

Making Sense of our Senses



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Introduction

How do you know if your bath water is too hot?

How do you know if it is sunny outside?

How do you know if your friend is calling your name?

How do you know if you like the food you are eating?



Your senses allow you to know these things. They help you to understand your world.

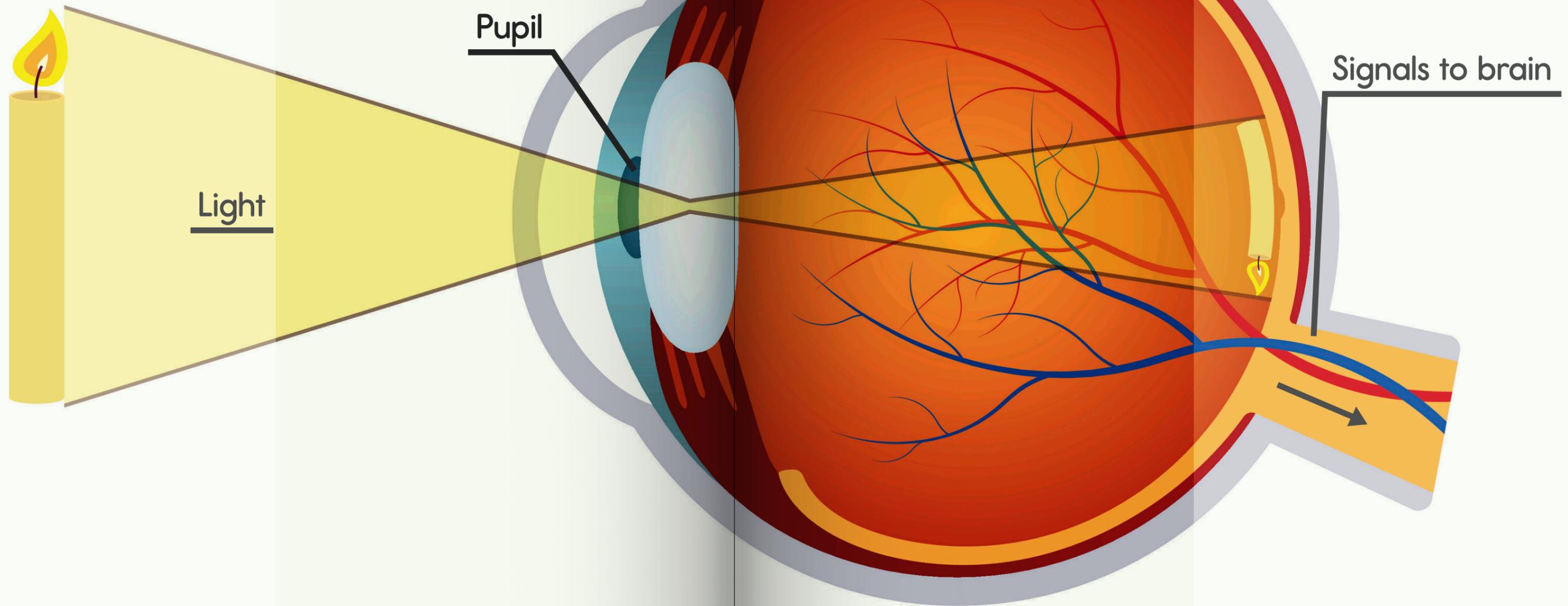
So, what are these senses, and how do they work?



Sight

We use our eyes to see.

Light enters our eyes through the small black circles in the middle of each eye. This part of our eye is called a pupil.



The human eye



Inside your eyes, the light is turned into signals. These signals are sent to your brain. Your brain receives these messages and uses them to work out what you are seeing.

This all happens so quickly that we don't even know about it!

Wow!

