Grades K to 3 | Physical and Health Education

# Activity Plan: Brain Breaks

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## Overview

### Big question

How can you prepare your brain for learning?

### Activity description

Students will inquire about strategies to regulate their mind and body.

### Grades and curricular area(s)

* Kindergarten to Grade 3
* Physical and Health Education (PHE)

### Big ideas

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Physical and Health Education (PHE) |
| Kindergarten  | Good health comprises physical, mental, and emotional well-being. |
| Grade 1 |
| Grade 2 |
| Grade 3 |

### Curricular competencies

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Physical and Health Education (PHE) |
| Kindergarten  | Students are able to identify and describe practices that promote mental well-being |
| Grade 1 |
| Grade 2 |
| Grade 3 |

## Materials/Resources

### Books

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Author | Notes |
| Breathe Like a Bear | Kira Willey  | [Optional read-aloud video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvmA2g3HliE) |
| Finding Om | Rashmi Bismark  | [Optional read-aloud video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVTxB3haxBM) |
| I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness | Susan Verde  | [Optional read-aloud video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXA3837uv3w) |
| Meena’s Mindful Moment | Tina Athaide |  |
| Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda | Lauren Alderfer |  |
| Moody Cow Meditates | Kerry MacLean |  |
| My Magic Breath | Nick Ortner and Alison Taylor |  |
| The Lemonade Hurricane: A Story of Mindfulness and Meditation | Licia Morelli |  |

### Meditation videos

* [Easy Mantra Meditation for Kids](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htJ0Bv7xuL8) (1:33)
* [Rainbow Relaxation: Mindfulness for Children](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIbBI-BT9c4) (3:46)
* [Learn to Bring Down Stress: Guided Meditation for Kids](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRkILioT_NA) (3:27)
* [Balloon (Peace Out: Guided Meditation)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBnPlqQFPKs) (6:22)
* [Starfish (Peace Out: Guided Meditation)](https://youtu.be/a1dgkivX9-A) (5:59)

### Templates

* [My Three Brain Break Strategies](#Brain_break)

## Kick Off and Connect

Class discussion:

* At school, how do we know that our bodies and minds are ready to learn?
* What are some indicators that our bodies are not ready to learn?
* What activities can you do to feel ready to learn?

Read one of the books suggested or show the class a video of the books being read aloud (see [Materials/Resources](#_Materials/Resources)).

As a class, discuss the story (book or video) using these questions:

* What is meditation?
* Students may not be familiar with meditation, but many will be familiar with calming breaths or relaxation breathing.
* What places in the world do you think meditation came from? (India, China, Japan, Tibet, and other Asian countries)
* Do you meditate? Do you know anyone who meditates?
* How do you think people feel after meditating?

Engage students in a meditation exercise by using a breathing activity video (see [Materials/Resources](#_Materials/Resources)) or by seating students on the carpet in a comfortable position and guiding them through deep breathing.

As a class, discuss how students feel after the meditation exercise and why meditation is helpful and important.

* There are many ways to calm our bodies down.
* Sometimes we may want to try a different strategy.

## Explore and Engage

Brainstorm calming strategies as a class. Ideas might include:

* Meditate
* Go for a walk
* Do Jumping Jacks
* Dance
* Stretch
* Run
* Read
* Take small sips of water
* Take deep breaths
* Find a quiet space
* Think happy thoughts
* Listen to music
* Play with blocks
* Pat a pet
* Count
* Hug a stuffed toy
* Play with playdough
* Listen to calming music
* Dim lights
* Do yoga
* Look out the window
* Go outside

Have students choose their three favourite calming strategies and create a small poster to keep on their desk. Students can create this from scratch or use the [My Three Brain Break Strategies](#Brain_break) template.

* **Grades K to 1:** Students can illustrate their strategies
* **Grades 2 to 3:** Students can illustrate and describe/name their strategies

Students can illustrate each strategy and use the poster as a reminder of things they can try when they are not focused for learning.

## Wrap-Up and Assess

Ask students how they currently feel. Share how you currently feel.

As a class, do a guided meditation, using a resource such as:

* [Learn to Bring Down Stress: Guided Meditation for Kids](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRkILioT_NA) (3:27)
* [Balloon (Peace Out: Guided Meditation)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBnPlqQFPKs) (6:22)
* [Starfish (Peace Out: Guided Meditation)](https://youtu.be/a1dgkivX9-A) (5:59)

Ask students how they feel after meditating. Was this similar to something they’ve done before?

As a class, discuss:

* How do you know if your brain break is working?
* What should you do if it’s not working?

### Assessment

You may choose to use a single-point rubric, a picture-based self-reflection, or another assessment tool.

#### Sample single-point rubric

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GrowsThings I can work on | Criteria | GlowsThings I did well |
|  | I focused and listened during the meditative exercise. |  |
|  | I illustrated the three strategies that I think will work best for me. |  |
|  | I reflected on how I felt before and after meditation. |  |

#### Sample reflection

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ear with solid fillI focused and listened during the meditative exercise. | Smiling face with solid fill with solid fillNeutral face with solid fill with solid fillSad face with solid fill with solid fill |
| Paint brush with solid fillI illustrated the three strategies that I think will work best for me. | Smiling face with solid fill with solid fillNeutral face with solid fill with solid fillSad face with solid fill with solid fill |
| Thought with solid fillI reflected on how I felt before and after meditation. | Smiling face with solid fill with solid fillNeutral face with solid fill with solid fillSad face with solid fill with solid fill |

## Extend and Transform

* Yoga is like a physical meditation. Ask students:
* Do you know what yoga is?
* Do you know anyone who does yoga?
* Have you ever done yoga?
* Do yoga as a class. Ask students:
* How does yoga feel similar or different to meditation?

### Yoga activities

* [Yoga and Mindfulness for Kids: Outside in the Woods](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8eMSTZ1LbI) (38:30)
* [Yoga for Kids!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X655B4ISakg) (25:04)
* [Yoga for Kids with Animals](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XCQfYsFa3Q) (4:12)

My Three Brain Break Strategies