



CLASS 23 | POETS IN SESSION

Engages with a group poetry writing session for a highly creative mind “stretch” and social connection.

TBH FOCUS

 **STRETCH YOUR MIND**

SKILLS WORKED

      

SBBT

 **ALL TOGETHER**

YOU WILL NEED

- Timer or stopwatch
- Whiteboard and/or flip chart and markers
- Music source and speakers



WELCOME TO CLASS!

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

Today's topic is *Poets in Session*. Our TBH Blueprint focus is the “Stretch Your Mind” action point. We'll be stretching our minds and sharpening our brains with some creative work together.

We will be working on the following thinking skills today:

 **ATTENTION**  **SPEEDY THINKING**  **NIMBLENESS**  **VERBAL SKILLS**
 **MEMORY**  **PROBLEM SOLVING**  **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 with you 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.



TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

CONTINUED

We are going to begin with *TBH Let's Get It Started!* This quick warmup is a wonderful way to get focused, build energy and get us ready to learn. Just watch what I do and follow along.

FEET GET STARTED!

- ▶ Tap toes on both feet, up and down. 10 repetitions. Count together 1 to 10.
- ▶ Alternate toe taps. 10 repetitions. Count backward together 10 to 1.

LEG GET STARTED!

- ▶ Stamp feet on the ground, alternating feet. Make "noise" with group.
- ▶ Gently kick legs out from the knee, alternating legs. 10 repetitions. Count together from A to J.
- ▶ March in place, alternating legs. 10 repetitions. If your class is physically able to march in place safely while standing, you may choose that option. Count backwards from 20 by 2's (20, 18, 16 ...)

ARMS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Gently shake arms, open and close hands.
- ▶ Circle wrists a few times in clockwise and counterclockwise.
- ▶ Hold arms straight out in front, shoulder level, palms facing down. Slowly lower both hands to thighs and then raise them back to shoulder level. 5 repetitions. Count by 2's (2,4,6,8,10).
- ▶ Shrug shoulders up and down, with hands on knees. 5 repetitions. Count backwards from 5 to 1.

VOICES GET STARTED!

- ▶ Say "OHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "EHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "AHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "OH – EH – AH." Hold each sound for a few seconds. 3 repetitions.
- ▶ Say "The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue." Repeat this famous acting voice exercise with the class, 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.
- ▶ Exhale out through the mouth.
- ▶ 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 | IF THEN

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 one of the “if” prompts below. Have the student to your right give a “then” phrase in direct response to your prompt. Keep going around, with each student offering a “then” phrase in direct response to the phrase offered by the person before them. For example, you might say “if pigs could fly” and the first student might say “then bacon would be air fried.” And the second student might say “then fried chicken would be cheaper” and so on.
- Encourage students to give silly or nonsensical responses.
- Have everyone clap/snap fingers to set a good pace.
- When repeating this class, try different “if” prompts or have students offer their own “if” prompts to lead the group.
- Encourage distance learners to join in from home.

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 “If Then.” This variation of a popular improvisational acting warmup is a great way to keep our thinking fast, fluent, and nimble. I’ll start us off with an “if” prompt. Then (name of student to your right) will respond by saying “then ...” and give a phrase in answer to my “if” prompt. Then we will keep going around, with each person sharing something beginning with the word “then” in response to what the person before them said. For example, I might say “if pigs could fly” and the first student might say “then bacon would be air fried.” And the second student would respond to the first student by saying “then fried chicken would be cheaper” and so on. The sillier and more nonsensical it gets, the more fun it is! To keep it challenging, we’ll (clap/snap fingers) to set a good pace. Ready?

“IF” PROMPTS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| If sloths were fast ... | If clothes make the man... |
| If dogs could sing ... | If I were a rock ... |
| If calories could count ... | If time went backwards ... |
| If walls could talk ... | If I knew then ... |



LEARN THE TBH SCIENCE

5 MINUTES

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

One of the things we’ve learned together is the importance of continuing to try new intellectual challenges. Research shows that stretching our thinking by learning a new language or trying a new hobby are important ways we can lower our dementia risk, no matter our age.