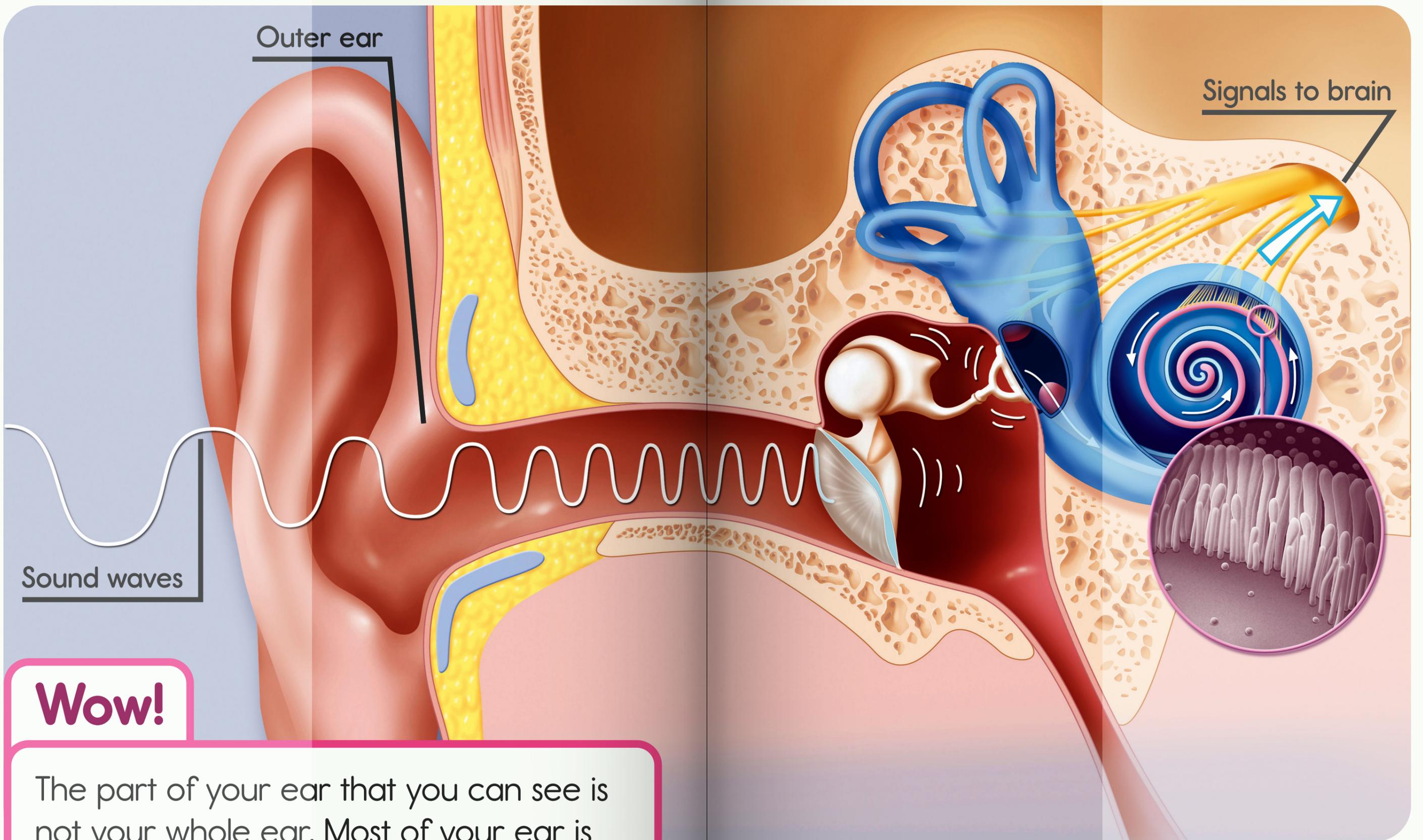
We blink to clean our eyes and keep them moist. We do this about 15 to 20 times every minute.

Hearing

We use our ears to hear.



When we make noise, vibrations are sent out into the air. These vibrations are called sound waves. When sound waves enter your ears, the different parts of your ear work together to turn them into signals. These signals are sent straight to your brain, and your brain uses them to work out what the noise is.



Wow!

The part of your ear that you can see is not your whole ear. Most of your ear is inside your head.

