



CLASS 12 | IT'S A MYSTERY!

Teaches the value of intellectual engagement with a fun creative writing group workout.

TBH FOCUS

MIND STRETCH YOUR MIND

SKILLS WORKED

A **N** **VE** **M** **PS** **EC**

SBBT

XX PAIR UP

YOU WILL NEED

- Timer or stopwatch
- Lined paper or index cards, enough for students to have several sheets. Remind distance learners to have these available at home
- Pens and/or pencils, enough for each student. Remind distance learners to have these available at home
- *Now Do It!* worksheets and *TBH Takeaway* handouts, enough for each student. Distribute to distance learners ahead of class
- Video conferencing technology if modifying for virtual delivery



WELCOME TO CLASS!

- Welcome any new students using the *Welcome to the TBH Course* introduction.
- Introduce today's class.

Today's topic is "It's a Mystery!" Our TBH Focus is the "Stretch Your Mind" action point. Research shows that intellectual engagement can defend the brain against symptoms of memory loss and lower the risk of dementia. We're going to engage our brains today with some creative writing that promises to be challenging and definitely fun!

We will be working on the following thinking skills today:

A Attention

N Nimbleness

VE Verbal Skills

M Memory

PS Problem Solving

EC Executive Control

TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

5 MINUTES

- Lead this upbeat, seated warm-up to build focus, energy and get everyone ready to learn.
- Encourage class to count along and support each other.
- See the [TBH Let's Get It Started! playlist](#) for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.

We are going to begin with *TBH Let's Get It Started!* Being physically active is great for our brains. This quick warmup is designed to get us focused, build energy and ready to learn. We'll do this right at our seats at the beginning of every class. Just watch what I do and follow along!



TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

CONTINUED

FEET GET STARTED!

- ▶ Lift toes to the sky for 5 beats. Feel the stretch while counting together from 1 to 5.
- ▶ Lift heels off the floor for 5 beats. Feel the stretch while counting backwards from 5 to 1.
- ▶ With feet on the floor, curl your toes tightly and hold for 5 seconds, counting backward E to A. Relax then repeat once more.

LEGS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Gently kick legs out from the knee, alternating legs. 8 repetitions. Count together backward from H to A.
- ▶ While sitting tall with feet together, gently swing right leg open to the right and tap toes. Then bring legs together. 5 repetitions. Count backward 5 to 1.
- ▶ Repeat with left leg swinging it open and tapping toes to the left side. Then bring legs together. 5 repetitions. Count backward from 25 by 5's (25, 20, 15, 10, 5).
- ▶ Stamp feet on the ground, alternating feet. Make "noise" with group.

BACKS GET STARTED!

- ▶ While seated, gently twist upper body to the right. Hold and count together 1 to 5.
- ▶ Repeat to the left, gently twisting the upper body to the left. Hold and count together 1 to 5.
- ▶ Reach arms forward, gently rounding the upper back. Hold for 5 counting E to A, then reach arms up, straightening upper back. Hold for 5 seconds. Count A to E.

ARMS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Gently shake arms at the side of the body, open and close hands.
- ▶ Circle wrists a few times clockwise and counterclockwise.
- ▶ With arms straight in front, use right hand to gently pull left-hand fingers up to the sky for a nice forearm stretch. Hold for 5 seconds. Count by 2's (2,4,6,8,10). Then, use the right hand to help gently push the left-hand fingers down towards the floor for another stretch. Hold for 5 counts. Count backwards by 2's. (10, 8, 6, 4, 2).
- ▶ Repeat on the other side. With straight arms, use left hand to gently pull right-hand fingers up to the sky for a nice forearm stretch. Hold for 5 seconds. Count A to E. Then, use the left hand to help gently push right-hand fingers down towards the floor for another stretch. Hold for 5 counts. Count E to A.
- ▶ Slowly circle shoulders to the front. 3 repetitions. Circle shoulders to the back. 3 repetitions. Count together 1 to 3 and then 3 to 1.

VOICES GET STARTED!

- ▶ Say "OHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds. Try lifting eyebrows while making noise for a surprised facial expression.
- ▶ Say "EHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds. Try smiling while vocalizing.



- ▶ Say “AHHHHHHHHHHH.” Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds. Try frowning while making noise.
- ▶ Say “OH – EH – AH.” Hold each sound for a few seconds. 3 repetitions. Use the facial expressions for each sound.
- ▶ Say “I wish to wash my wristwatch.” Repeat this famous tongue twister exercise, focusing on articulation and participation. 3 repetitions.

BREATH GETS STARTED!

- ▶ Slow focus to bring awareness to sitting still in chair.
- ▶ Take a deep breath in through the nose and exhale out through the mouth.
- ▶ Give a full body shake and a wiggle.
- ▶ Give selves big hug, wrapping arms across waist and squeezing gently, as able.
- ▶ Thank selves and send some “TBH love” to our brains!

Great job, everyone! We are started up and ready to go!



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.
- Begin with a word. The next person will take the last letter of your word and offer a word beginning with that letter.
- When a student cannot quickly think of a word, they are “out.” Continue play until one student is left or until time runs out.
- Have everyone clap or snap fingers to set a good pace.
- Encourage distance learners to join in from home.

Now let’s do our “Brain Play.” Research shows that working against the clock is an important way we can keep our thinking focused, fast and nimble. And all these skills are essential to learning and remembering better! We will “play” with our brains at the start of every class to support these important cognitive skills.

