



# BRAIN GAMES

QUICK AND FUN GAMES TO BUILD FOCUS,  
WORKING MEMORY, AND SELF-CONTROL

**CREATED BY**

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This set of Brain Games is divided into a Starter Deck, Base Deck, and Expansion Deck.



**STARTER DECK:** Simple games to introduce Brain Powers. Play repeatedly with your class until they become easy before adding in new games from other decks.

I Spy

Head, Shoulders, Knees,  
and Toes

Catch the Brain Power

Name Game

The Brain Powers Song

Freeze

Simon Says



### **BASE DECK:** Tried-and-true games for practicing Brain Powers

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**Sha Zam!**

**Who Stole the Honey Pot?**

**Silly Sounds**

**Catch That Sound**

**Wiggle Cool Down**

**Going to Grandma's Telephone**

**Who Has the Last Word?**

**Silly Stories**

**Sing with a Partner**

**Pass the Bell**

**The Pickler**

### **EXPANSION DECK:** More advanced games with challenges and variations

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**Pass the What?**

**Animal Cool Down**

**My Hat Has 3 Corners**

**Catch the Signal**

**On My Pizza, I Like**

**Going on a Bear Hunt**

**What is Missing?**

**Hot Potato**

**Super Sort**

**Singing with Style**

**Freeze Feelings**

**Sing Like Bingo**



# BRAIN GAMES

**Play at least one game every day to give students and teachers plenty of practice to build their Brain Powers through Brain Games.**

## A FEW IDEAS FOR WHEN TO PLAY

- Times when you want to switch gears from high energy to calm focus.
- When you want to prepare students for remembering instructions.
- During transition times (e.g. *lining up, waiting*). Change “downtime” into fun, productive, skill-building time.
- During “pressure points” or times of the day when things tend to fall apart. Give students a movement break and opportunity to re-focus.
- During class celebrations. The class can earn a Brain Game as a reward for good behavior or for making progress toward a class goal together.

## MY GAMEPLAN FOR PLAYING BRAIN GAMES

*Make it easy for yourself to play Brain Games. Keep the games on hand, and try using this card as a visual reminder of when you want to play.*

After \_\_\_\_\_ we will play \_\_\_\_\_

*ex. recess*

*ex. I Spy, a calming Stop and Think game, etc.*

Before \_\_\_\_\_ we will play \_\_\_\_\_

*ex. we start math*

*ex. Freeze, a Remember game, etc.*

When \_\_\_\_\_ we will play \_\_\_\_\_

*ex. the class gets restless*

*ex. Wiggle Cool Down, an energizing Focus Game, etc.*



## BRAIN GAMES

# 5 Things to Keep in Mind

Brain Games are easy games to work into your daily routine. Keep these 5 key concepts in mind as you introduce Brain Games to your students and begin playing.

### 1 Talk about basic gameplay.

Everyone comes to school with different experiences and knowledge about how to play games. One of the most helpful things you can do to get Brain Games started in the right way is to **have a class discussion about the basics of gameplay**. Capture the discussion (e.g. use chart paper), so you can refer back to it.

**Start with simple questions:**

Do you like games? What games do you play? How do you play? What are the rules? Why do we play?

**Then discuss gameplay basics together, connecting to examples from students' past experiences:**

- Games have rules. Rules help us to be safe and to play “fair” so everyone can enjoy them.
- Games usually require patience. We take turns so everyone can participate.
- We play games to learn how to work together as members of a team. When playing Brain Games, it’s important to try your best and it feels good when you’re successful, but winning or being right isn’t the most important thing. Brain Games are about teamwork and supporting each other.

### 2 Model with a small group first.

Before playing a new game with the entire class, **try out the game yourself with a smaller group of 2-3 students** while the rest watch. This will allow you to demonstrate key points, teach new vocabulary, teach new motion skills (e.g. *hop*, *sing quietly*), and answer any questions. You might repeat this several times over the course of a few days before playing with a larger group (4-8) or the whole class.

### 3 Emphasize Post-Game Talk.

Post-Game Talk is perhaps **the most important part of playing Brain Games**. Reflection time is essential for the skills to “set in” and transfer to other times of the day when students need to focus, remember, and use self-control to be successful in school. **Post-Game Talk helps students recognize specific strategies they used** during the games. Students also learn by hearing about the strategies that others use. When students talk about strategies, they are more likely to use those strategies — independently or with gentle reminders from you — during other times of the day.

## 4 Talk about feelings that arise.

Playing games naturally brings up all sorts of feelings. **Post-Game Talk can be a great time to recognize and talk about feelings that come up.** Help students recognize feelings are a normal part of school and life.

### Some ways to discuss gameplay feelings:

- When we play games, we might feel frustrated, jealous, or embarrassed (*and many other feelings*). These feelings are normal— all people have these feelings.
- Learning to manage feelings is an important part of what we do in school together. We are all learning how to work with feelings in ways that don't hurt other people, so we can keep learning and growing together.
- When we notice someone having a hard time during or after a game, we can talk about our feelings and listen to each other so we understand how to work together as a class next time.
- (*Share about a time you felt angry, jealous, or embarrassed, and what you did in that moment. Examples: I reminded myself that it's okay to make a mistake, I decided to cheer on my friend even though I was disappointed I didn't do as well as I wanted to, or I decided to "let it go" and keep playing.*)

### Post-Game questions that can help in tough situations:

- I noticed some of you were feeling \_\_\_\_\_. Can you describe what happened and why you felt that way?
- Let's go around the circle and share our thoughts and feelings about this game. Did the way we played together today feel good? Did anything happen that made someone in our class feel bad? What can we do differently next time to support each other and make sure everyone is enjoying the game, getting to practice their Brain Powers, and being treated fairly?

## 5 Celebrate Brain Powers all day.

Brain Games are quick activities to build skills in focus, memory, and self-control. Students need these skills for everything they do in school! **You can help kids use these new skills by pointing out when kids need Brain Powers to be successful throughout the day.** Some things you can do:

### Talk about Brain Powers and how they're used throughout the day.

- For example, ask students to put on **Focus Binoculars** to pay attention when you give instructions for a new activity, encourage students to use **Remember Power** if they get interrupted during a task and need help remembering what to do next, or remind students to **Stop and Think** before shouting.
- Talk about Brain Powers whenever you notice *yourself* using them throughout the day to model this kind of talk for students.
- Use the hand signals whenever you see the highlighted Brain Power words in the game instructions, and use the hand signals throughout the day whenever you mention a Brain Power.

### Notice kids using their Brain Powers, and celebrate them.

When you notice kids using a Brain Power outside of Brain Games, let them know about it! You can praise the class as a group, or recognize individuals. You can also make use of Brain Powers as part of your classroom rewards system.

# **STARTER DECK**

# Catch the Brain Power

Use this guessing game to help kids notice Brain Powers in action throughout the day.



## BEFORE GAMEPLAY

This game takes place during a regular classroom activity. Choose an activity that will require students to use one (or more) Brain Powers. For example, students might need to **Remember** instructions or **Focus** on their partner even if other groups are nearby.