The human ear

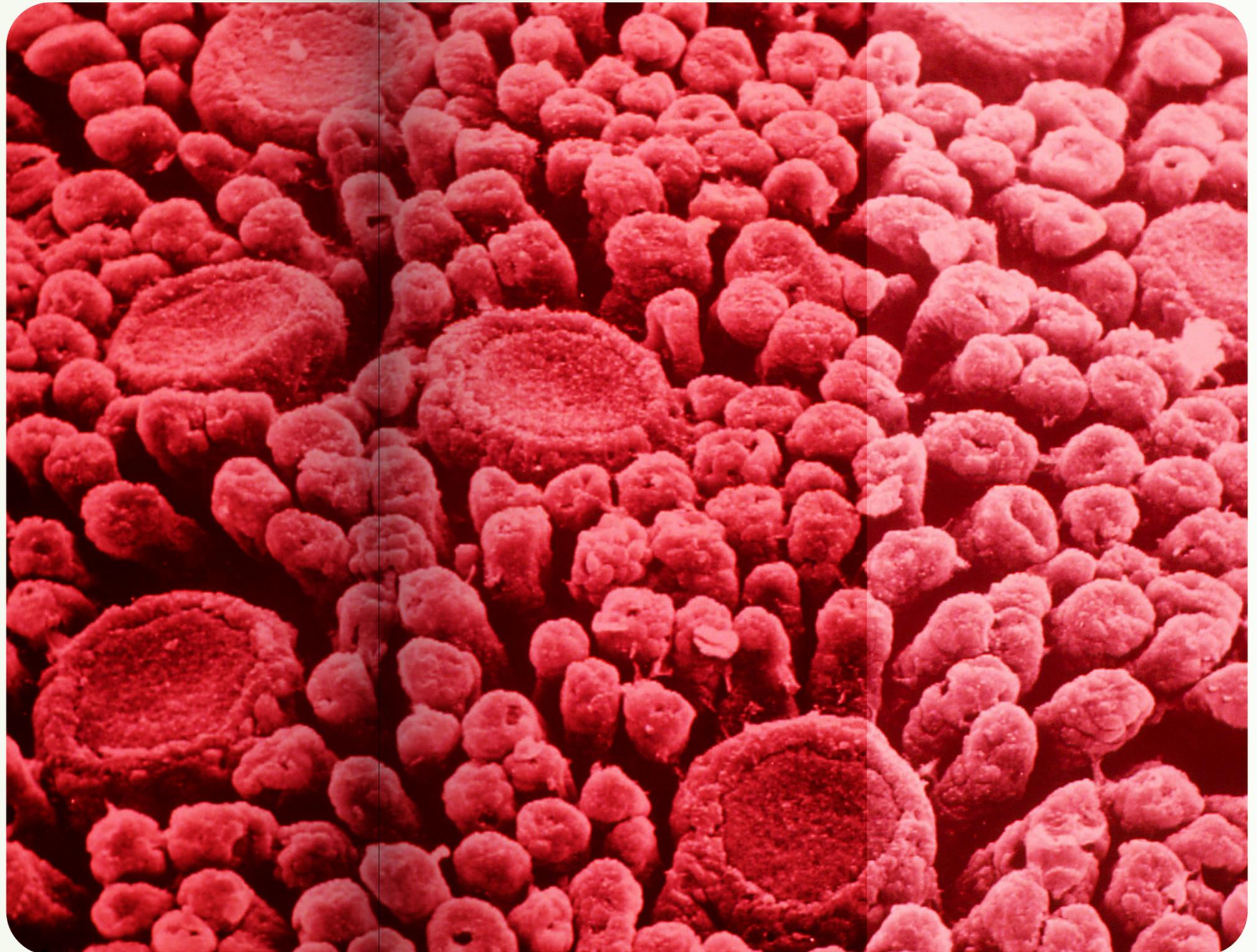
Taste

We use our tongue to taste things.

Your tongue is covered in tiny sensors called tastebuds. When food touches your tongue, the tastebuds send signals to your brain, and it works out what the taste is: sweet, sour, bitter, savory or salty.

Wow!

The average person has between 2,000 and 8,000 tastebuds.



