

## Mindfulness and Wellbeing

### Exploring Emotions – ‘Check-In’ Activity

This activity provides a daily check-in to ensure children are feeling safe, welcomed, and ready to start their day. Some ideas to use are set out below and the children could circle their choice - helped by the teacher. The use of the proforma could be linked to the development of class rules.

**Thumbs up for SWAN! Safe! Welcomed! Altogether! Nurture!**

<b>Do you feel SAFE in school?</b>			
<b>Do you feel WELCOME in school?</b>			
<b>Do you feel we are working ALTOGETHER in school? (Belonging)</b>			
<b>Do you feel Nurtured/ Looked after in our school?</b>			

The teacher can use this check-in frequently. Initially it will be necessary to talk through the check-in with the children and do it as a group/ class together so that they understand the questions and can be helped to consider how they feel.

The teacher could choose to focus on one or two aspects of the grid at the start of the term. For example, they could focus on the children feeling Safe and Welcomed. Then later, the other aspects of the grid could be introduced to see how the children feel working together and about nurture in school or the sense of being looked after. This is perhaps the easiest way to explain or describe Nurture to younger children.

Once the children have had time to work together and to consider their new rules for working together, they could progress to consider these further aspects of the grid.

Later as the children settle and have considered some of the other activities in the pack, they should be able to complete the check-in alone and progress to use it individually.

The table could also be adapted and used to see if children feel Safe, Welcomed, Altogether, Nurtured (SWAN) in other environments too such as at home or out in the wider community context. This could open discussions about Coronavirus and its impact on our lives and how we now need to be aware of it in our lives in various settings inside and outside of school.

The younger children could consider each aspect of the grid at different times, or on different days. At the beginning of the term the teacher could focus on feeling safe at home with the children. Two templates have been provided below for use by the teacher.

The teacher could also amend these to suit the needs of their children or to use with individual children as required.

**Template One (below)** – can be used in relation to the children and how they feel in school: Safe, Welcomed, Altogether and Nurtured.

**Template Two (below)** - can be used in relation to how children feel in school, home and beyond.

**Template 1****Do you feel SAFE in school?****Do you feel safe in the classroom?****Do you feel safe in the playground?****Do you feel safe in the dinner hall?**

**Template 2****Do you feel SAFE in school?**

Yes



OK



No

**Do you feel safe in the classroom?**

Yes



OK



No

**Do you feel safe at home?**

Yes



OK



No

**Do you feel safe at the shops?**

Yes



OK



No

**What things do we do to make sure we are safe...****At school?****At home?****At the shops?**

By exploring these issues of feeling safe the teacher can introduce and discuss the concept of needing rules to keep us safe wherever we are. This work can lead to the **writing of class rules**. The teacher could lead discussion with the children based on what they remember of class rules in other years and how these have had to change to keep us safe and healthy.

The children could compile a list of **old rules we need to still have** and new rules **we now need to include**.

The teacher could refer to some of the materials in circulation regarding the spread of Covid 19, social distancing and other preventative measures to help the children write the rules for their class or school. The teacher may also wish to display and discuss a set of class rules for before Covid 19, encouraging the children to consider what needs to be added.

This will allow the teacher to reinforce the current measures in place at the time. This basic proforma (overleaf) may help in the recording of what the children discuss, or in the prompting of the discussion.

The children could decide what they need to include for themselves and others as they keep safe in the school environment. They could discuss which rules stay the same, which need updated and what new rules there are all together. The teacher should ensure the children understand and include the following:

- New, stricter personal hygiene measures
- social distancing rules
- Class bubbles
- Limits on personal resources
- Restrictions on accessible areas
- Any other rule applicable to the individual setting.

Rules we remember from last year:	New Rules we need to add:
E.g. Put your hands up! 	Put your hands up! E.g. Don't touch... 
E.g. Be polite 	Be polite E.g. Stay in our bubble 
E.g. Be kind to everyone 	Be kind to everyone E.g. Acts of kindness 
E.g. Keep the classroom tidy 	E.g. Keep your own place tidy 
E.g. Sign out when going to the toilet 	Sign out when going to the toilet E.g. Only go to the toilet one at a time 
E.g. Look after your things/ 	Look after your things E.g. Don't share your own resources. 
	Sneezing & Coughing rules. 

## Emotions- Activity 1

**Now that I am back in school - How do I feel?**

**Being back may cause a range of emotions for children. This activity uses Emojis to help children express their feelings and to articulate them.**

Teacher could use the images below or source a range of emoji images to represent emotions such as:

- Happy
- Sad
- Afraid
- Worried
- Relieved
- Excited

The children could use the emojis to depict how they are feeling about being back in school. They could highlight which emoji best describes how they are feeling. They could be encouraged to share why they have selected that image or emoji.

**The children in KS1 could try to be more specific by selecting from emojis which depict degrees of feeling, for example, different degrees of happiness. This activity will help develop children's emotional vocabulary and emotional literacy. Template is provided below.**

The children could also match emotions to different aspects of being back in school. So, for example, they may have different feelings about different aspects of school life. They might feel differently about the fact they are back doing schoolwork; this could provoke a range of responses. The fact that they can see and meet their friends again will probably make them happy!

So, they could help the teacher list all the different aspects of school life and returning to school, such as:

- Back with friends
- Back to schoolwork in classrooms

- Back to Play
- Back to school dinners
- Back to PE
- Back to wearing a uniform
- Back to homework
- Back to some learning online

Once the list is compiled, the children could select from a set of emojis to identify how they feel about each aspect. Again, this can help teachers identify anyone struggling to cope. If the activity is repeated several times the teacher could track children to see if they are settling in ok or to see which aspects of settling back to life in school, they are happier about.