But here’s something new – of those intellectual challenges, creative pursuits add a “brain boost” for the investment of your time. Why? Creativity challenges our thinking skills in a different way than activities like reading a book or attending a concert. When we are engaged in creating something, we are more likely to build higher order cognitive abilities such as problem solving, flexible thinking and executive control. We also are more likely to gain more multi-sensory challenge when we engage creatively, whether we are making something with needlecraft or experimenting with a new recipe. These are all good reasons to make sure that your mind “stretch” always includes a way to engage creatively.



NOW DO IT!

15+ MINUTES

- Lead your class in the workout to personalize their learning of the science. Option to distribute class worksheets.
- Write one of the poetry prompts from below at the top of the whiteboard/flip chart.
- Ask students to contribute a phrase or movement to continue and complete the poem together.
- Write the phrases/notate the movement on the whiteboard/flip chart as they are contributed and agreed upon. Decide together when the poem has reached its natural conclusion, then read/act out the poem together.
- If time allows, repeat with a new poetry prompt.
- When repeating the class, use new poetry prompts. Or, have students create a poem solely comprised of movements. Or, have students suggest poetry prompts.
- Encourage distance learners to follow along at home by contributing to the poetry prompts. Adjust scripting accordingly.

Today we are going to get creative together. How many of you write poetry? Pause for discussion.

Poetry is a form of creative expression that dates to the earliest writings of humankind. Playing with language to share our deepest thoughts, feelings and desires can take many poetic forms. We find poetry across cultures and generations. And while reading poetry is familiar to us all, writing poetry might be something you don’t do, or don’t do very often.

In a moment, I’m going to share a prompt we will use to start a poem. Then we will “write” the poem together by sharing our ideas for what comes next. Feel free to just say what comes to your mind for the next part of the poem – no need to wait for a turn!

And here’s something to make this a bit more brain boosting - In addition to sharing something verbally, we can add to the poem with a motion. And that motion will become part of the poem.

We’ll agree on the parts we want to add to our poem, and end when we all think the poem is done. Then we will read and act it out, together. If time allows, we will create another poem with a new prompt. Ready?



“POETS IN SESSION” PROMPTS

The embers glow red and smoky ...
 Oh! how the mighty roar of the ...
 What pleasures bring the ...
 At 4 o'clock be here, he said ...

Be still! For beneath the ...
 Memory is a fickle thing ...
 The ancestors before us ...
 Steaming tea and ...



TBH TAKEAWAY

10 MINUTES

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

Stretching our mind with intellectually engaging activities is one of the most important things we can do to take good care of our brains. The good news is that staying intellectually engaged is easy to do. Try and include creative pursuits as part of your daily routine for a brain boosting workout that is not only intellectually stimulating but that challenges higher order thinking skills such as problem solving and nimbleness. Some even find staying creative helps them feel more connected to themselves and to others.

Can you share a creative pursuit you would like to try or go back to doing? Can you plan to do it?



TBH TAKE A BREATH

5 MINUTES

- Lead this signature TBH relaxation and affirmation exercise to close 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 now with “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 day.

- ▶ *Have students get comfortable, resting both feet flat on the floor, hands resting in their laps on their thighs.*
- ▶ *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 mind is nimble.
I am grateful I can try new things
I am grateful I can be creative.
I am grateful to my classmates.
I take this time and this breath for me.**

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

Today was informative and lots of fun! I look forward to seeing you for our next TBH Brain Workout class. Be sure to bring a friend!



CLASS RESOURCES

NOW DO IT! WORKSHEETS

Use these optional worksheets to run your class.

Poets in Session Worksheet. Use this worksheet to support the class exercise. Distribute or email to distance learners.