Tastebuds seen through a microscope

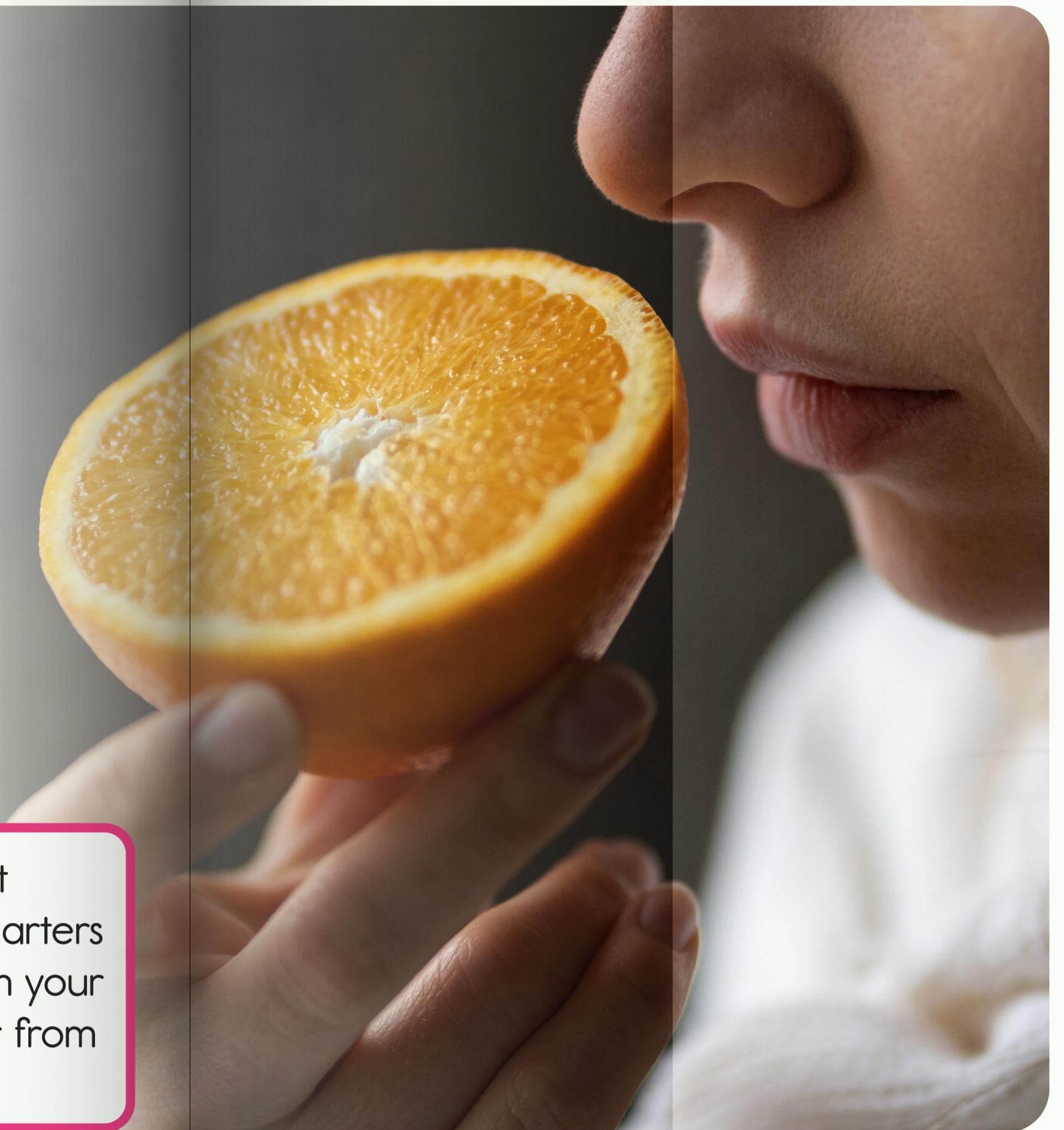
Smell

We use our nose to smell things.

When you sniff, tiny particles that are too small to see enter your nose and hit smell sensors inside. These sensors send signals to your brain, and your brain works out what the smell is.

Wow!

When your brain is working out what something tastes like, about three-quarters of the information it uses comes from your sense of smell, and only one-quarter from your tastebuds.