Various degrees of happy	Various degrees of sad
	
	
	
<b>Other potential emotions:</b> Excited	<b>Worried / Nervous</b>
	
Relieved	Afraid, fearful



Further images are available at <https://emojipedia.org/>

## Emotions - Activity 2

The teacher could display a range of emoji faces to depict emotions on a whiteboard or on a large page that is accessible to all children. The range of emoji images could represent emotions **such as**:

- Happy
- Sad
- Worried
- Excited

The children could be asked a few times a day to use a strategy such as Dot Voting to identify which emotion they are feeling at that time.

To explore how they feel the teacher could ask some prompt questions at different times of the day, such as:

- How do you feel being back with your friends?
- How do you feel being around others?
- How do you feel now that you are back to schoolwork in classrooms?
- How do you feel about the new rules?
- How do you feel now that you are back to doing homework?

Each child could have the chance to select the most relevant feeling they are experiencing at that time or to answer the question posed, by putting a dot beside the relevant emoji. If possible, each child could have a different colour pen so that the teacher could identify them. Alternatively, children could write their name below or beside the emoji that represents how they are feeling.

Using this simple activity, the children can express themselves and the teacher can identify any child who may need support. The children could also discuss the range of emotions that the class is experiencing. They could talk about ways to help anyone who isn't feeling happy at that time. The children should be encouraged to discuss the emotions so that they have the chance to acquire and develop their vocabulary and understanding of the different words and expand their ability to articulate how they are feeling.

### Emotions - Extension Activity

The children may need to discuss their feelings about lockdown, or the teacher may wish to explore their feelings on the subject. If so, the same activity could be used. The teacher should ask the children to select some of the emoji faces to describe how they felt when they were off school. To do this the children should have a separate sheet each, with several emotions depicted as emojis. The children could identify those they recall feeling and share and discuss why they had felt these emotions.

Encourage the children to draw pictures of all the good times they had when they were in lockdown and ask them to draw emoji faces in the corners of the pictures to show the emotions experienced. This will bring out things which can be discussed or explored further with the children.

### Activity 3 - On the Other Hand

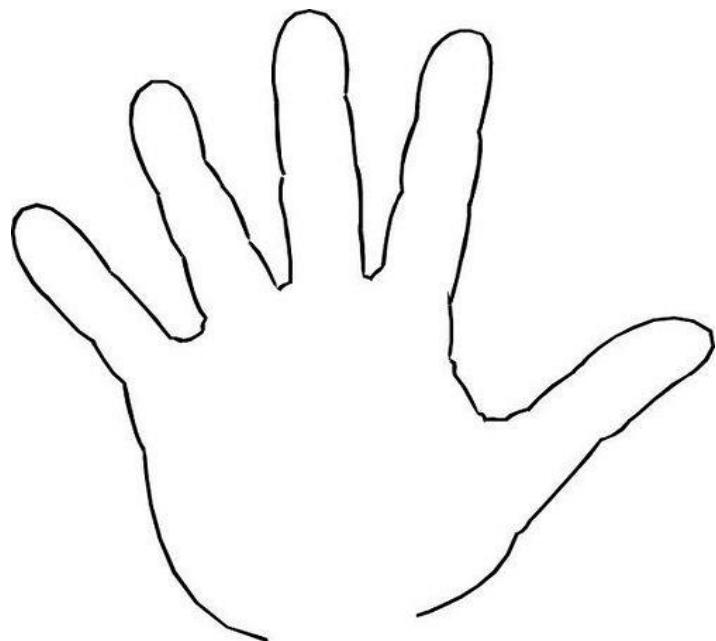
In this activity the teacher will focus on positive and negative experiences with the class. Start the discussion by asking the children if they learned anything new during lockdown. Did they gain a new skill? For example, many children got trampolines or tried baking with parents. The children could think about the new things they did and new skills they gained during lockdown and consider:

- Who helped them with it?
- How they felt when they were learning their new skill?

The teacher could lead a discussion with the children around the positive things that happened during lockdown and affirm that not everything was 'bad' or negative during this time. Allow the children the chance to express both sides of lockdown, the negative and the positive. To this a simple proforma could be used such as the one provided below:

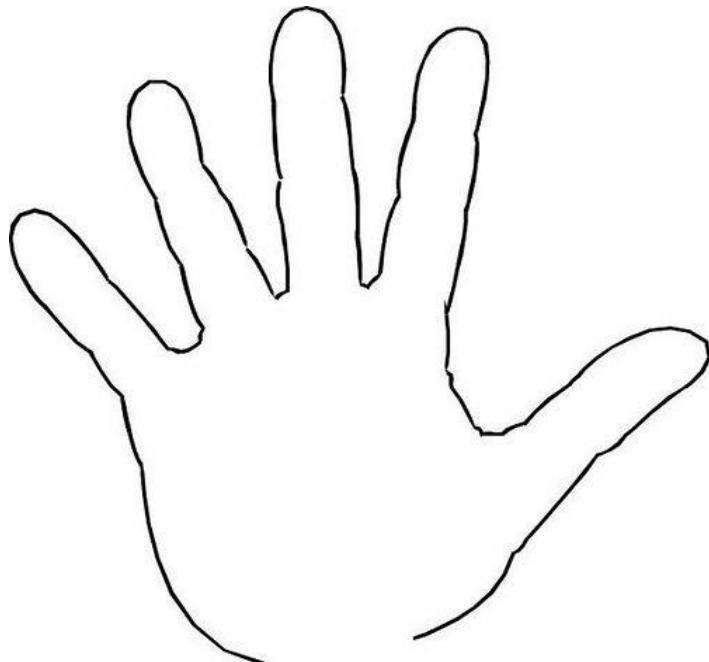
**'On the Other Hand' Activity**

The negative things about Lockdown were:



ON THE OTHER HAND....