## PRE-GAME TALK

We've learned about three Brain Powers by playing Brain Games. Now we are going to be using them during a regular class activity. Let's see if you can catch which Brain Power we are using during our next activity.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Who remembers the hand signals for the three Brain Powers? (*Review hand signals.*)
2. During this next activity you'll be using one of your Brain Powers. Listen to the instructions, and try to guess which Brain Power will be helpful. When you have a guess, show me the hand signal for that Brain Power.
3. (*Give instructions for the next activity.*)
4. Who has a guess about which Brain Power you think will help? Show me with your hands. When I call on you, tell me why you chose that Brain Power and how you think that will help for our activity. (*Repeat and extend student answers by thinking aloud about why that Brain Power will be useful.*)
5. Now we're going to start our activity. When you catch the class using their Brain Power, make the hand signal. When I see someone making a hand signal, I might call on them and let them share what Brain Power they see.
6. (*Calling on students can be brief. Let students say a sentence about what they see, and then return the class's attention to the activity. You can model for the class by thinking aloud about Brain Powers and doing the hand signals.*)

*See reverse for Post-Game Talk.*

## GOOD TO KNOW

- Once the group becomes good at identifying Brain Powers, challenge them to catch individuals using Brain Powers: "Today, let's be on the lookout for people using Brain Powers. If you see a classmate using **Focus**, **Remember**, or **Stop and Think Power**, give them a compliment by showing them the hand signal and saying: Good job using your \_\_\_\_\_ Power to \_\_\_\_\_."
- Encourage students to be on the look out for Brain Powers by modeling them yourself. When you see students using their Powers, acknowledge them with specific thanks and praise.
- You can also find a time at the end of the day to let students share some of the Brain Powers they noticed classmates using. Get the conversation going by sharing specific examples you saw.
- The three Brain Powers are interconnected, so often multiple Powers apply. It's not about getting it "right". It's more about connecting Brain Powers to specific actions.

## POST-GAME TALK

- Was it easy or hard to notice when we were using Brain Powers? What does it feel like to use \_\_\_\_\_ Brain Power?
- Our brain is like a muscle and in order to strengthen it, we need to notice when we are using our Brain Powers. That's why it's important for us to talk about which Brain Power we're practicing for each Brain Game we play.
- Let's keep a lookout for students practicing Brain Powers throughout the day. If you catch someone, you can say:
  - "Good job using your **Focus Binoculars** when you \_\_\_\_\_!"
  - "High five! I noticed you using your **Stop and Think Power** when \_\_\_\_\_!"
  - "Wow, when I saw you \_\_\_\_\_, it seemed like you must have used your \_\_\_\_\_ Brain Power!"

## WHY NOTICING BRAIN POWERS IS IMPORTANT

- The more we notice and name our Brain Powers, the more we help our brains grow and get stronger. Think Aloud is a great way for adults to model noticing and thinking skills. Think Aloud helps kids become aware of their own thinking.
- Positive feedback encourages students to use their Brain Powers throughout the day, not just during gameplay. It's important for adults to model this noticing to extend the effects of practicing Brain Powers into the entire school day.



**Challenge:**  
How many  
**Brain Powers**  
can you catch  
in action  
today?



### DID YOU KNOW...?

When adults model what it's like to notice and talk about these skills, it helps children to notice when they are using their Brain Powers. It also helps them see they are growing and improving. Science tells us that when children and adults realize they can get better by practicing (using effort), they are more likely to actually get better!

# Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes

Students have to pay careful attention to each other in order to play this group version of the classic song.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Today we will combine our **Focus Brain Powers** to play this tricky version of Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes. Sometimes in school, it is hard to pay attention to others while we wait for a turn. In this game, we work together to focus during each person's turn so we know what to do when our turn arrives!

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let's stand in a circle and sing this song together. Tap the body part when we say its name in the song:  

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes  
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes  
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose  
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
2. (*Once the class is comfortable with the song and motions*) Now we are going to change the game in a way that takes even more focus. We will all keep singing, but only one of us in the circle will do each of the motions. So when we all sing "head" the first person will touch their head. When we sing "shoulders" the second person in the circle will touch their shoulders. And so on.
3. Use your **Focus Brain Power** to follow the motion, so you know when it's your turn!

## GOOD TO KNOW

- If kids aren't familiar with the song and matching actions, it's fine to just stay on step one. You can build the skills to add step 2 later by playing the game repeatedly over time..
- If students are getting distracted, they can use their **Focus Binoculars** to follow the action and pay attention as each person in the circle does their motion.
- Try to play faster as kids get more familiar with the game.

## POST-GAME TALK

- This game really worked our **Focus Brain Power**! It required working together to pay attention to each person, focusing the entire time to know when it's your turn, and listening to the words in the song so you know which body part to touch when your turn comes.
- How did it feel to play with the whole class together?
- What are ways we can support each other as we play?
- Which parts of the game were easy or hard for you? What can we try the next time we play?



### DID YOU KNOW...?

Until the pre-frontal cortex “control center” part of the brain is fully developed (which happens in early adulthood), it is difficult for children and youth to control impulses, manage behavior, focus for long periods of time, remember and follow rules, and think creatively to solve problems. This is especially true when children are upset, frustrated, angry, or scared, because negative feelings get in the way and make it harder to think calmly and make thoughtful decisions.

If you notice some of these feelings coming up while playing Brain Games, remember: that's normal! Try taking a break, acknowledging what students may be feeling, and talking together about ways to support each other when things feel hard.

## Can you think of other times you need to **Focus** and pay attention to other people around you?

- When I want to play or work together as a group to reach a common goal.
- During a sports game, board game, or other game.
- When I'm working with a partner and we need to listen carefully to each other's ideas to figure out the answer or finish a project.
- When we're singing a song in rounds, and I need to pay attention to know when it's my turn to start.



## HOW WE CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER DURING BRAIN GAMES

- Have a conversation as a class about what we expect from one another when we play games and how we transition afterwards.
- Encourage each other by saying what went well.
- Help each other if we forget our turn or move.
- Remember that it's about having fun and strengthening our Brain Powers — and not about winning or losing.

# I Spy

Putting on our **Focus Binoculars** helps us to play this classic guessing game.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Today, we're going to play I Spy to learn about our **Focus Brain Power**. I have my **Focus Binoculars** on. Can you put on yours? Binoculars point your eyes at something you want to see more clearly, and they help you to block out distractions. Let's use our **Focus Binoculars** now to look carefully around the room while we play I Spy.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let's make sure our **Focus Binoculars** are working before we play. I'm going to make a small motion. See if you can catch what I do. (*Make a small movement with your face, like wink one eye, blink twice, or wiggle your nose.*) Did you catch me?
2. Now let's use our **Focus Binoculars** to see if you can guess what object in the room I'm thinking about. I spy with my little eyes something that is \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. choose a color).
3. Point your **Focus Binoculars** at your best guess! When I ask, tell me what you are focusing on. The person who guesses right first gets to pick the next object!

## POST-GAME TALK

- What made this game easy or hard for you? What will you try the next time we play?
- During this game, you were able to notice or find small things because you were using your **Focus Binoculars**. **Focus** is one of your Brain Powers that helps you notice and pay attention to important things in the classroom. Today, let's keep our **Focus Brain Power** in mind at \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert activity or time of day when children need to pay attention*).
- When are some other times when we need to use our **Focus Power**? (See back of card for examples, or think of new ones.)
- Were there times in the game when you felt distracted or frustrated? What can you try the next time that happens?

## GOOD TO KNOW

- The first time you play, try starting with 2–3 rounds of guessing, then doing post-game talk.
- As you play more, make it more challenging by adding more rounds, choosing clues besides color, or having students take turns making small movements for the class to guess.
- If students are having trouble, give them a hint about where to point their **Focus Binoculars**. If no one has guessed after about a minute, give a second clue (e.g. location, size, etc.)
- Variation: Have students take turns making small movements for the class to guess.



## WHY FOCUS IS IMPORTANT

Our **Focus Brain Power** helps us pay attention when something important is happening, like when a teacher is giving instructions for a math problem, art activity, or gym time. When we focus, we are using many different parts of our bodies—our eyes, ears, and brain.

### DID YOU KNOW...?

Science tells us that the pre-frontal cortex (which is the “control center” of the brain) goes through a very important growth spurt between 3 to 8 years of age. Adults can support this development by helping students notice, name, and practice using their **Focus Brain Powers** every day!

