Quick and Fun!

Get Those Kids Moving!

60 Brain Break Cards
(for Squirrelly Students)

Brain Breaks: Dinosaurs and Kittens
For 30 seconds half the class pretends to be dinosaurs while the other half pretend to be kittens, then switch.
We all know how important brain breaks are for student learning (and for teacher sanity), even more so now that so many schools have cut back on recess and PE. These 60 brain breaks have been carefully selected and created to meet the following criteria:

• They all require students to get up out of their seats and move!
• Every student is involved…none are just watching.
• They can be completed in less than five minutes - many take less than a minute.
• They require very little if any prep - most require no prep at all.
• No special materials are needed - a few require pencils, music, or other easily attainable objects.
• They do NOT require the use of a video or video game.
• They are fun!

The brain breaks are presented in card format for ease of use. While there are some old favorite (Simon Says, Dance Party), many are likely ones you have never tried before. Six blank cards are also included for you to create your own. Please see the next page of suggestions for use.

Printing and Cutting:
The cards were made to be printed in color, but will print out fine in gray scale too. They should print out with even margins around the cards; however, because every printer is different, it is possible that you may need to adjust your printer settings. Selecting “actual size” or adjusting the size percentage should do the trick. Cut the cards apart using the dotted guidelines (discarding the bottom strip).

This resource was created by Rachel Lynette copyright © 2013. It may be printed and photocopied for single classroom and personal use only and may not be sold, placed on the internet or distributed in any form. If you wish to share it with your colleagues, please purchase licenses to do so on the Teachers Pay Teachers product page.
Suggestions for Use

• Laminate cards for durability. Keep them in a special bin or hole punch the corners and put them all on a ring.

• Try to do a brain break at least once every half hour that there has not been any other movement (such as moving from the carpet to seats) or whenever your kids are squirrely.

• Make sure you have a quick and easy and quick way to partner students and to split them into small groups.

• Make sure students know the ground rules ahead of time for moving about the classroom (no running, bumping into others, etc.) and for spontaneous partnering (be kind, no refusing to partner, etc.)

• You may want each student to have his or her own designated “brain break spot” for brain breaks that do not require moving around the classroom.

• Consider splitting the cards into those that are super quick and those that take a little longer so that you can quickly grab a card that will work for a given time slot.

• Try selecting 3-6 cards each morning and display them in a way so that the students cannot see the fronts (face down in a pocket chart, on the white board with magnets, on a special bulletin board etc.). Students will enjoy the surprise whenever you turn over a card to reveal the brain break.

• Allow the Student of the Week or Birthday Child to select the day’s brain breaks. Or use choosing the brain break as a reward.

• Allow students to lead brain breaks they are familiar with. Again, this can be used as a reward.

• After you complete a brain break for the first time, ask your students to give you a thumbs up or a thumbs down to express how they felt about it (or use a scale from 1-5, students can show their number with their fingers). This will help you to get an idea about which brain breaks your students love (and which ones are not so popular).

• Consider reserving the most-loved brain breaks for when students have earned a special treat.

• Don’t skip over the ones that require pretending just because you have older students. Tell them that it is like acting. Call it improv.
Picture Pose
In groups of 4-6, students have 10 seconds to create a silly pose for a (pretend) picture. They must hold the pose until the teacher says, "click."

Toe Taps
Partners stand facing each other and tap their left feet together 3 times. Then they tap their right feet. Continue to alternate, increasing speed.

Emotions
Students use their whole bodies to express each of these emotions:
• Nervousness
• Excitement
• Surprise
• Fear
• Happiness

Handshake
Student pairs work together to create an elaborate handshake. For example a handshake could include fist bumps, pinky locks, high-fives, elbow touches etc.

Dinosaurs and Kittens
For 30 seconds half the class pretends to be dinosaurs while the other half pretend to be kittens, then switch.

Wink and Snap
Students stand and wink with their left eyes while snapping with their right hands, and then switch. Try to go fast!
Students stand behind their pushed-in chairs. Teacher calls out a trait and everyone who has that trait must change places with someone else. Examples: “Everyone who is wearing stripes” or “Everyone who likes oatmeal.”

**Trading Places**
Students stand behind their pushed-in chairs. Teacher calls out a trait and everyone who has that trait must change places with someone else. Examples: “Everyone who is wearing stripes” or “Everyone who likes oatmeal.”

**Pencil Balance**
Each student balances a pencil horizontally on his or her index finger. Then they walk. If the pencil drops, the student must sit down.

**Rhythm Repeats**
Teacher (or leader) does a series of movement (such as, 2 claps, 3 shoulder taps, and a jump.) Students repeat.

**Hip Bumps**
In pairs, students hip bump each other (gently), one time. Then both partners turn 180° and hip bump 2 times. Continue to 10 bumps.