The positive things about Lockdown were:



The teacher should help the children understand that there were different sides to lockdown, the positive and the negative, the good and the bad.

The children could decorate their hands with images to depict what they have written on the fingers.

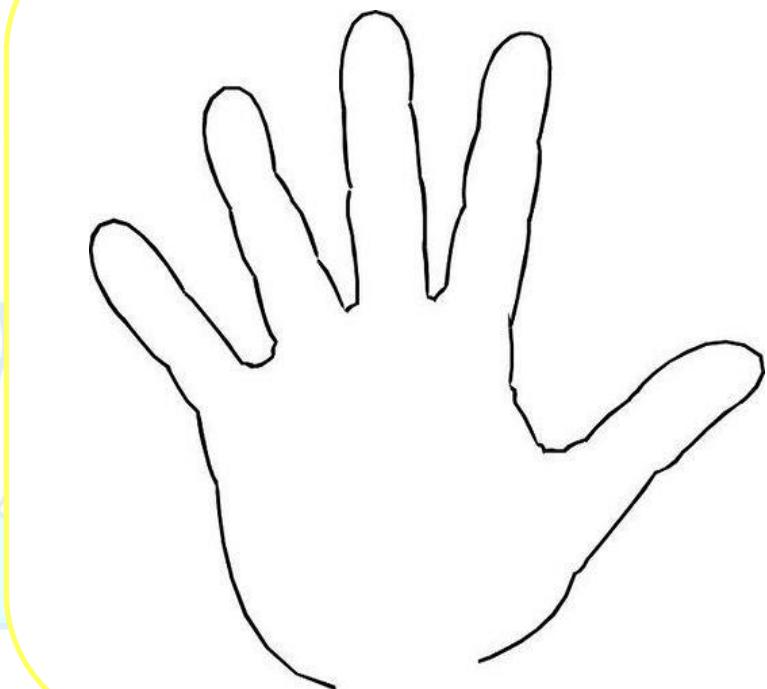
The children could identify all the new things they learned to do or new skills they gained. These could also be recorded in words or in picture on the template. For example, they may have learned to cook, to do something new on their computer, to work an appliance at home.

### **Extension Activity**

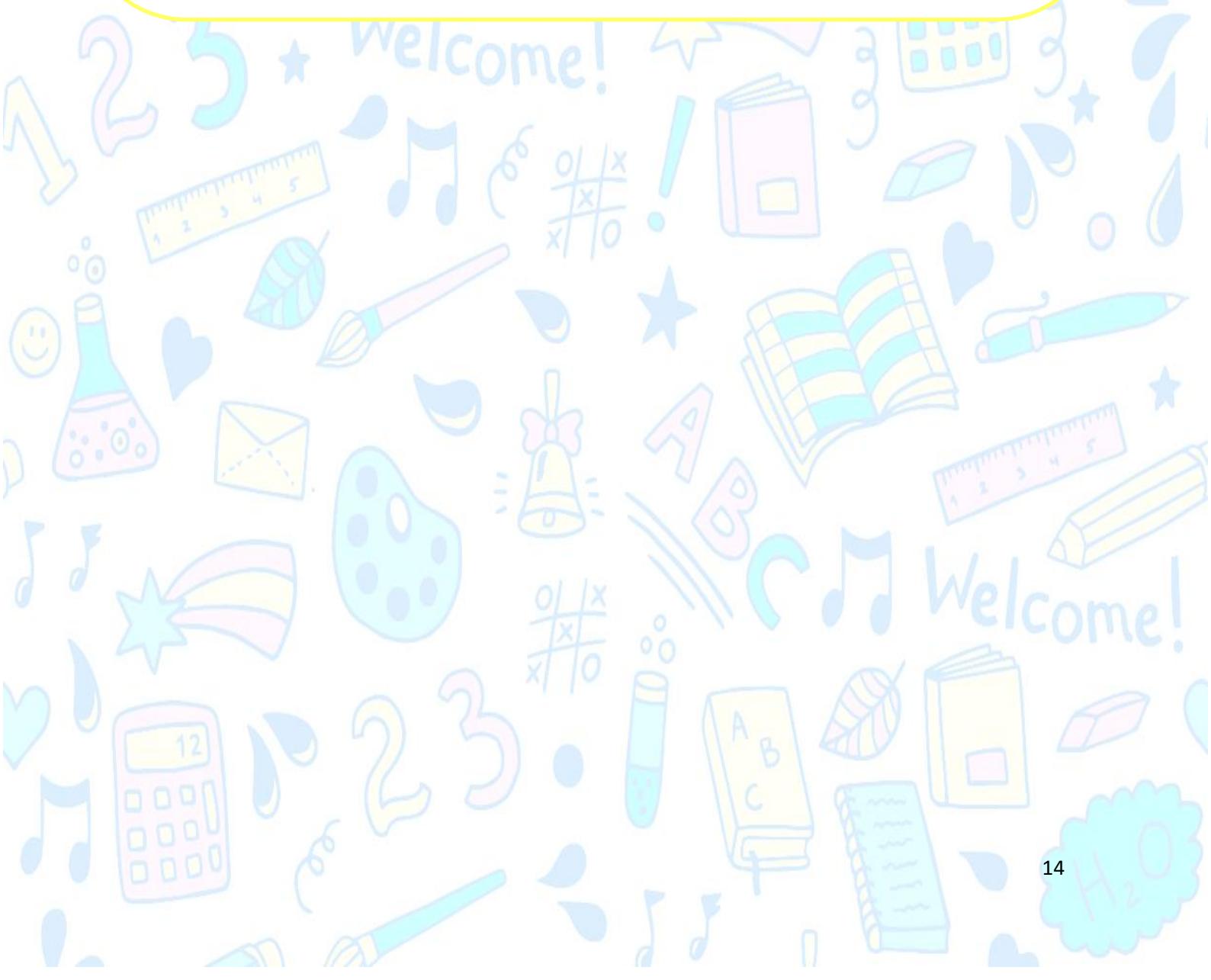
Consider all the positive things about being back in school. These could include:

- Seeing friends
- Working in their classroom
- Playing in the yard
- Playing games
- Seeing their teacher
- Working together

Once the children have thought up their ideas and these have been collated and displayed for all to see, the teacher should direct the children to select five positive ideas from the list and record them on the Hand Template overleaf.



1. Record a positive experience on each finger.
2. In the centre of the hand write the words:
3. 'Back in school and feeling good is...'
4. Decorate the hand.
5. Draw a positive emoji at the end of each finger.



## My SAFE Place Activity

### The discussions:

The children should think of how it is good to have a safe place to go when they need it. Think of characters from stories who found a safe place/person to keep *them* safe.

Consider all the times that they might need to go to a safe place in their heads... somewhere to feel good and to be happy. This should lead to discussing how school is a Safe Place. Think of all the people who keep them safe in school and how rules in school keep them safe.

They could think about the locked doors and other regulations designed to keep them safe. This discussion could include any new rules that have been brought in due to Coronavirus.

Once these discussions have taken place, consider the following activities:

- Think about somewhere you go that makes you happy and makes you feel safe. Draw this place and write the heading on the picture - 'My Safe Place'. Work with a partner sharing ideas and pictures about each of their places and discussing who/what/where/when/why.
- Design and create a safe place in the classroom, so that if anyone is feeling sad/ upset/ lonely etc. they can use the safe place. This 'spot' can be filled with pictures and messages created by the children. Think about the rules for using the safe place and write them down and use these for a display.
- Make 'School is Safe' posters and display around the school.
- Take the class to the school hall (if available). Use yoga mats/towel from home to lie down on or find a clean space on the floor. Play some soft gentle, music and quietly ask the children to listen and to breathe. When the class is calm, ask the children to imagine that they are in their 'safe place'. Ask them

to look around and see what is there. Encourage them to focus on how they feel and to relax in their safe place. This exercise can be developed and extended to include the use of some mindful breathing into the classroom or into the children's new routine.

- Create a Story Board of a walk in their safe place. Consider who to take with them and what they could do there. For example, plan a picnic in their safe place or plan what to put into a bag to take with them.
- Safe Selfies - Create a display of all their safe places. Each child could then take a selfie to show their emotion/face/ how they feel in this place. These could be added to the display. Think of all the positive emotions related to being/feeling safe and write these as colourful captions to add to the display.

Help the children to create a photo story of their safe/happy places and then sing along to the song, 'Don't Worry, Be Happy' as the background music for the presentation.



**Consideration should be given to sharing resources and ensuring they are cleaned between use.**

### Altogether Activities

During these activities, the children are going to think about all the people who have helped and are continuing to help them in these strange times.

Use the song, 'I Get by With A Little Help From My Friends', by the Beatles. Think about all the people who are their friends and how they help them. They could consider all the people who were helping during Lockdown and when they had to stay at home.

Then, consider all the people who continue to help them, especially all those who are connected to their return to school. They could record all the people on the following template.

**During Lockdown- I got by with a little help from my friends....**

**In the Community**

**At school**

**At home**

Now- I will get by with a little help from my friends....

In the Community

At school

At home

The children can use this template to consider everyone who will continue to help them as we live our ‘new normal’. The teacher may need to help them identify people in their community and remind them how certain people, such as shopworkers etc are helping us and playing a key role.

The children can discuss and create a list of all the people who ‘visibly’ helped us during the lockdown period. The teacher should help them to understand that there are many ‘invisible’ people helping us too and a similar list could also be compiled and put into a table on a sheet. Decorate these sheets with drawings, images, or photographs of all the people who helped/are helping them now. They may include any family members who belong in the relevant groups on the proforma.

Select someone important who helped them (or several) and send them a thank you card, postcard, or letter. Think about and discuss why saying thank you is important and how it makes us feel good too!

Talk to the children about the Rainbow Campaign and how it was designed to say thank you to the NHS. Draw a picture in keeping with this theme to say thank you to all the people who helped us or for thanking all the people in school who will be helping them in the weeks and months ahead. Can they think of a new symbol instead of the rainbow to symbolise this?

### Kindness Activities- Cup of Kindness

Think of one person from each of the categories on the template who you would most like to present a ‘Cup of Kindness’ to. Decorate the cup and “present” it to the people they have chosen. Write a short speech for their presentations and be record on video. If possible, send these to the recipients of the cup!

A sample outline is provided overleaf.

**The Cup of Kindness****My Cup of Kindness goes to:****Why they deserve this award:****What I would like to say to them:**



The children should go onto consider some good deeds that they could do to allow *them* to receive a 'cup of kindness' too! The teacher should lead a discussion with the class to help them understand that doing things like washing their hands counts as being kind to others. Staying 2m apart too. Other acts of kindness, like tidying the class or helping at home can also be considered. The children can then create a contract (below) to agree to help others so that they can receive a cup soon.