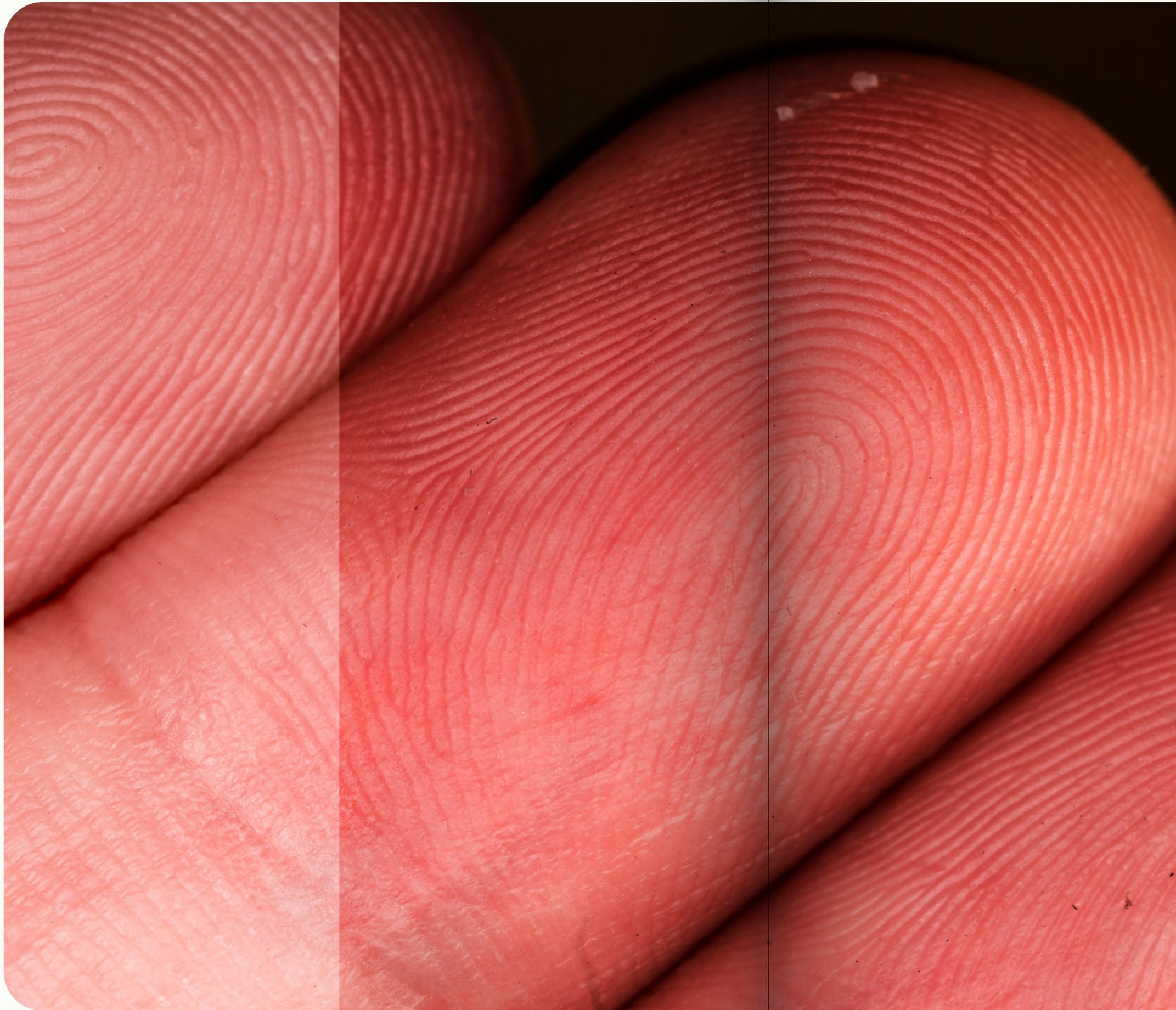
Touch

Our sense of touch helps us know if something is hot, cold, sharp, rough, smooth, painful, soft or hard.



Your skin is covered in thousands of tiny sensors. When you touch something, these sensors send signals to your brain.

Your brain uses the signals to work out what you are touching, and then tells your body how to react. And this all happens in a split second! For example, if you touch something hot, you instantly pull your hand away.



Wow!

Our fingertips are the most sensitive part of the body. Every person in the world has patterns on their fingertips. These patterns are called fingerprints, and no one has exactly the same pattern as anyone else.