### WHEN DO WE USE FOCUS?

- When I need to tie my shoes, and I need to focus carefully in order to do the steps in the right way.
- When I want to listen carefully to a story or learn the words of a new song.
- When I want to finish my worksheet or project, and I need to ignore other sounds and distractions.
- When I’m feeling tired or frustrated, and I need to really pay attention to what I’m doing to finish my task.



Can you think of other times you need to **Focus** to pay attention to what's important?

### THINGS THAT HELP US TO FOCUS

- Covering my ears to keep out distracting noises.
- Quietly reminding myself to focus, and put on my **Focus Binoculars**.
- Going to a quiet spot to finish my work.
- Using my active listening skills to sit still and keep my eyes on the speaker to focus on what is being said.

# Freeze

Even if we want to keep dancing, the name of the game is to freeze when the music stops. It's a great way to grow our **Stop and Think Brain Power**.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Today, we are going to play Freeze. It's a fun way to practice your **Stop and Think Brain Power**. It's a great power to have because it helps us quickly pause before acting so we can make good decisions. There's even a way to remind yourself to "stop and think" without using any words. You can say "stop" with one hand and "think" with the other, like this. Let's try it together.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody find your own space in the room where you can move around without bumping into anyone else.
2. When the music starts, show everyone your favorite dance moves! When the music stops, remember to freeze and hold up the **Stop and Think** hand signal. (*Demonstrate and ask students to practice making the signal again.*) When the music restarts, get moving again!
3. Pay close attention to the music. We'll play multiple rounds to practice our **Stop and Think Brain Power**.

## GOOD TO KNOW

- If music is not available, you can start and stop the game with commands of "go" and "freeze".
- You can also try counting aloud while everyone waits for the music to resume (especially for those who have a hard time waiting).
- To make this game more challenging over time, increase the number of seconds that players remain still, or start and stop the music at quicker intervals.

## POST-GAME TALK

- What made this game easy or hard for you? What can you try next time?
- How can we help each other practice our **Stop and Think Power**? (e.g. use the hand signal to remind someone to wait nicely for their turn.)
- When else can we use our **Stop and Think Power** in school, at home, etc.? (See back for examples or think of new ones.) What can you say to yourself the next time that happens?
- Let's keep the **Stop and Think Brain Power** in our heads today. Later, look for the **Stop and Think** signal during \_\_\_\_\_ (name an activity or time of day when children are frequently impulsive, e.g. when we wait for the water fountain, when we take turns at recess, etc.)

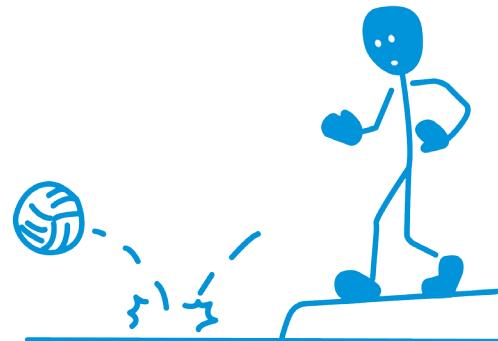
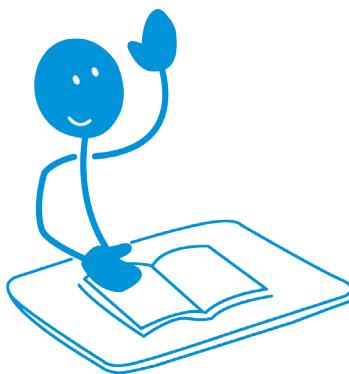
## WHY STOP AND THINK IS IMPORTANT



A lot of times, life is about doing things at the right moment. Think of a baseball player at bat waiting to hit the ball at the exact right moment. Waiting and being patient is hard for everyone, even for adults! **Stop and Think** gives us the ability to get better at waiting patiently, and it gives us time to make choices we feel good about. You can exercise your **Stop and Think Brain Power** and use new strategies to help you wait.

## WHEN DO WE USE STOP AND THINK?

- When I don't want to bump into my friend, I'm going to slow down and wait my turn (for the slide, water fountain, to play a game, etc.)
- When I really want the teacher to hear my idea, I can raise my hand and wait until someone else is finished talking and the teacher calls on me.
- When I really want to put a block on top of the tower, I'm going to move my hands slowly and carefully.
- When I am playing outside and my ball rolls into the street, I need to stop and think about what I should do instead of running out to get it right away.
- When my friend or I get upset, I need to stop and think about what I can say or do next to make things better.



## THINGS THAT HELP US STOP AND THINK

- Counting quietly in my head.
- Taking deep slow breaths.
- Using the **Stop and Think** hand signal and saying to myself "I am using my **Stop and Think Power**."

Can you think of other times you need to **Stop and Think** before you act?

# Simon Says

A classic game that lets us move around, players must pay close attention to instructions before they act.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's play Simon Says to challenge ourselves and practice our **Stop and Think Brain Power**.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody find your own space in the room where you can move around without bumping into anyone else.
2. Watch me and copy my actions, but only when I say "Simon says" first. For example, if I say "Simon says touch your nose" you should touch your nose. But don't do anything if I just say "touch your nose."
3. (*Give everyone a series of fun, active commands – some with "Simon says" before, some without.*)
4. (*End with "Simon says sit down" for the Post-Game Talk.*)

## POST-GAME TALK

- In this game, Simon is telling us what to do. In real life, our brains tell our bodies what to do. The brain is a very special muscle that can grow and become stronger with regular practice and exercise.
- What did you do to keep yourself from moving when I didn't say "Simon Says"? What does it feel like when you are trying NOT to do something you want to do? What does it feel like to tell your body to **Stop and Think**?
- Do you ever talk to yourself to help yourself do something the right way? You can build your **Stop and Think Power** by noticing what you are doing and thinking about whether you are doing the right thing: We can say, "Hey Brain, let's stop and think right now!" What are other ways we can help our brains **Stop and Think**?
- Sometimes it helps to slow down and take a break. You can tell yourself to **Stop and Think**. When are times you need to remind yourself to **Stop and Think** today?

## GOOD TO KNOW

- To practice careful listening, insert other, but similar, phrases like "Simone says."
- To make the game more challenging, you can do the action yourself whether or not you say "Simon says," which tempts players to follow instead of listening closely.
- A more challenging variation that also practices mental flexibility: After a few rounds, change the rules. "Now you will copy my actions only when I **DON'T** say 'Simon says' first."

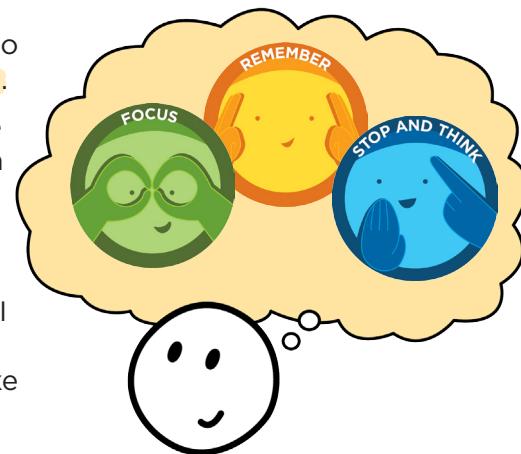
## WHY THINKING ABOUT THINKING IS IMPORTANT



Thinking is important work! When you **Think About Thinking**, you try to look inside your own brain and notice if you are distracted or doing something you didn't mean to do. Then you can remind yourself what you are supposed to be doing. When you notice your thinking and say it out loud, you share your thinking with others. This is called a Think Aloud and helps us build our Brain Powers.

## WHEN WE CAN THINK ABOUT THINKING

- When I notice I am getting distracted, I can tell myself to put on my **Focus Binoculars**.
- When I notice that someone is giving me directions, I can tell myself to use my **Remember Power**.
- When I catch myself getting frustrated about something, I can remind myself to use my **Stop and Think Power** to take a deep breath, count to 10, and then return to my task.



