pencil. Set the paper aside. Set up four plastic cups, each on top of a piece of paper. Pour a little lemon juice (sour) into one cup, and a little tonic water (bitter) into another. Mix up sugar water (sweet) and salt water (salty) for the last two cups. Label each piece of paper with the name of the liquid in the cup—not with the taste.

Take toothpicks and dip them in one of the cups. Place the stick on the tip of their tongue. Do you taste anything? What does it taste like? Dip again and repeat on the sides, flat surface, and back of the tongue.

Once you recognize the taste and where on your tongue the taste is the strongest, write the name of the taste—not the liquid—in the corresponding space on the tongue drawing.

Rinse your mouth with some water, and repeat this process with the rest of the liquids. Fill in the “tongue map,” by writing in all the tastes. If you like, draw taste buds and color in the tongue too.

## Additional Resources

1. **Wake Up Your Taste Buds** (using your taste and smell): choose the foods and liquids for your experiment select a variety of sweet, salty, sour and bitter flavors. Also, try to select different textures; granules, solids, liquids, smooth and rough. See how many friends you can round up to make this experiment a [lot of fun](#).

2. **What's the deal with silent letters?** From our friend Mignon Fogarty and her incredible podcast Grammar Girl, [this awesome episode](#) and article is full of cool information about silent letters. English has been written for about 1,300 years, and, in that time, words with silent letters, including B, D, E, G, H, K, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, W, X, and Z, have been created.

## Kid News

### **Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy By Giving Back To Your Community!**

Celebrated annually on the third Monday of January, Martin Luther King Jr. Day honors the life and legacy of one of the most influential leaders of the American civil rights movement. Designated a national day of service by the US Congress, the federal holiday encourages citizens to help realize the Baptist minister's vision of a “beloved community” by bridging racial and ethnic barriers, addressing social issues, and volunteering to improve their communities.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) grew up in a world where black and white people led disparate lives. As a result of the legacy of slavery and generations of discriminatory laws, black and white people in America dined at different restaurants, attended different schools, and even sat separately in specially marked areas when traveling on buses and trains.

It's been barely fifty years since landmark laws were passed in the 1960's and 1970's with the intention to eradicate legalized discrimination, and America is still working on realizing the vision of a united country articulated by Dr. King and many others.

Read more about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr... [Here](#) and think about one act you can do to give back to your community.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast [www.WhoSmarted.com](http://www.WhoSmarted.com)