**High-Fives, Low-Fives**
Each student finds a student to high-five, then finds a different student to “low-five” (at knee level). Repeat at least five times.

**Trading Places**
Same game, but played in slow motion. It helps to choose several “its.” Teacher can verbally “freeze” any student who is moving too fast.

**Trading Places**
Teacher calls out a trait and everyone who has that trait must change places with someone else. Examples: “Everyone who is wearing stripes” or “Everyone who likes oatmeal.”
Zoo Time
Students pretend to be whatever animals the teacher calls out.

Walking Pair-Share
Students pair off and walk around the classroom sharing answers to a question posed by the teacher.

Six Spots
Teacher labels six spots around the room from 1-6. Students select spots. Teacher rolls dice. All students at that spot must go back to their seats. Remaining students keep playing until only a few are left.

Book Balance
Students walk around the classroom with books balanced on their heads. If the book falls off, the student must sit down.

Imagine-Ball
In pairs or small groups, students play catch with an imaginary ball.

Detective
Student pairs face each other for 30 seconds. Then they turn their backs to each other and each changes one thing (such as untying a shoe, or taking off a necklace). Students then face each other again and identify the changes.
Brain Breaks

Name Moves
Students stand (in a circle if possible) and one student does an action paired with a sound. The class imitates the student in unison. Each student gets a turn.

Line Up!
Students line up by a criteria given by the teacher such as by birthday, alphabetically, by height, etc.

Dance Party!
Turn on the music and dance! Make it a freeze dance by turning off the music at random intervals.

Jumping Skip Count
Students skip-count (by 2s, 5s, 10s, etc.) in unison and jump with each count.

Jack-Spin-Jack
Students do 5 Jumping Jacks, then spin in a circle 3 times, then 5 more Jacks. Repeat as needed.

Hip-Hop
Students hop 1 time on one foot, 2 times on the other foot, then 3 times on the first foot and so on until they either lose their balance or get too tired to hop.

Brain Breaks for Squirrely Kids by Rachel Lynette Copyright ©2013 all rights reserved http://www.rachel-lynette.com
Simon Says
An oldie, but a goodie. Make it more challenging by playing super-fast.

Would You Rather
Teacher asks the class a Would You Rather... question. Students indicate their choices by moving to one end of the room or the other.

Circle Up!
Students mill around the classroom until the teacher calls out a number. Students must quickly form circles containing the number of kids called.

Back to Back
Pairs of students sit on the floor, back to back with arms linked. The challenge is to stand up.

Do the Wave
Students stand in a line (or several lines) and do the Wave, ideally using their whole bodies.

Sing a Movement Song
- Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.
- Tony Chestnut
- Peel Bananas
- Father Abraham
- Noble Duke of York
- If You're Happy and You Know It
Keep it Up!
Student must keep a beach ball from hitting the ground as it is batted around the room (make it more exciting with 2 beach balls.)

Find It Fast!
Teacher calls out a qualifier such as, "red" or "plastic." Students each find and go to an object that meets the qualification.

Wiggle-Wiggle
Students start by wiggling their heads for about 10 seconds. Move on to each part of the body, one at a time. Then wiggle everything at the same time.

Hot and Cold
First students pretend they are very, very cold. Then they pretend they are very, very hot.

Pencil Jumps
Each student places a pencil on the floor and jumps over it forwards and backwards, 10 times. Then 10 more times side to side.

Walk This Way
Students walk each way for 10 steps each:
- baby steps
- giant steps
- backwards
- limping
- fast
- tip-toes

Brain Breaks for Squirrely Kids by Rachel Lynette Copyright ©2013 all rights reserved   http://www.rachel-lynette.com
**My Day So Far**
Students have 30 seconds to act out what they have done so far today starting with waking up. You may want to do this silently and in place.

**Take a Lap**
Students take a lap around the perimeter of the classroom in whatever way the teacher calls. For example: marching, crawling, high-knees, heel-to-toe, etc.

**Freeze and Giggle**
Put on some music and dance. When the music stops, students must freeze. Select 2 or 3 students to unfreeze. Their job is to try and make the frozen students laugh or move, without touching them.

**Ssstand Up! Sssit Down!**
Teacher reads slowly from a book. Whenever the "s" sound is heard, students stand up. They sit down when the "s" sound is heard again.

**Category Jump**
The teacher selects a category, such as “cities” or “games.” Students who have a word that fits stand up. As they are called on, they say their word while jumping, and then sit back down.

**Gotcha**
Students stand in a circle with their left index fingers in the palm of their neighbor’s right hand. When the teacher says, “Gotcha,” Everyone tries to grab their neighbor’s finger while avoiding being grabbed themselves.
Designate one end of the room as true and the other as false. Teacher makes statements (such as, "Snakes are scary"). Students each choose which end of the room to go to.