## WHAT HELPS US THINK ABOUT THINKING

- Noticing what my brain is thinking about, and noticing when it's distracted.
- Talking to my brain to remind it what I want it to be doing.
- Using the hand signals to remind each other when we need to **Focus**, **Remember**, or **Stop and Think**.



## DID YOU KNOW...?

Children grow their Brain Powers by observing and learning from adults. The more you talk about your own Brain Powers, the more children will do the same! Try using a **THINK ALOUD** to describe how you focus, remember, or use self-control. Describe what you say to yourself or what you do in order to **Stop and Think** before you act.

# Name Game

A great game to play at the beginning of the year to learn names, to get to know each other, and to introduce the Remember Brain Power.



## PRE-GAME TALK

We're asked to remember so many things in our lives, especially at school! Sometimes I need to rub my temples to try to get the information out. That hand signal can be our signal for our Remember Brain Power. Let's practice getting better at Remember Power with a Name Game.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let's stand in a circle.
2. As we go around the circle, each person gets to share their name and a move or motion with the group. Then we'll all repeat it. We can be creative with our motions! For example, if it was my turn, I would say my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and my motion is \_\_\_\_\_. (*Examples, bend to touch your toes, do a jumping jack, or make a lasso motion.*)
3. And now we'll all repeat my name and motion as a group.
4. Everyone take a second to think of a move they want to make.
5. (*Continue around the circle, having people repeat back the motions, until everyone has gone. When it gets back to you, have everyone sit where they are for Post-Game Talk.*)

## GOOD TO KNOW

- This game can be played with different themes where motions match the prompts, such as: How are you feeling today? What kind of animal would you want to be? What would you bring on a trip?
- Once your class gets better at Remember Power, ask each person to repeat back the former person's response before saying their own.

## POST-GAME TALK

- We had to Remember (rub your temples) both the person's name and their motion so we could repeat it back. We also had to use our Remember Power to remember our own motion until it was our turn in the circle. Let's keep our Remember Power in mind today when \_\_\_\_\_ (*name a time of day when you'll be giving directions*).
- What made this game hard for you? What made this game easy for you? What will you try the next time we play?
- What are some times that we need to use our Remember Power in school or at home? (*See back of card for examples, or think of new ones.*)
- What are some things that help you Remember? (*See back of card for examples, or think of new ones.*)

## WHY REMEMBER IS IMPORTANT

We remember so much every day! We remember names and numbers, when our favorite tv show comes on, what to clean up before recess, even our favorite memories. It's a good thing that **Remember** is a Brain Power that we can make stronger over time with practice.



### DID YOU KNOW...?

While there are many different types of memory, Brain Games build working memory – the ability to remember, update, and use information over short periods of time. This helps students plan and work toward goals that have multiple steps.

### WHEN DO WE REMEMBER?

- When I am packing my backpack, and I need to remember the things I need to bring with me when I leave my house.
- When I take a break from reading, and I want to remember my place in the story. I also want to remember the important things that happened in the story.
- When I need to remember a set of instructions from the teacher, like during clean up and the transition to the next activity.



Can you think of other times you need to use your **Remember** Brain Power?

### THINGS THAT HELP US REMEMBER

- Repeating the information aloud after I hear it.
- Picturing something in my mind (e.g. imagine the things I need to put in my backpack, imagine the things I need to do when I first enter my classroom in the morning, etc.).
- Making up a song about what I want to remember and singing it many times (aloud or silently in my head).
- Drawing a picture or making a list of things I need to do.

# The Brain Powers Song

A song set to tune of Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes to help us remember and practice the hand signals for all three Brain Powers.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Today, we are going to sing a song called “Focus, Remember, Stop and Think” to build our memory of the three Brain Powers and their hand signals.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let's stand in a circle for our song.
2. We're going to sing and use our Brain Power hand signals every time we say the name of the Brain Power. Who can remember how to show each Brain Power with our hands? (*Show visuals and demonstrate for students.*)
  - **Focus** – hands up holding Binoculars over eyes
  - **Remember** – two fingers together rubbing temples
  - **Stop and Think** – one hand making stop motion and then one finger pointing to forehead
3. This song is sung to the tune of Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes but with different words and motions. Listen for the Brain Powers, so we can do the hand signals together. (*Song lyrics on reverse.*)

## GOOD TO KNOW

- The first time the teacher can sing slowly, and everyone can do the hand motions.
- The second time you play, use call and repeat: the teacher can sing one line, and the kids can repeat it back.
- When the class knows the entire song, you can do a more challenging variation where kids replace the words “focus” “remember” and “stop and think” with just the hand signals, Bingo song style.

## POST-GAME TALK

- We can practice using these hand signals whenever we're telling our brains to **Focus**, **Remember**, or **Stop and Think**. Today I'll remind you to use your \_\_\_\_\_ Brain Power at \_\_\_\_\_.
- What made it easy or hard to remember the hand signals for the game? What could you try the next time you play?
- When you were waiting your turn, what helped you to wait?

# FOCUS, REMEMBER, STOP AND THINK

(Sung to the tune of Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes)

Brain Power's really cool (really cool)

Tools to use at home and school (home and school)

Be suc-cess-ful, Brain Power is the link

**Focus, Remember, Stop and Think (Stop and Think)**

**Focus** is when you concentrate (concentrate)

It helps you think and keep it straight (keep it straight)

Pay atten-tion to the task that you must do

**Focus**, the tool that will help you (will help you)

**Remember** means simply don't forget (don't forget)

Thinking of the past to recollect (recollect)

Keep-ing in-for-mation in your mind

**Remember!** the info you will find (you will find)

**Stop and Think** to regulate (regulate)

Use control and take a break (take a break)

When you feel that you are out of sync

Use your brain to **Stop and Think (Stop and Think)**



# **BASE DECK**

# Going to Grandma's House

A small-group game where students try to create and remember a growing list of items.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Today we're going on a pretend trip to grandma's house, so we'll need to use our **Remember Power** to remember what to pack.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. We are going to play this game in small groups.
2. One person will start by saying "I'm going to grandma's house and I will pack \_\_\_\_."
3. The next person will start by repeating what the previous person said, then add one extra

## GOOD TO KNOW

- Think ahead of how you want to group students, and model with a small group first while the others watch.

thing to pack. (Give the class an example like: “I’m going to grandma’s house, and I will pack a sleeping bag.” The next person will say, “I’m going to grandma’s house, and I will pack a sleeping bag AND my favorite shirt.”)

- When you have gone all the way around the circle, try as a group to remember and say aloud all the items in the right order together.

### POST-GAME TALK

- In this game, we used our **Remember Brain Power** to keep track of what other people were saying, while also thinking about what item we wanted to add to the list. What helps you **Remember**? (e.g. focus on each person one at a time, or repeat their items in my head.)
- At what other times does **Remember Power** help you at school or home?
  - When your parent or teacher tells you a list of things to do: e.g. feed the dog and do your homework before watching TV.
  - Keeping track of many numbers at the same time helps us do math, especially with multiple digits. Keeping track of information helps us figure out what is needed to solve a word problem.

# Who Has the Last Word?

Players use working memory to keep track of key words and create new sentences.

## BEFORE GAMEPLAY

Think of a 3-word sentence, such as “Pigs eat potatoes,” but don’t share it with the students. Then think of 3 new sentences, each of which ends with one of the words from your original sentence. (e.g. “*Sonia has pink pigs.*” “*My dog loves to eat.*” “*Tyrell mashed potatoes.*”)

## PRE-GAME TALK

We will use our **Remember Power** to remember the last word of three different sentences and make a whole new sentence from those words.