I .....

**Promise to complete these kind deeds**

**For the next 2 weeks**

**Signed :**



### Altogether Times Activities

Children should think of ‘altogether times’ and make a list of them. Think of the ‘altogether times’ we have **as families, as friends, as classmates as a school**. They should think of all the things we do together and how it makes us feel. Create a display or a video sharing all the things they come up with,

Discuss the ‘altogether’ times we missed out on in lockdown and consider that even though they are back to school they are not yet ‘altogether’. Make a short video to say hello to someone they miss from their class. Each child could be paired with another to make a video message to say that they miss them and that they look forward to all being together again. You may want to pair the children who use the same desk on the alternate school days.

Paint a self-portrait (head and shoulders) and cut them out and group as an ‘class portrait’. This should be displayed on a wall set out like a class photograph. The class could think of a title for their display, such as, ‘All in this Together’, ‘We’re a Great Class’ or ‘Classmates Together’. Think of ways of sharing what they are doing with each other. They could create a message board beside the display where they could leave messages for friends who are not in school that day. Post positive affirmations and captions to let each other know that they may be apart, but they are still one class.

### Playing Together-Energy Zap Game!

Children should stand, spaced in a circle, following the applicable social distancing rules. The children do not need to touch for this activity, rather they mime pushing or passing a bolt of energy to each other.

Teacher asks the group to repeat the words “Zip, Zap, Zap” three or four times, all together. The teacher introduces the activity by telling the children to imagine that they have a bolt of energy in their hands. To start the game, the teacher will send the bolt out of energy out of their body with a strong forward motion straight towards one of the children (use hands, body, eyes, and voice to make contact across the circle) and they should say, “Zip.” Explain that the next person takes the energy and pushes/ passes it immediately to someone else saying “Zap.” That person passes it

on to another child saying a “Zop.” The game continues and the “Zip”, followed by “Zap”, followed by “Zop” sequence is repeated as the energy moves around the circle. Encourage all children to use their whole body to send energy and to make eye contact with the child they pass to. They can send the energy to whoever they want but the goal is to include all players in the game. Practice the game. If there is a mistake, encourage children to simply resume playing without discussion. The group challenge is to get the ‘bolt of energy’ moving very quickly from child to child while maintaining a consistent rhythm; if children struggle at any point, pause the game, discuss strategy, and try again. Discuss how the children felt about the game and what it allowed them to do together.

### **Some quick suggestions for further mindfulness activities:**

Mindfulness exercises such as ‘self-soothing’ to start the day or an activity. Using hand sanitiser and then hand cream to slowly clean and protect hands. Listening to some soft gentle music while they do this.

Some good ideas for simple self-soothing can be found on:

[www.elsa-support.co.uk](http://www.elsa-support.co.uk)

Listening Activity; Use drums or other simple instruments to pass on a ‘message’, sequence of notes/sounds which must be copied and passed around a circle. Create a pattern of notes or sounds and let the children experience the rhythm of the pattern. Half the group and have them join each other at different places and stop in different places by directing them. This also helps to build focus and concentration. Record their piece and play it back for them to listen to how they can work together. Discuss what changes they could make to their piece. Play and listen to the music made by the rest of the class from their days in school. Leave messages to let the other half of the class know what they liked about the music.

### Ready to Learn!

**In this Section of the Pack, the children explore activities that are designed to help them get ready for learning. The activities engage the children in settling into and using their ‘new learning environment’. Through engagement in creative activities, the children begin again to meet the requirements of the Curriculum and develop their Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.**

During these activities, the children are going to think about what they need to learn and how they get ready to learn both at home and at school. The children will firstly explore the physical/material needs before considering the other side of what they will need, such as concentration, thinking, focus, listen, try their best etc. The teacher will explain to the children that they will be learning in school part of the week and at home part of the week (if applicable to your setting). The children could consider what things they will need to have in both these places and what they will need to do to be ready to learn at home and in school.