Today’s “Brain Play” is called “Word Hot Potato.” Here’s how it works. I will start by saying a word. Then (person to your right) will then come up with a word that starts with the last letter of their word. For example, if I say “elephant,” (person to your right) will say a word beginning with the letter “T” like “tide.” And we will keep going around with everyone taking a turn, until time is up. If you can’t quickly think of a word when it’s your turn, you are “out” and we’ll skip to the next person. We will keep playing until all but one of you are out and we have a winner or until we run out of time!

Let’s set a good pace by (clapping/snapping our fingers) as we go. Ready?



LEARN THE TBH SCIENCE

5 MINUTES

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

Words have a lot of power. They can lift us up or start an argument. They can take us to far-away places in books and magazines. They can teach us about new inventions or provide instructions about how to complete a project.

But they hold another very important power: They can be used to build new brain cells and fight memory loss, two things we could all use at every and any age.

When you read a book, write a poem or complete a word puzzle, you are using intellectual engagement to stimulate your brain. Intellectual engagement means you are thinking deeply, problem solving or learning new skills. And that type of challenge to your brain is linked to neuroplasticity, or the ability to form new connections. Those new neurons and the new connections between the brain cells can create a theoretical “cognitive reserve” that may provide a buffer or resilience against symptoms of dementia.

Studies have shown that higher levels of intellectual engagement may reduce the risk of dementia by as much as 63 percent. And the more you practice, the more protection you get. Researchers found that people who have participated in a lifetime of intellectual engagement showed moderate to significant benefits to their brain health.

There are endless ways to stay intellectually engaged. We should always be on the lookout for challenges that encourage us to think out of our own “box” and seek creative solutions. Even thinking about ways to stay intellectually engaged keeps you intellectually engaged!



NOW DO IT!

15 MINUTES

- Lead your class in this workout to personalize their learning of the science. Option to distribute class worksheets.
- Break your class into pairs of 2 or 3.
- Distribute paper and writing utensils.
- Have students work in pairs to write 10-word “mystery novels” together.
- After 10 minutes, ask students to share their “mystery novels” with the class.
- For virtual delivery, modify to work “All Together.” Adjust script accordingly.

TIP! Display the 10-Word Mystery Novels on a bulletin board or online with the authors’ permission.

Now that we’ve learned how words can help us stay intellectually engaged, let’s tap into our creative sides. We’re going to pair up and write a mystery novel, but with a hitch. They can only be 10 words long. No more and no less!

Let’s talk for a minute about how to write a mystery novel. You will want a character to act



as your protagonist – maybe a man that is lost or a little girl spooked by a sound. You will want to build mystery for your character – maybe he hears a scream upstairs or maybe she spots something unusual by the side of the road. Build suspense before the reveal and conclusion. It sounds like a lot of information for 10 words, but you can do it!

For example, my 10-Word Mystery Novel might be, “Bang! What’s that? She listened. It was just the dog.”

Let’s break into pairs and get started! Try pairing up with someone you haven’t worked with yet. It will be fun to hear what we all come up with for our “mystery novels!”



TBH TAKEAWAY

10 MINUTES

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

That was a lot of fun. I’m impressed by your creativity and sense of mystery! The intellectual engagement of this exercise is one way to keep your brain busy and active. Repeated intellectual engagement like this has been shown to promote neuroplasticity, reduce dementia risk and possibly build a cognitive reserve to ward off age-related cognitive issues.

What are some other ways you can challenge yourself with a creative boost each day?



TBH TAKE A BREATH

5 MINUTES

- Lead this signature relaxation and affirmation exercise to close the class.
- See the [TBH Take a Breath playlist](#) for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.

Let’s wrap up with our “TBH Take a Breath.” Being mindful of our breath and sharing some positive thoughts is a wonderful way to acknowledge what we’ve learned together before we go back to our days. Research also shows that these kinds of exercises help us focus better and even learn more effectively.

- ▶ *Have students get comfortable, resting both feet flat on the floor, hands resting in their laps.*
- ▶ *Have students close their eyes and keep them gently closed.*
- ▶ *Ask students to focus their attention on their breathing, noticing the rate and rhythm of their breath. Allow them to focus on their natural breathing for a few moments.*



- ▶ *Instruct students to begin rhythmic breathing. Ask them to inhale slowly and deeply through their nostrils, breathing gently into their chest and belly. Then ask them to exhale slowly through their lips, slowing the rate and rhythm of their breath.*
- ▶ *Have students continue rhythmic breathing, instructing them to continue to focus on gently and slowly inhaling and exhaling, allowing their attention to simply “ride” the wave of their breath. Allow them to focus on rhythmic breathing for several moments.*
- ▶ *Offer the following positive affirmation statements below in a calm, slow voice. Invite students to simply listen, repeat the phrase silently to themselves, or to think about what each statement means to them.*

**My body is relaxed.
I am grateful for my creativity.
I am grateful for a nimble mind.
I am grateful for the support of my classmates.
I take this time and this breath for me.**

- ▶ *Pause for several moments.*
- ▶ *End the exercise by inviting students to bring their awareness back to the room, gently opening their eyes and becoming more aware of their surroundings.*
- ▶ *Invite them to end practice with gratitude for taking a moment for themselves, for the chance to learn together and connect with each other.*



COMING UP NEXT!

2 MINUTES

- Thank students for attending the class.
- Invite students to join you for the next TBH class.

I am so glad we had this time to learn together today. It was nice to give our brains a boost and connect with each other.

I look forward to seeing you for our next Total Brain Health class. Be sure to bring a friend!



CLASS RESOURCES

NOW DO IT! WORKSHEETS

Use these optional worksheets to run your class.

It's a Mystery! Worksheet. Use this worksheet to support the class exercise as needed. Distribute or email to distance learners.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[*Resources Mystery Word List*](#). This list of words on Vocabulary.com can be a good resource for your class as they work on their 10-word mystery novels.