## GOOD TO KNOW

- This game might take students a little time to figure out. Start with short sentences, and have a few rounds ready so students can play multiple times to get lots of practice.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. I'm going to say three sentences out loud. Try to remember the LAST WORD of each sentence (*without writing anything down*). We are going to use those last words to make a new sentence.
2. (*Slowly read the three sentences.*)
3. Do you remember the last word of each sentence? Can anyone make a new sentence using those three words?

## POST-GAME TALK

- This game was hard for me. I had to Remember the last word in each of the three sentences. What helped you Remember the last word? What are things you would try differently?
  - After the first sentence, I repeated the last word in my head, and then added the last word of the second sentence and repeated them both in my head, and then added the last word of the third sentence.
  - I made a picture in my mind of the last word of each sentence; I was visualizing “pigs”, etc.

# Telephone

A classic game where students use listening and memory skills to send a message around the circle.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's see if we can send a secret message all the way around the circle. We will use our listening skills and **Remember Power** to play Telephone.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody come sit down in a circle. (*You can also do this standing or sitting in a line.*)
2. I'm going to send a secret message down the "telephone" line. To start, I'm going to whisper a secret message to the person next to me, so no one else can hear. That person needs to **Remember** the secret message and whisper it quietly to the next person.

3. (Once the message has made it around the circle:) Let's see if the secret message made it all the way around correctly. Can the last person in the circle please tell us the secret message you heard?
4. Let's compare it with the original message.

### POST-GAME TALK

- Even if the secret message doesn't make it all the way around the circle correctly, this game is still a fun way to practice our listening skills and our **Remember Power**. What made this game easy or hard for you?
- What helped you play the game when it was your turn to hear the message? What helped when you were waiting your turn?
- At what other times during the day can our **Remember Power** be useful? (e.g. *when the teacher is giving directions, when we need to remember to give a message to someone.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- For younger students, start with a one-or two-word phrase to let students practice their listening and **Remember** skills.
- You can increase the level of challenge by making the secret message longer and more complex.

# Wiggle Cool Down

A quick game that helps the class transition from a high-energy state to a calmer, focused ready-to-learn state.

## PRE-GAME TALK

Here's a sequence of moves to get our wiggles out. See if you can use your **Remember Brain Power** to follow along with the number countdown.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody, find your own space in the room where you can move around and respect the space of others.



## GOOD TO KNOW

- Over time, see if students can **Remember** the sequence without the directions; try just counting down the numbers aloud.

2. We are going to count down from 10 to 1, doing different motions that help us release extra energy to get our bodies and brains calm, focused, and ready to learn.
3. Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle for 10, 9, 8... (*Everyone should be standing, wiggling their whole bodies and making silly noises.*)
4. ...at 7 and 6 we are getting quiet... (*Lower your voice to a whisper as you say this.*)
5. ...at 5 and 4 our bodies sit silently...
6. ...at 3 we take a deep breath and roll our shoulders back...at 2 we take a deep breath and cover our eyes...and 1 and zero.
7. Uncover your eyes.

### **POST-GAME TALK**

- At first, I was excited and was moving pretty fast. As we counted down, I moved slower and felt more relaxed and calm. How did you feel?
- What are other times when we need to become more relaxed and calm? (*e.g. before you take a ride in a car, when recess is over and we need to get our minds and bodies ready to go inside.*)

# Catch That Sound

Students listen carefully and signal when they hear a specific sound during a short read-aloud.



## BEFORE GAMEPLAY

Choose a story that can be read to students in 1-2 minutes and that has many repetitions of one kind of letter sound.

## PRE-GAME TALK

We're going to use our **Focus Brain Power** to listen and catch the sounds in the story today.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. We are going to play a game where we pay special attention to the sound \_\_\_\_ (*Pick a sound such as /m/ or /t/.*)
2. I am going to read a short story to you. I need you to do some care-

ful listening. Every time you hear the sound \_\_\_ in the story, I want you to touch your nose (or tap your knee or some other action).

3. The sound \_\_\_ is pretty sneaky, so let's see if we can catch them all! Ready?

### POST-GAME TALK

- I really had to **Focus** and listen carefully to hear the \_\_\_ letter sound. Was it easy or hard to catch the sound? Did you do anything to help you catch the sound? (e.g. *watch the reader's lips to see how they form the sound.*)
- Was it easy or hard to **Remember** to touch your nose when you heard the letter sound? Did you do anything to help you remember? (e.g. *keep saying the sound silently in my head to remember what I was listening for.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Make this game more challenging by increasing the number of sounds for which to listen. Or by picking two sounds that are similar.
- Use this game during a read-aloud for introducing vocabulary.
- Variation: Use nursery rhymes and have students make a motion when they catch rhyming words.

# Who Stole the Honey Pot?

Students use careful listening skills to identify the honey thief!



## PRE-GAME TALK

For this game, let's use our **Focus Brain Power** to look and listen carefully to guess Who Stole the Honey Pot?

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everyone sit in a circle. I'm going to choose one student to be the listening bear. The listening bear sits in the middle of the circle with the bear's honey pot (*which is represented by a bell or anything that makes a noise*). The bear will need to pay attention to the sounds to guess who took the honey pot.
2. Let's get the bear to cover his/her eyes by all saying together: "Mr. Bear is very sleepy. Mr. Bear is dreaming deeply."

- Now I will silently point to another student to be the honey thief. The honey thief will quietly take the bear's honey pot back to their seat in the circle. The thief will ring the honey pot and then hide it behind his/her back.
- Mr./Mrs. Bear, uncover your eyes and guess who has the honey pot. (*Play multiple rounds, giving different students a chance to play the roles of bear and thief.*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- Bear: What was it like to listen with your eyes closed? Did that make it easier or harder to **Focus**? What else did you hear that might have been a distraction? What helped you focus your listening?
- I used my **Focus Brain Power** to look around and see that your facial expressions and body language (e.g. wiggles, smiles, eyebrows, etc.) gave me hints about who had the honey pot. Did you notice any?
- What other times can we use our **Focus Power** to help us listen carefully?

### GOOD TO KNOW

- You can make the game more challenging by increasing the number of honey pots.

# Sha Zam!

A careful looking and listening game – students try to copy a pattern and notice when it changes.



## PRE-GAME TALK

See if you can use your **Focus Brain Power** to focus your eyes and ears as we play a Brain Game called Sha Zam!

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. I am going to make a pattern of sounds and you will try to copy the pattern. Once you think you've figured out the pattern, say "Sha Zam!" We'll keep repeating the pattern until everyone has said "Sha Zam!"
2. *(Make a pattern of a few distinct sounds, such as 2 hand claps and 1 foot tap. Repeat the pattern 5-10 times while students follow along. Keep going until all students have said "Sha Zam!"*)

- Now I am going to make some new patterns. Some will be the same as the one we just learned, and some will be different. Repeat them after me. You'll need to decide if the pattern is the same as the first one. If it is, say "Sha Zam!"
- (*Make a series of patterns, some of which follow the first one, some of which don't. Pause after each pattern for the group to decide whether to say "Sha Zam!"*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- We had to really **Focus** on each new pattern to decide whether it was a new sound or a new pattern. What made recognizing the pattern easier or harder for you? (e.g. *I said the motions silently to myself to help keep track of them and notice when they returned to the first pattern.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Once students get the hang of it, let them take turns setting the pattern. Advise them to keep patterns simple enough (3-5 sounds) so others can remember it.
- Noticing patterns is helpful in school. Recognizing rhyming words or similar sounds at the beginning or end of words can help children read, write, and spell correctly.

# Silly Sounds

Players use their **Focus Power** to listen carefully and try to identify some silly sounds.



## BEFORE GAMEPLAY

Gather 5-8 simple sounds (e.g. *ripping paper, pouring water, ringing a bell, etc.*). Choose a place to perform the sounds hidden from student's view. (*One option is to set up a screen to perform behind.*)

## PRE-GAME TALK

We're going to play a guessing game called Silly Sounds. You'll have to use your **Focus Brain Power** to pay attention to the sounds!

