

Understanding ASMR: The language of sensory experiences

1. Warm-up: Your sensory world

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- What sounds do you find relaxing (e.g., rain, a crackling fire)?
- What sounds do you find annoying or unpleasant (e.g., nails on a chalkboard)?
- Besides sound, what other senses (smell, touch, sight) strongly affect your mood? Give an example.

2. Vocabulary: Describing sensations

Match the words with their definitions.

1. Tingle	a. A feeling of intense happiness and excitement.
2. Alleviate	b. Harmless or not likely to cause damage.
3. Euphoria	c. To make something less severe, like pain or stress.
4. Stimuli (singular: stimulus)	d. Sounds that are sharp, clear, and dry.

5. Soothing	e. A slight pricking or stinging sensation.
6. Benign	f. Having a gentle, calming effect.
7. Crisp sounds	g. Things that cause a reaction in your senses.
8. Placebo effect	h. A beneficial effect produced by a patient's belief in a treatment, rather than the treatment itself.

3. Video: What is ASMR?

You are going to watch a short video where people discuss the phenomenon of ASMR. Watch and answer the questions below.

1. What does the acronym ASMR stand for?
2. What are three examples of ASMR "triggers" (sensory stimuli) mentioned in the video?
3. According to the video, what are some of the positive effects that people claim ASMR has on them?
4. What does the expert say about the scientific proof for how ASMR works?
5. What is the expert's advice for people who want to use ASMR to help with a medical condition like depression?

[Watch the video on YouTube](#)

4. Useful phrases from the video

Complete the sentences with a word or short phrase from the video. These phrases are useful for describing experiences and their effects.

1. They say it _____ stress and insomnia, depression, and even pain.
2. I had never allowed myself to just fully _____ in the sensation.
3. It sucks you in, _____ you in so much that you forget if something else was going on in your mind.
4. It refers to the feelings of euphoria and _____ that people get.
5. It tends to _____ this relaxation sort of quality.
6. If you have mild depression... this could be really _____ in those instances.
7. It seems like a _____ way to calm down.
8. This could all be _____.

5. Grammar focus: Verbs for describing effects

When we talk about sensory experiences, we often use specific verbs to describe their effect on us. Using precise verbs makes your English sound more advanced.

- **Alleviate:** To make something bad (like pain or stress) less severe. (e.g., "This music helps to **alleviate** my anxiety.")
- **Promote:** To encourage something to happen or develop. (e.g., "A quiet environment can **promote** better concentration.")
- **Induce:** To cause a particular state or feeling. (e.g., "The medication can **induce** drowsiness.")
- **Trigger:** To cause a particular reaction or event to start. (e.g., "For me, the sound of tapping nails **triggers** the ASMR tingles.")
- **Enhance:** To improve the quality or strength of something. (e.g., "Listening with headphones can **enhance** the experience.")

Rewrite the sentences using one of the bold verbs from the explanation box. You may need to change the form of the verb or the sentence structure.

1. The smell of coffee in the morning makes me feel more alert.
→ The smell of coffee in the morning helps to _____ a feeling of alertness.
2. For some people, certain foods cause an allergic reaction.
→ For some people, certain foods can _____ an allergic reaction.
3. This lotion makes the skin irritation feel better.
→ This lotion helps to _____ skin irritation.
4. Getting enough sleep makes your memory work better.
→ Getting enough sleep can _____ your memory.
5. The calm music and dim lighting helped create a feeling of relaxation.
→ The calm music and dim lighting helped to _____ relaxation.

6. Speaking practice: What are your triggers?

Work with a partner and discuss the following questions. Try to use the vocabulary and grammar from today's lesson.

- Now that you've learned about ASMR, what's your opinion? Does it seem interesting, strange, or something you'd like to try?
- Describe a specific sound, smell, or sight that you find particularly **soothing**. What effect does it have on you? (e.g., "The smell of baking bread induces a feeling of comfort.")
- Do you have any negative sensory "triggers"? Describe a sensory experience that you find unpleasant and the effect it has on you.
- The video mentions that ASMR can be used "in conjunction with" professional help. Can you think of other non-medical activities people do to **alleviate** stress? (e.g., hobbies, exercise, meditation).
- Some people are skeptical and think ASMR is just a **placebo effect**. What do you think?