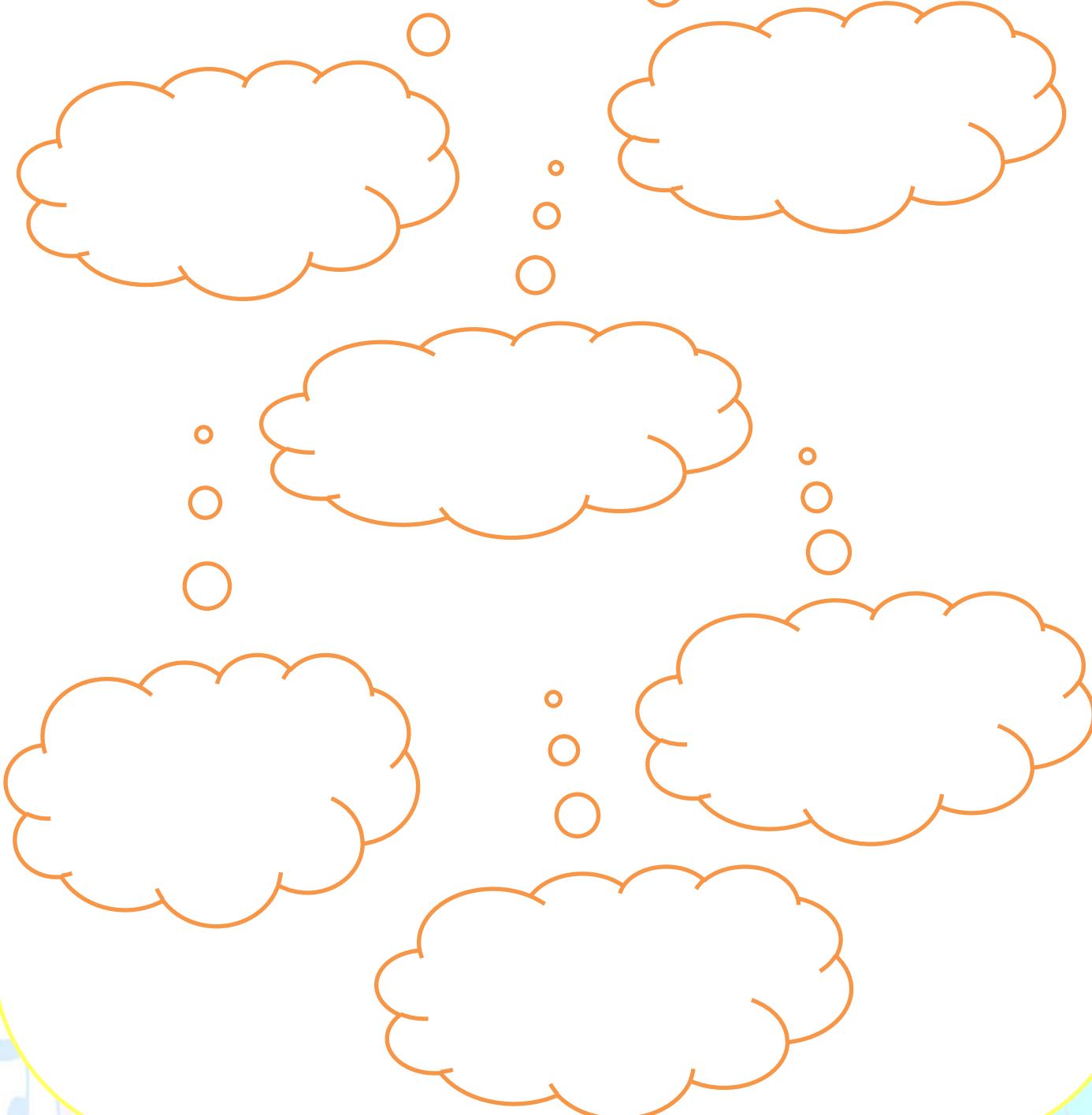
Firstly, the children should have time to think about and discuss all the physical things they need to be ready to learn. These can be written on the board by the teacher or images could be sourced to show the children and saved onto a flipchart on the whiteboard. The children will use the ideas on the board to help them to decide which are the 5 most important things they will need to be ‘ready to learn’. Draw and label the objects they have chosen in the outline provided to ‘pack their bag’ for learning. Once they have completed this for learning in school they should consider if they will need anything different for learning at home. The teacher should help them understand that while they will need the same things in both places it will be important to be ready to learn at home...to be prepared. So, they could complete the second template too.

Pack me with all the  
things you need to be  
ready to learn!





Think of what you  
need to do at  
home to be ready  
to learn :



Ideas for the things the children will need for learning will include:

Pencils, rulers, rubbers, sharpener, crayons, colouring pencils, books, pencil case, a clear space, workbooks, paper, computer, school bag etc.

Developing this idea further, the children should think about and discuss, how they know they are ready to learn in school because of all the things **they do to be ready**. These could include ideas such as:

- I think
- I concentrate
- I take my time
- I need someone to help me sometimes
- I listen in class
- I use what I learn
- I use my own ideas
- I read carefully
- I clear my head of distractions
- I try my best

There will be other ideas suggested by the children or included by the teacher.

Once these ideas are discussed the teacher should help the children understand that these are even more important than having a pencil and all the things they put into their bag. The teacher should help the children understand that to be ready to learn **at home** they must remember the following statements. The children can decide which statements they want to add to the second template to help them be ready to learn at home. They could write the statements like this on the template to help them:

- I will need to think
- I will need to concentrate
- I will need to take my time
- I will need someone to help me
- I will need to listen in class

- I will need to use what I learn
- I will need to use my own ideas
- I will need to read carefully...etc.

### Extension Activity

Each child should be given **4 pieces of paper**. Select, with help from the teacher, **the things they think are the most important** they need to be ready to learn from all the statements they have come up with. Each child should be encouraged to pick the statements which are most relevant for themselves as learners. Once they have the statements, that most apply to them, they can order them on a priority pyramid. This allows them to reconsider the statements and to rank them in order of importance as they perceive them. Create two pyramids, one for each of the two sets of statements they are created.

The template required for this activity is provided below. The number of statements can be adapted to suit the ability or age of the participating group of children.