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. I'm going to make some sounds, and it's your job to use your **Focus Brain Power** to try to identify what made the sound.

2. (Make a sound hidden from view.) What do you think that sound was? If you think you know, show me by raising your hand. We will listen to the responses and see who identified the sound!
3. (Repeat as desired with additional sounds.)

### POST-GAME TALK

- We really had to use our **Focus Brain Power** to pay attention to those sounds. Let's keep our **Focus Power** in mind later today when we are \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I found it easy to name the sound, that made me feel \_\_\_\_\_. When I didn't know some of the sounds, I felt \_\_\_\_\_. How did you feel during the game?
- What helped you **Focus** in this game? (e.g. *I closed my eyes to listen, I tried to picture the object that makes the sound.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Make the sounds harder to identify such as a stapler stapling or the click of a ballpoint pen, etc.
- If some students are quick to call out the right answer and others are struggling: have students play in small groups, ask students to tell a partner first, or ask everyone to write down their guesses.

# Pass the Bell

Passing a bell without making it ring helps students practice careful listening and body control, while cooperating with classmates.



## BEFORE GAMEPLAY

Find a small bell (or another object that makes a noise if you're not careful handling it) that can easily be passed from hand to hand.

## PRE-GAME TALK

In this game, **Stop and Think** will help us be still and move carefully while we concentrate on something that takes a lot of effort. Let's challenge ourselves to see if we can pass a bell without letting it ring.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everyone sit in a circle.

2. I'm going to pass this small bell around. Let's see if we can work together to pass it all the way around the circle without making it ring.
3. If you hear the bell ring, make this signal. Then we'll start the game again. (e.g. *raise your hand, touch your ear, etc.*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- What were you thinking about when you were waiting for your turn to pass the bell? (e.g. *pay attention, focus on how others worked together to prevent the bell from ringing, etc.*)
- What did you do to pass the bell silently? (e.g. use **Stop and Think Power** to be still before moving slowly, tell myself to hold the bell gently so it doesn't shake.)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- You can make this game more challenging by adding multiple bells to the circle.
- Being slow and deliberate is helpful in school. For example, slow careful attention to each letter or sound in a new word can help children read, write, and spell successfully.

# The Pickler

Our **Stop and Think Power** is put to the test when we practice how long we can keep ourselves from smiling or laughing.



## PRE-GAME TALK

We're really going to challenge our **Stop and Think Power** today! We have to control the urge to smile or laugh in a game called The Pickler.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everyone find your partner. One of you is the Pickler, and the other is the Observer. (*Make sure pairs know who has which role first.*)
2. The Pickler's job is to say or do something to try and make the other person smile or laugh without touching them. You can make a funny face or do a silly dance or use a funny voice.

3. The Observer's job is to listen and watch and count to 10. You have to use their **Stop and Think Power** to try not to smile. Once 10 seconds is up, the Observer has to say "Pickle" without smiling. (*The Observer must look directly at the Pickler the entire round.*)
4. Now switch roles.

### POST-GAME TALK

- Was this game challenging? Observer, how did you use your **Stop and Think Power** to not smile or laugh? (e.g. concentrate on *counting and breathing, focus on my face and tell myself not to move, think of something else, ignore the other person, etc.*)
- Can you think of other times when your **Stop and Think Power** might be helpful to keep yourself from laughing? (e.g. *when you are supposed to be paying attention and someone else is doing something funny or distracting.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- You can choose partners for your students and assign Pickler and Observer roles to get the game going.
- Model what it's like to try and keep a straight face by choosing a student volunteer to be the Pickler with you first.

# Silly Stories

Players need to listen carefully for the key words, and think before they act in order to do the right silly motions.



## PRE-GAME TALK

This game is about doing something different from your impulse. Instead of acting out the words you hear, you are going to be silly and do the opposite of what you hear. **Stop and Think Power** will help you think before you act, so you can make the right motion.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. To play this game, we need to learn a motion. Can everyone drum quietly with your fingers? (*Demonstrate drumming on the desk or floor.*)
2. This is the silly part: you're going to do the drumming motion every time you hear "guitar" in the story but NOT when you hear "drums".

3. Pay attention as I read the story. Be prepared to do the silly motion:

- Benny's Big Booming Band had a big show the other night. Benny was the main singer, Bobby played the guitar, and Bubba played the drums. Poor Bubba, he banged those drums so hard they broke, and a piece hit Bobby's guitar and broke it too. Benny had his eyes closed and just kept on singing. He didn't even notice that the drums and the guitar weren't playing!

### POST-GAME TALK

- What was easy or hard about our silly story and mixing up the motions? How did **Stop and Think Power** help you?
- Being able to control impulses is helpful but hard. In this game, we had to **Stop and Think** to NOT drum when we heard the word "drums". What are other times we need to do this in school? (e.g. *when I get excited to share and want to shout out an answer but need to raise my hand instead.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- As a challenge, read the story faster or add in a second motion. (e.g. "*sing la la la*" every time you hear the word "drums")
- Use stories from your regular curriculum which contain word repetition, or make up your own!

# Sing with a Partner

Players take turns singing and moving to Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.



## BEFORE PLAYING

This game is a variation of Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes, so make sure your class has plenty of practice with that game first!

## PRE-GAME TALK

Today, we're going to play Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes in partners. Use your **Stop and Think Power** to be still when it is your turn to sing and to be quiet when it is your turn to do the motions. It will be tricky!

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody find your partner. Decide who will be partner A. (*You may give a prompt such as: The person with the longer hair be partner A.*)

2. This first time we go through the song, only the A's will be singing, and the B's will be doing the motions. (e.g. *touching head, shoulders, etc.*) Let's sing together as a class and try it!
3. Now, we'll switch. B's will be singing the words, and partner A's will do the motions.

### POST-GAME TALK

- How did it feel to **Stop and Think** about whether it was your turn to sing or move? What was easy or hard for you?
- We had to take turns to make this game work. When are other times we have to take turns? (e.g. *when I have to listen carefully to others during their turn to share, when we take turns during recess, when there is a line for the bathroom.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- You may want to choose partners for your students.
- A more challenging variation: partners take turns switching between singing and motions for each line of the song.
- Being able to wait and take turns is critical for teamwork and collaboration in academic projects.

# **EXPANSION DECK**

# Animal Cool Down

Transition from high-energy to a more focused ready-to-learn state through imitating body postures.



## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's use our **Focus Brain Power** to copy a series of animal poses. You will have to look closely at my arms and legs to see what each animal pose looks like. Pay attention to your own body.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody, find your own space in the room where you can move around. We are going to learn a series of animal poses.
2. *(Model the poses, saying the name of each pose as you demonstrate. Start with a few poses, and add more over time.)*
  - Flamingo: Stand on one foot, with the other knee bent. Fold your arms at the elbow like bird wings.

- Dog: On all fours, with your limbs straight. Your bottom is high and your head pointing down.
  - Snake: Lie straight down on your belly. Push up on your hands so that your head and shoulders come off the ground.
  - Lion: Sitting on your knees, hands on knees, mouth and eyes open roaring silently.
  - Butterfly: Sitting on your bottom, soles of your feet together and knees out. Palms together and elbows out.
  - Monkey: Sitting with legs crossed on the floor, hands in lap.
3. Now let's see if we can remember the order we just did. Say the name of the animal aloud with me each time we do a pose. (*Repeat sequence.*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- Holding poses like that really required us to stay focused. What other activities really need our **Focus Brain Power?**
- What helped you remember the positions for each animal?

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Add more poses from the book *My First Yoga: Animal Poses*, by Abbie Davies, 2010.

