



## Key Advice

### Scent Assignment (20 mins)

#### Preparation

Bring a scent that is not immediately recognisable. For example, essential oils such as vetiver, cardamom, cedarwood or lavender, or something more unexpected like leather or black pepper.

#### Background

This assignment is designed to help students shift from the “closed mode” typical of academic environments into a more open, creative mindset. By engaging the sense of smell, it creates space for playfulness, memory and associative thinking. This opens up their capacity for reflection and creative exploration, essential when navigating complex, interdisciplinary domains.

By connecting scent associations with personal objects linked to stress and eustress, students begin forming links between their lived experiences and broader thematic questions. In doing so, they gain insight into how creativity can serve as a tool for self-awareness and connection with others.

#### In-class instructions

##### 1. Smell and feel

Let students smell the scent without revealing what it is. Ask them to spend one to two minutes fully focused on the scent. Encourage them to resist the urge to name or identify the scent and simply observe what it evokes.

##### 2. Respond intuitively

Ask students to jot down their answers to the following prompts using keywords only. Let the responses be intuitive rather than analytical:

- What color do you associate with this scent?
- What emotion does it evoke in you?
- Where in your body do you feel something in response to this scent?
- What memory or image comes to mind?
- If this scent were a sound, what would it sound like?



### **3. Write creative sentences**

Have students look at the five objects they brought to class and choose three intuitively. Then, prompt them to write two or three short, disconnected sentences that weave together their scent associations and the chosen objects. Emphasise that they do not have to try to make it logical; let the associations flow freely.

Example: *The blue rubber band smells like metal and rain. My old keyring sings softly in the distance. Everything feels a bit like Wednesday.*