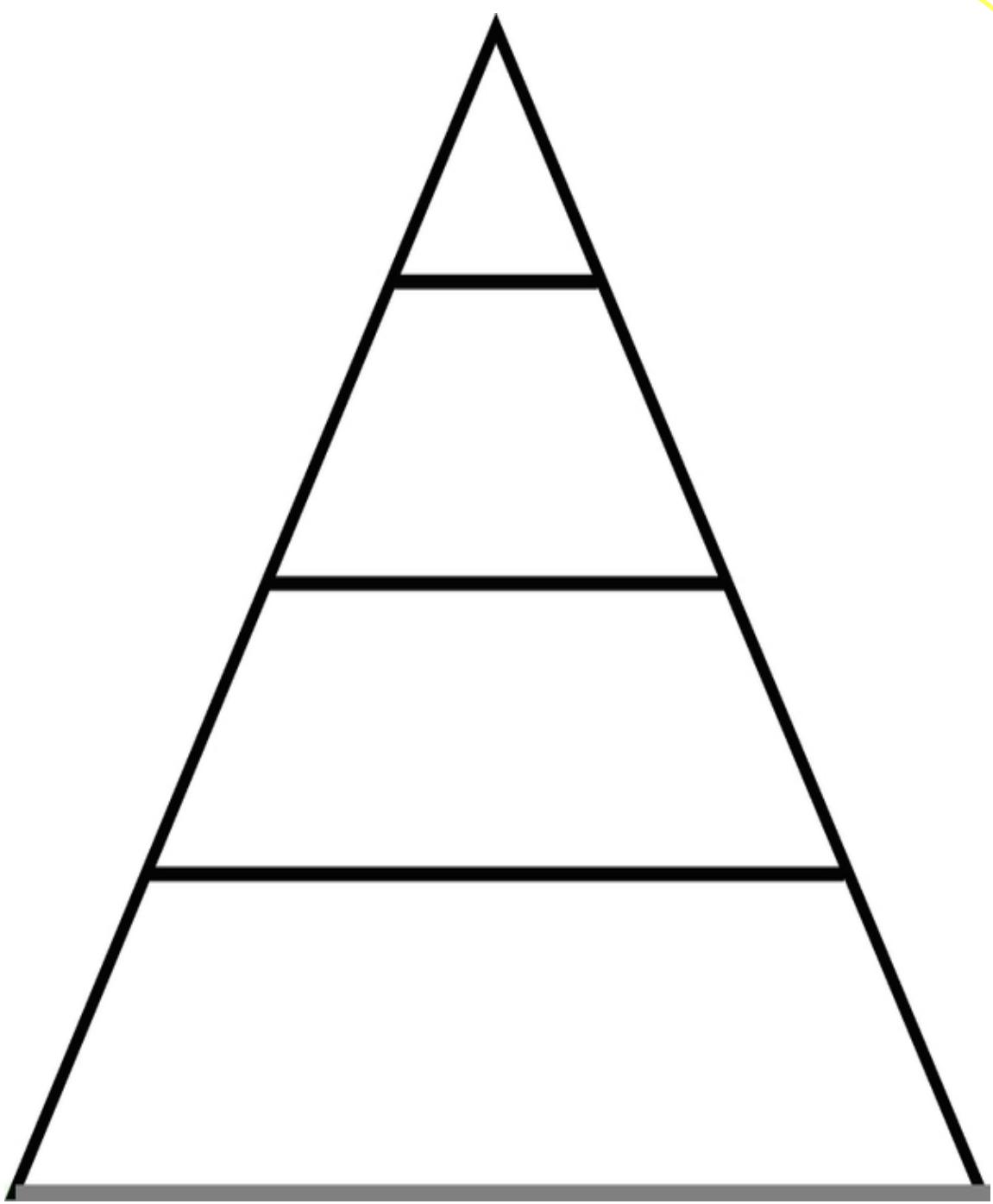
Template 1 - The Priority Pyramid – children use this to place their statements in order of most important at the top to least important at the bottom.

### Developing the Activity

Using the first list, the children could go on to identify and highlight anything they do not have and will need to acquire to be ready to learn. This list can then be shared with their parents.

Using the second list the children should highlight 3 things they would like to do better. For example, they may decide that they need to listen better, or to focus more, to help them to be ready to learn.

Once they have identified these ideas the children can then use them to form the basis of goals or targets that they create for themselves. Write checklists for home/school learning and goals and targets to set for learning in each environment. These targets could be monitored by the children with the help of the teacher. They could acknowledge when they think they have achieved them, in consultation with their teacher and celebrate this achievement.



### New things to think about for working alone and together!

Returning to school, we must think about new ways that we can work in pairs, in groups or as a class. The children should have time to think about why sometimes we need to work on our own and how they feel about this. Then consider that other times it is good to work together and how they feel about this too. So, we must now plan ways we can do this.

We will have to stay apart in our pairs, but could we use a computer, iPad, or laptop to help us communicate with each other?

How can we work in groups? Could we all look at the same pictures perhaps but write our own answers or record our thinking and answers? How can we share our thoughts? Has this changed? The teacher should lead the class as they think about how they will be able to work together. When they have had some discussion time and thought of potential solutions, they can complete the template overleaf.

The children should think about the rules they will need to follow to share things in school and to work together. They could create posters to show their rules.

Consider how they can creatively fill the spaces between themselves and their classmates. Put the rules in this space, as a means to remember and adhere to them.

A space between two place that belongs to no one is often referred to as, 'No Man's Land'. The children could use superheroes to name the spaces between them and the children around them.

## Working on my own- Likes and dislikes!

**We learn when we work on our own- when do you work on your own?**

**Things I like about working on my own:**



**Things I don't like about working on my own:**



## Working together – Likes and dislikes!

We learn when we work together- when do you work together?

Things I like about working together:



Things I don't like about working together:



## Ways we plan to work together- Our Rules!

We will:





## Quick Activities to build focus

Children may need some activities to build focus and to ease them into the school environment again. Here are some quick activities designed to be engaging but not too taxing. They should help to build focus and concentration.