# Catch the Signal

This is a game to use throughout the day to build skills in noticing key signals or information.

## PRE-GAME TALK

I have a challenge for you today: this Brain Game is one we will play all day long. You will use your **Focus Brain Power** to see how fast you can catch my **Focus Binoculars** during the day.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Today, try and see how quickly you notice and respond when I put on my **Focus Binoculars**.
2. Whenever I make this signal, put on your **Focus Binoculars** too, and be ready to pay attention with your eyes and ears.
3. Let's practice it right now. (*Hold up your **Focus Binoculars** hand signal, and see how fast students put theirs on, too.*)



4. Throughout the day, you will not know when I am going to give the signal, so always be on the lookout. As you get better at this, I'm going to make it harder by doing it faster or doing it in a way that's harder to notice.

### POST-GAME TALK

- How did we do today in catching the signal? We had to **Focus** our attention to catch the signal throughout the day. How can we help each other as a class to get better at catching the signal every time, or catching it faster?
- Signals can remind us to **Focus** and pay careful attention. What other signals do we have in school, at home, or in the community? (e.g. *music before clean-up time, a whistle on the playground, a stop sign, flashing lights on an ambulance.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- This is a good game to use a lot early on to practice the three hand signals for the Brain Powers and to help students build noticing skills.
- Over time, you can invent new signals for other actions (e.g. *folded arms means everyone has to line up quietly.*) Tell students that every time they catch the signal, they should perform the action.

# My Hat Has Three Corners

A simple chant where silent hand motions gradually replace key words



## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's use our **Focus Brain Power** to pay attention to the words and make the correct hand motions as we chant "My Hat Has 3 Corners".

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Let's learn the words to the chant. It's just two phrases:
  - My hat has three corners, three corners has my hat.  
If it didn't have three corners, it wouldn't be my hat.
2. Let's do it again, and this time when we get to the word "hat", DON'T say it. Instead, just point to your head. (*Demonstrate motion.*)

3. Let's try it again, and this time we'll add one more hand motion. So in addition to pointing instead of saying "hat", when we get to the word "three", DON'T say it. Instead, hold up three fingers. (*Demonstrate motion.*)
4. Okay, last round, and we're adding one more hand motion. This time, we'll continue to point instead of saying "hat" and hold up three fingers instead of saying "three". But now when we get to the word "corner", we'll make a corner with our arms and touch our elbows. (*Demonstrate motion.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- If the class needs practice, play only until step 2. Add the following steps only when students are ready for more challenge!

### POST-GAME TALK

- Wow, that was a little tricky for me! Chanting, moving, and positioning is a lot to do. How did your **Focus Brain Power** help you?
- What helped you play this game? What could you try differently next time? (e.g. *I said all the words silently in my head to help me do the right motions at the right time, I remembered what words were silent in each verse by picturing them in my mind while we were chanting, etc.*)

# Pass the What?

A small-group game where players pass a message and object around the circle.

## PRE-GAME TALK

We are going to use our **Focus Power** to pay careful attention and pass an object around the circle.

Pretend you are from a distant land and have never seen this object before. Only the leader knows the name of the object. You will have to send your question all the way around the circle to the leader in order to learn what the object is.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody find your group and sit in a circle.
2. Our first object is going to be “the pencil”. The leader will pass the pencil to the next person and say, “Here is the pencil.” The person receiving



## GOOD TO KNOW

- Before playing, choose groups, designate a leader in each, and demo the game with a small group.

the pencil will ask, “The what?” The leader will answer, “The pencil.”

3. We’ll keep passing the object around. Each person who receives the object must ask what it is, but only the Leader can answer. So the people sitting in-between must pass the message back and forth between them. (*It’ll look and sound something like this:*)

**P2** (hands pencil to P3): “Here is the pencil.”

**P3** (holding the pencil): “The what?”

**P2** (turning to pass message to Leader): “The what?”

**Leader:** “The pencil.”

**P2** (turning to pass message to P3): “The pencil.”

**P3** (hands pencil to P4): “Here is the pencil.”

**P4** (holding the pencil): “The what?”

...

4. Keep going until the pencil makes it all the way to the end.

## POST-GAME TALK

- Was it easy or hard to **Focus** and follow the message around the circle? Did you do anything that helped you get ready for your turn? How did you know what to say when it was your turn? (e.g. *I said it silently to myself, I looked at each person as they said their message to follow it around the circle, etc.*)

# Going on a Bear Hunt

An interactive movement game to practice remembering the correct order of sounds and actions.

## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's go on a Bear Hunt! We might have to run from the bear, so use your **Remember Power** to remember where we've been. Repeat after me, and copy my actions.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. "We're going on a bear hunt. Gonna catch a big one!" (*Start tapping both hands quickly on your thighs.*)
2. "I'm not scared" (*Shake your head.*)
3. "Do you see what I see?" (*Shade your eyes with your hands.*)
4. "Looks like a big mountain! Can't go under it, can't jump over it, can't go around it, gotta climb over it." (*Act out climbing mountain.*)



5. “Looks like tall grass. Can’t go under it, can’t jump over it, gotta go through it, swish, swish.” (*Part grass with arms.*)
6. “Looks like a bear cave. Can’t go under it... Help! It’s a bear! We have to run back through everything! Does everyone **Remember** the right order?” (*Go through the obstacles in reverse order, repeating all sounds and actions.*)
7. “Phew, we are safely back home!”

### POST-GAME TALK

- We needed a lot of **Remember Brain Power** to keep track of all those locations and motions! What helped you **Remember**? (*e.g. picture things in my mind, focus on key words and say them to myself.*)
- What other times in school or at home do you need to **Remember** lots of steps or pieces of information? (*e.g. to use the right order of operations to answer a math question; to make a paper outline or project plan; to remember what’s first on my to-do list; to learn dance steps.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Harder variations:  
Add more obstacles with actions and sounds (*e.g. muddy puddle: glug-glug or a lake: swim-swim*); Increase the pace of the hunt and retreat.

# Hot Potato

When the music stops, everyone tries to remember the dance move – and the person holding the “hot potato” has to remember something different!



## BEFORE PLAYING

Find an object that can be passed easily from hand to hand to use as your “hot potato” (e.g. ball or eraser), and cue up some music for the game.

## PRE-GAME TALK

Let’s play Hot Potato, and use our **Remember Power** to remember the motion or dance move we need to do when the music stops!

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody, let’s all stand (or sit) in a circle.
2. I have a hot potato (*show the object*) that we’re going to keep passing

around as long as the music is playing.

3. When the music stops, everyone will do this dance move: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. *jump, turn around in a circle, touch your head, etc.*) The person who is holding the hot potato will do a different dance move: \_\_\_\_\_. Let's practice the two moves. (*Demonstrate and have kids repeat.*)
4. Let's start the music and play multiple rounds!

### POST-GAME TALK

- How did it feel to play this game? Did anyone feel nervous about ending up with the potato or worried they might forget the move? Everyone feels nervous sometimes.
- What are things we can do to **Remember** next time? (e.g. *when I'm nervous, take a deep breath to calm down and stay focused on what we should be doing when the music stops; give each other hints to support each other when someone forgets; say the two actions to myself to distract myself from the nerves.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- To make things more challenging: increase the number of “potatoes”.
- Kids can take turns deciding the dance moves for each round.

# On My Pizza, I Like

A small-group game where students try to remember a growing list of items.

## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's play a game where we pretend to order a pizza and everyone gets to select their own topping. We'll have to use our **Remember Brain Power** to remember everyone's ingredients. Ready?

