

BEHAVIOR & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT · K TO Y6

30 Brain Breaks

Quick activities for primary classrooms

About brain breaks

A brain break is a short (1-3 minute) activity that interrupts cognitive load and resets attention. The research is clear: the human brain (especially children's) cannot sustain focused attention for more than ~20-30 minutes at a time. After that, attention degrades, errors rise, and behaviour worsens. A short break — properly chosen — restores focus far faster than ploughing on. **FOUR PURPOSES, FOUR CHOICES:** • **ENERGISE** when energy is low (post-lunch slump, last lesson Friday) • **CALM** when energy is too high (post-PE, post-playground argument, hot afternoon) • **FOCUS** when transitioning between subjects or lessons • **SOCIAL** when class culture needs warmth or repair **KEEP IT SHORT.** 1-3 minutes max. Longer than that and it becomes 'a thing', not a break. Set a visible timer. **KEEP IT INTENTIONAL.** Pick the type to match the class energy. A wild silly game when children are already over-aroused makes the next 30 minutes harder, not easier.

ENERGISING (use when energy is low)



CALMING (use when energy is too high)

FOCUSING (use between tasks or transitions)

SOCIAL (use to build / repair class culture)



How to use these in your classroom

