



BRAIN PLAY | WORD HOT POTATO

5 MINUTES

- Lead this quick cognitive warm up to build attention, processing speed, nimbleness and other cognitive skills, as well as group connection.
- Have students call out words that begin with the last letter of the word stated by the person who goes before them. Begin with the word “BRAIN.” The first student will come up with a word beginning with the letter “N.” The next student will come up with a word beginning with the last letter of that word, and so on, until time runs out.
- Keep time for the activity by snapping your fingers or clapping your hands for a paced beat. Option to have the class join you in setting the beat.
- Option to increase the difficulty by having students pass a medium-sized soft ball to each other when it is their turn at “Word Hot Potato.”

Now let’s do our “Brain Play.” These fast-paced warm-ups at the start of every class are an important way we can keep our thinking focused, fast and nimble. Today’s Brain Play is called “Word Hot Potato.” I’m going to say a word. The next person will take the last letter of my word and say a word that begins with that letter. Then the next person will keep going, again taking the last letter of that word and saying a new word that begins with that letter. Everyone understand the directions?

Great! Let’s get started! I’m going to set the pace to make sure we work fast! Let’s go. BRAIN.

Let’s all congratulate each other. What a great job playing word hot potato!



LEARN THE TBH SCIENCE

5 MINUTES

- Present the science behind this class.
- Allow for brief discussion of the science with your students.

Today’s topic is “Beat the Clock!” There’s nothing like racing against the clock to get us to speed up our processing skills. Did you know that when time is of the essence and we have to hurry to get something done, there’s a brain bonus? Research shows that “thinking fast” helps us sharpen and maintain intellectual skills—especially attention, speed, executive control, and memory, all of which tend to decline as we get older.

Do you have some things you do that force you to work against the clock and think fast?

One of the best -- and most fun! -- ways to flex our mental muscles is to play games or work puzzles that are timed. These can be board games, console-based games using devices like the Nintendo Wii, or app-based games that we can download and play on our smartphones or tablets. That means we can fit in a brain workout whenever we find ourselves with a little time to spare—in line at the grocery store or even in the doctor’s waiting room!



NOW DO IT!

15 MINUTES

- Break your class into two teams.
- Lead your class in the workout below to personalize their learning of the science.
- Play at least two rounds of each “Beat the Clock” game, or more as time allows.
- Award points to the winning team for each game. The team with the most points “wins.”

Now we are going to break into two teams for a bit of friendly “Beat the Clock!” competition. Each team will work together to see who can win against the clock and finish first! We have a few games to play. I’ll keep score. Let’s get started!

“BEAT THE CLOCK” GAMES

WORD SCRAMBLE How many words can each team find using the prompt word “NEUROPLASTICITY?”

Each team picks a “scribe.” They will write the prompt word at the top of the team white board/ flip chart. Each team has 3 minutes to work together and come up with as many words as they can using the letters in the prompt word. When time is up, one team will call out the words on their list. Both teams will cross out any words in common (for example, if both teams have the word “rope” on their list, both teams will cross it out). The team with the most words remaining wins. Additional prompt words: CALCULATOR METAMORPHOSIS CEREBELLUM

SING DOWN! How many songs can each team name (or sing!) that include the prompt word?

Each team takes a turn naming or singing a song that includes the prompt word below in the lyrics. For example, if the prompt word is “rain,” they would name or sing songs such as “Don’t Rain on My Parade” or “Rain, Rain Go Away.” Songs cannot be repeated. Each team has 30 seconds to come up with their “song.” The last team to successfully come up with a song wins the round. Play several rounds using the prompt words below, one at a time, as time allows. The team winning the most rounds wins the game. Prompt Words: LOVE HAPPY SUN FRIEND(S)

Awesome job, both teams! Our brains were definitely the big winners today!



THE TAKEAWAY

10 MINUTES

- Share this brief wrap-up to end the workout.
- Distribute the handouts to each student.
- Ask students to share one thing they will “take away” from today’s class.

Playing against clock is great for our brains. Research has found that timed workouts help us maintain the very intellectual skills that typically decline with age, especially attention, quick and nimble thinking, and memory.