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find your group of four.
2. The first person will pick one thing they want on the pizza. It can be something expected, like pepperoni or something silly like peanut butter. You will say, "On my pizza, I like \_\_\_\_\_" and add your ingredient.
3. Going around in a circle, the next person will repeat what the first person said and then add an ingredient. (e.g. if the ingredients so far are



*pineapple and peanut butter, the third person might say, “On my pizza, I like pineapple and peanut butter and apples.”)*

4. The last person will need to take the items off in reverse order. (“*On my pizza, I do NOT like apples or peanut butter or pineapple.*”) Everyone, use your **Remember Powers**, to help each other out with saying all the items.

### POST-GAME TALK

- How did you use your **Remember Brain Power** to keep track of the toppings in the right order? (e.g. *repeat the ingredients to myself, create a picture in my mind*)
- What was it like to play on teams? How did it feel when you or a teammate tried to remember but forgot? Remember, it’s normal to feel that way! How can we support each other when it’s hard to remember? (e.g. *pick another teammate to give you a hint.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Pre-select groups.
- Add challenge by making groups bigger or letting people add two things at a time.
- You can adapt this game to any subject matter to build memory skills. Try substituting pizza ingredients for math concepts, vocabulary words, or other content.

# What is Missing?

A visual memory game where players try to identify what is missing from a set of objects.



## BEFORE PLAYING

Assemble a group of 5 small objects that you can display on a surface. (e.g. pen, button, coin, paperclip, rubber band, etc.) Find some way to cover all of the objects for the part of the game where you have to remove one. (e.g. large folder or scarf)

## PRE-GAME TALK

Let's use our **Remember Power** to keep track of a group of objects and try to figure out what is missing when one is removed.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Here are five objects. Can everyone see? Let's see if we can name all

the items. (*Identify and name each item, and make sure students know what each item is.*)

2. Now take 15 seconds to **Remember** (*rub your temples*) the objects before one is removed.
3. I'm going to remove one object. (*Cover the objects, and remove an object without letting students see.*)
4. Can you use your **Remember Power** to guess what's missing?

### POST-GAME TALK

- What Brain Power helped you while you were looking at the objects the first time? How did you **Remember**? (*e.g. I made mental images of the objects in my head, I repeated the names of the objects to myself.*)
- Is there any other time you need to **Remember** a set of objects and figure out if something is missing? (*e.g. to pack my bag in the morning, to double-check I have everything I need before I leave school, to make sure I included all the right information in my assignment.*)

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Make this game harder by removing more than one object at a time, adding more objects, or limiting the amount of study time.

# Sing Like Bingo

Players sing familiar songs while gradually replacing words with silent motions



## BEFORE PLAYING

Choose a classic children's song that has associated motions that you'd like to sing with the class (e.g. *BINGO*; *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*; *5 Little Monkeys*; *Hokey Pokey*; etc.).

## PRE-GAME TALK

We're going to sing some familiar songs, but let's make our **Stop and Think Power** even stronger by NOT singing some of the words and doing hand motions instead.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody find your own space in the room.

2. We are all going to sing \_\_\_\_ together. Let's sing the song normally first to learn the words. Repeat after me. (*Lead students through the song.*)
3. Now we're going to sing the same song in a tricky way. We're going to leave out one word and replace it with a silent hand motion instead. We'll need to use **Stop and Think Power** to not say the word. For this round, DON'T say the word \_\_\_\_\_. Do this hand motion instead (e.g. touch your head instead of saying "head", clap instead of saying B in BINGO, etc.).
4. (*Continue taking out key words and associate them with motions. By the end of the song, the kids should be doing most of the song silently, using motions instead.*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- To play this game, we had to **Stop and Think** so we could think quickly about doing the motion instead of singing the word. That's hard! What other times during the school day do we need to stop ourselves from doing something automatically and instead think before acting?
- Was it hard to keep track of the song in your mind? What helps you do that? (e.g. focus only on the word that was supposed to be silent, tell myself "don't say shoulders")

# Freeze Feelings

A version of Freeze: when the music stops, players use facial expressions and body language to show a specific emotion.



## BEFORE PLAYING

Cue up some music to use during the game.

## PRE-GAME TALK

We're getting so good at Freeze, let's try a different version. We'll need to use our **Stop and Think Power** to freeze with our faces and bodies showing a different feeling each time the music stops.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody, find your own space in the room where you can move around without bumping into others.

2. In this version of Freeze, before each round I will say the name of a feeling, like “happy” (or sad, angry, scared, embarrassed, etc.). Take a moment to **Stop and Think** about how you would show that emotion with your facial expression and body posture without talking or moving.
3. Dance when the music starts. When the music stops, freeze in a pose that shows me “happy”.
4. Let’s play multiple rounds. (*Give students a new feeling before each round.*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- In this game we used our brains to **Stop and Think** about how to express the emotion with our faces and bodies. What was easy or hard about this game?
- I was picturing different emotions in my mind and what they look like on my face. What were you thinking about before you froze?

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Over time, use this game to explore more complex feelings vocabulary with the group (e.g. *frustrated, proud, jealous, etc.*).
- Challenge: ask students to freeze when the music stops for a count of five BEFORE doing the specific pose.

# Singing with Style

Players use their **Stop and Think** skills to sing familiar songs in different styles.



## BEFORE PLAYING

Create large cards with different styles (e.g. *loud, quiet, quick, slow*) visually represented with words and/or images. Choose a classic children's song that has associated motions that you'd like to sing with the class (e.g. *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes; 5 Little Monkeys; Hokey Pokey; etc.*).

## PRE-GAME TALK

This game is tricky because we'll sing familiar songs in different styles from what you'd expect. We'll need our **Stop and Think Power** to switch styles.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everybody, find your own space in the room.

2. We are all going to sing \_\_\_\_\_ together. Let's sing the song normally first to learn the words and motions. Repeat after me and follow along. (*Lead students through the song.*)
3. Now let's try singing the same song in different styles. I have four cards that say "fast, slow, loud, and quiet." Let's try singing in one of the styles. (*Show one card, and sing together.*)
4. (*Continue singing new rounds in different styles.*)

### POST-GAME TALK

- We had to use our **Stop and Think Power** to do something different than what we were used to. It can be hard. How did that feel? What can help us when it's hard to do this?
- Let's pay attention to styles today. When I tell us to use "quiet" voices during \_\_\_\_\_, think about how to **Stop and Think** to talk in a different style.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Variations: switch styles mid-song or invite students to choose styles.
- This game gives students clear practice for common classroom expectations such as "slow down" or "use a quiet voice."

# Super Sort

An interactive game where kids use their thinking skills to group together by changing categories.

## BEFORE PLAYING

For this game, kids will need distinct areas where they can go and cluster as small groups. You can make 4-5 large circles on the floor (*using hula hoops, tape, etc.*) or hang signs to indicate different areas.

## PRE-GAME TALK

For this Super Sort game, I'm going to ask you to sort yourselves into small groups in these marked areas (*show students the circles or areas you've marked off*) based on different categories. You'll need to **Stop and Think** about the categories before moving.



## GOOD TO KNOW

- Try silent versions of the game where kids can't talk while they are matching.

## GAME INSTRUCTIONS

1. I am going to name a category, and you'll have 5 seconds to think silently to yourself about who else in the room has the same category as you. The first category is \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. hair color, shirt color, age, birth month, etc.) Don't move yet! **Stop and Think** for 5 seconds about others who share your category.
2. On the count of three, I'm going to say "Super Sort!" and you'll start moving into groups. The goal is to try to get into the right groups as quickly as possible.
3. (*Play multiple rounds, sorting based on different categories.*)

## POST-GAME TALK

- For each round, we had to **Stop and Think** about the category. When are times in school or at home that you need to pause and think about a decision before you do something? (e.g. *during an art activity when you have to decide which color to use first, when you feel frustrated with a friend and want to stop yourself from saying something mean, etc.*)
- What can help you to **Stop and Think**? (e.g. *use the hand signal to remind myself to take a pause, take a deep breath and count to 10, etc.*)