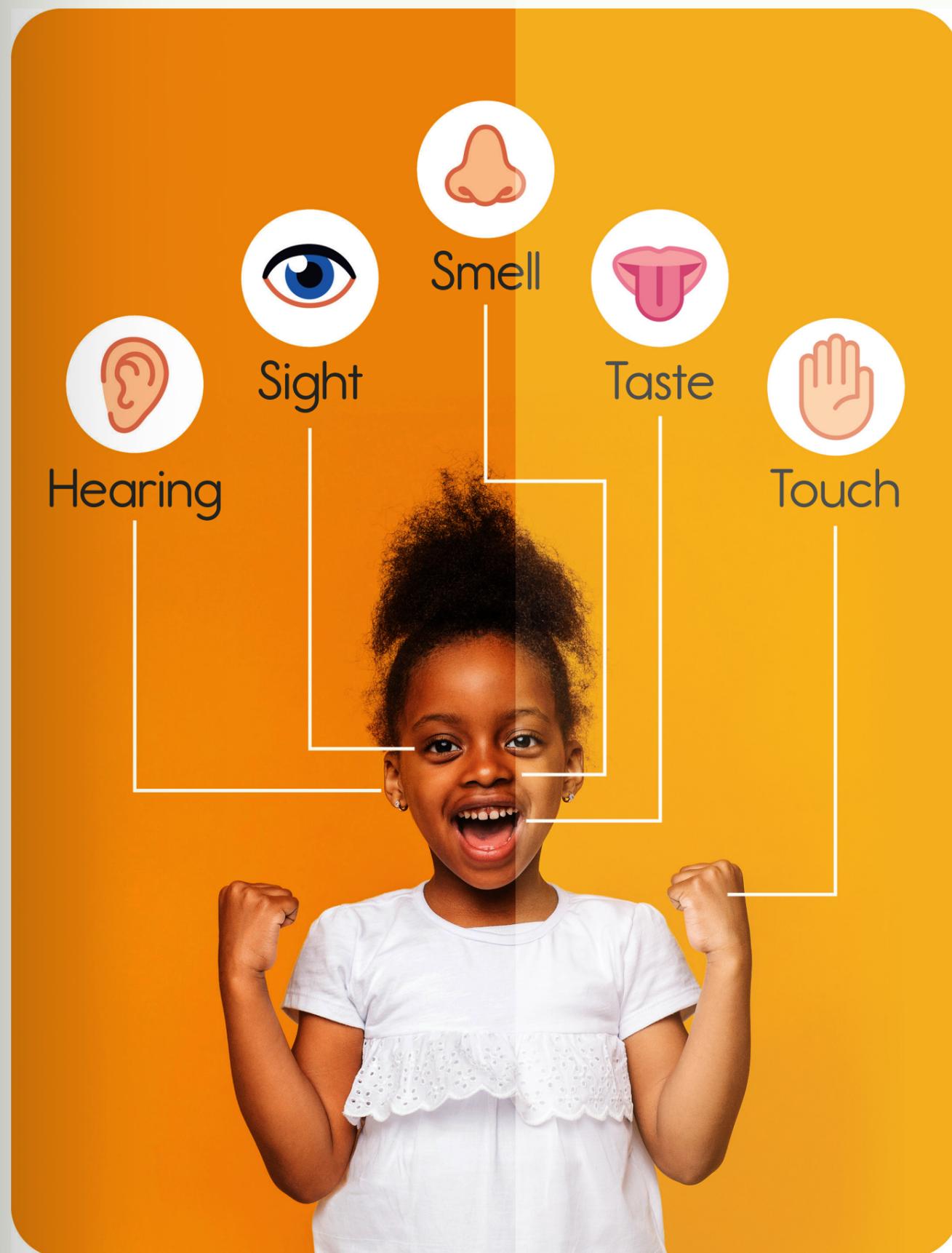


Conclusion

Our senses work together so we know what is happening around us.

Each of our senses gives us different information. Our brain uses this information to keep us safe and to help us learn about the world.

Our five senses



Do you wonder how we see, hear, smell and taste?
Do you know how the sense of touch works?

Making Sense of our Senses explains how our senses work, and how they help us to understand the world.

Download this text and teacher resources
<https://tinyurl.com/57jkh9df>

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