**Robots**
Students walk and talk like robots. It is also fun to begin the next activity while still being a robot.

**Find Your Shoe**
Students each take off 1 shoe and pile them in together. Everyone takes a shoe and has 1 minute to hide the shoe they have (You might want to require part of the shoe to be visible.) Students find their shoes.

**Part to Part**
Pair students. Teacher calls out two body parts (such as "elbow to ear" or "knee to knee"). Pairs must put those parts together.

**Pantomime**
Students pantomime (act out without words or props) a simple scene such as making a sandwich or opening a present.

**Dance Steps**
Teach your students some of your favorites:
- Macarena
- Zumba
- YMCA
- Hip-Hop
- Moonwalk

**True or False**
Designate one end of the room as true and the other as false. Teacher makes statements (such as, "Snakes are scary"). Students each choose which end of the room to go to.

**Find Your Shoe**
Students each take off 1 shoe and pile them in together. Everyone takes a shoe and has 1 minute to hide the shoe they have (You might want to require part of the shoe to be visible.) Students find their shoes.

**Robots**
Students walk and talk like robots. It is also fun to begin the next activity while still being a robot.

**Pantomime**
Students pantomime (act out without words or props) a simple scene such as making a sandwich or opening a present.

**Dance Steps**
Teach your students some of your favorites:
- Macarena
- Zumba
- YMCA
- Hip-Hop
- Moonwalk

**True or False**
Designate one end of the room as true and the other as false. Teacher makes statements (such as, "Snakes are scary")). Students each choose which end of the room to go to.
Give each student a paper plate. Students must walk around the room balancing the plates on their heads. If a plate is dropped, the student must freeze until another student picks it up and places it back on the student's head.

Teacher says 3-2-1, at 1, students must freeze in a dramatic pose. Repeat several times. Encourage creativity. Students may pose together.

Students each write one fact about themselves on a piece of paper and ball it up. Students have a 30 second “snowball” fight. Students each pick up 1 snowball, unball it, and find the person who wrote the fact.

Teacher or student can lead, just don’t let them get away with moving on the “red lights!”

Students stand and pair up. Each pair plays. Losers sit down, winners pair up and play again. Play until only one person is standing.

Students balance on one foot while holding their arms over their heads.

Brain Breaks for Squirrely Kids by Rachel Lynette Copyright ©2013 all rights reserved  http://www.rachel-lynette.com
I Can Fly!
Students pretend they can fly like each of these for 10 seconds:
- An airplane
- A butterfly
- A bee
- An eagle
- A kite

Hop and Bow
Students hop on one foot looking for partners. When a partner is found, both students face each other and bow (still on one foot). Then they both switch feet and hop to find new partners.

What Makes You Happy?
Students find partners and take turns asking, “What makes you happy?” Answer should be no longer than one sentence. Students shake hands and each find new partners.

Paper Airplanes
Students are given 2 minutes to make paper airplanes (use paper from recycle bin). On the count of 3, all students throw their planes.

5-4-3-2-1
Teacher leads students in five different movements in descending order, pausing in between each one for students to do it. For example: Do 5 jumping jacks, spin 4 times, hop 3 times, walk around the classroom 2 times, Give your neighbor 1 high-five.

Action Words
Students act out each of these words:
- Explode
- Flutter
- Shrink
- Splat
- Melt
Thanks so much for downloading this product! You can find more task cards and question cards here, in the task card section of my Teachers Pay Teachers store.

Other great resources:

- Lit Sparks: Literature Response Question Cards
  - Grades 2-8
  - 94 cards for any book, each with a different question!
  - Plot
  - Setting
  - Character
  - Speculation
  - Comprehension
  - Author's Purpose
  - Personal Connections
  - And Much More!

- Creative Book Projects
  - Grades 3-6+
  - Aligned to Common Core Standards
  - 15 different projects each with a detailed student instruction sheet and grading rubric

- Poetry Patterns and Activities
  - Grades 3-5
  - 37 pages of ready-to-use activities including 21 different poem patterns
  - Haiku
  - Septet
  - Diamante
  - Cinquain
  - Bio Poems
  - Alliteration
  - Holiday Poems
  - Preposition Poems
  - Reflection Questions
  - And so much more!

- Category Brainstorm!
  - Grades 4-6
  - 20 different game cards
  - Make a new game each time
  - Facilitates fluent and flexible thinking skills

- 50 "Top Ten" Writing Prompts
  - Grades 4-6
  - Mix and match pages
  - Appealing half-page format
  - Great for reluctant writers and fast finishers

- Fact or Opinion Task Cards
  - Grades 3-5
  - 32 short multiple choice statement cards to practice fact and opinion.
  - Perfect for reading centers
  - Great for fast prep and fast finishers
  - Recording sheet and answer key included

- Minds in Bloom
  - Ready-to-Use Teaching Materials
  - Highly rated
  - Reasonably priced
  - Often Common Core Aligned

- Teachers Pay Teachers Store