### 1. Play a Game - An oldie but a goodie.

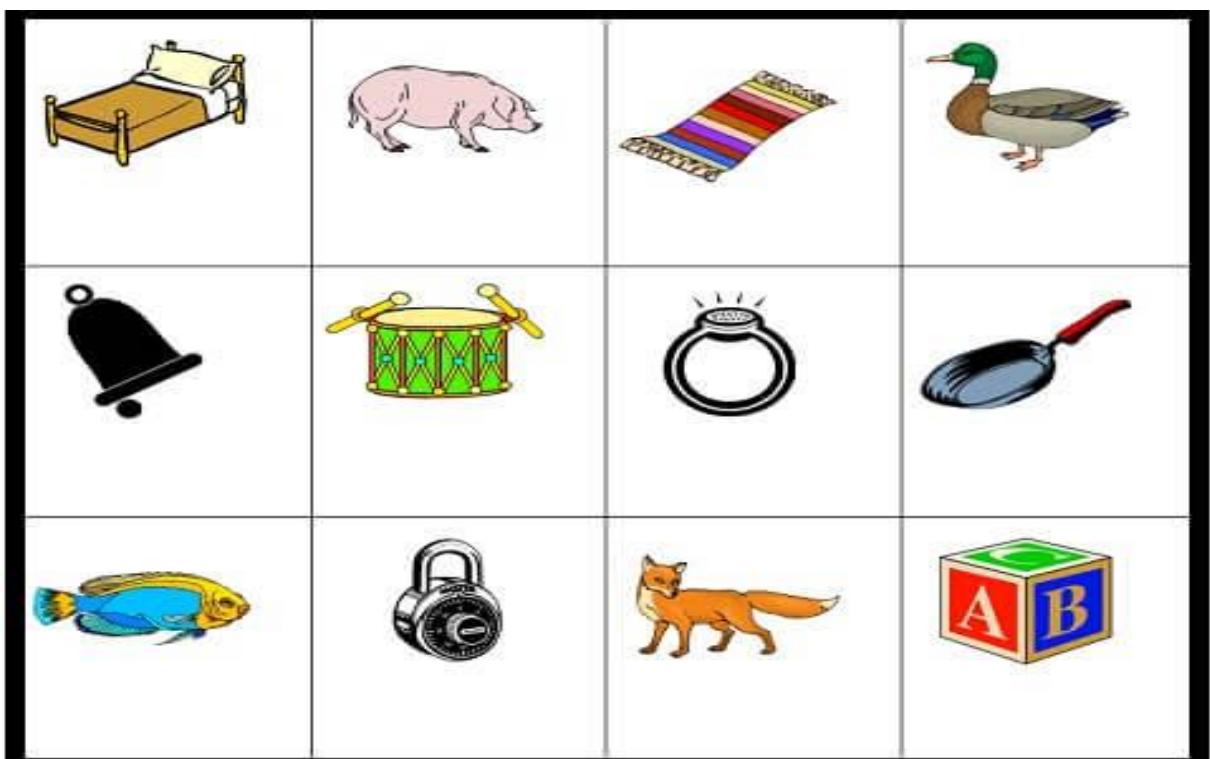
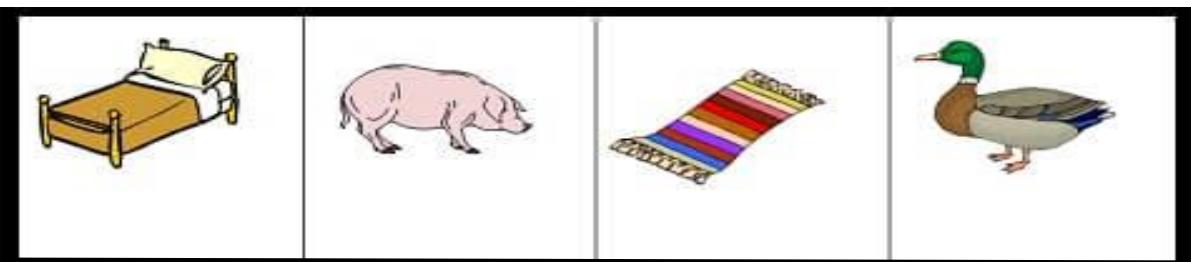
Gather your children around for a few rounds of Hangman or Heads Up Seven Up. Topics could be used as a focus for each round. For example, the Hangman words could relate to a book the class are reading or to a topic such as animals or sports.

### 2. The Memory Game

Start off by showing your children a picture with lots of different objects on it for about 30 seconds. For example, a photo of a crowded table. Then hide the picture and give your children a couple of minutes to write down as many of the objects as they can remember. Whoever writes down the greatest number of correct objects wins. Alternatively cover a couple of objects with post it notes and ask the children to remember what has been covered.

The younger children could have pictures with fewer objects (sample 1). Or they could have an image to look at to identify what has been covered.

Older children could have many more objects to memorise or the image could relate to a topic such as planets or animals (sample 2).

**Sample 1**

**Sample 2**

### 3. Guess the Sound

Engage your children's auditory senses by playing a series of recordings of a variety of sounds. You could play these videos and stop them in between sounds. Alternatively play through and ask children to identify the sounds.

Younger may only have a few to match and they could have images to help them match.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1m4h79JZso>

Then ask your children to guess what those sounds are. If you need a little extra help organising this activity, you might find this YouTube video useful.

There is also one for guessing the voice of the Disney characters. May be more suitable for older children. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB0HYM9rPvQ>

**Please always listen to/view videos first to assure suitability for your class.**

### 4. Guess the Song

This one is nice and simple: play the first few notes of a song and ask your children to guess what it is.

### 5. Simply Create

Give your kids some generic construction materials and give them ten minutes to create something. Materials can include cardboard, playdough, pipe cleaners and wooden lolly sticks, anything you wish. You could either ask them to create whatever they want, or you could give them a more specific creative challenge. Why not ask them to make a tower or to invent a new mini beast?

## 6. The Price is Right

Just like the famous game show, line up a series of different objects and ask your children to try and organise them in order of price. Again, this can be made harder or easier depending on the age of the children. The differences in the prices could also be much greater to make the challenge easier.

## 7. Odd One Out Game

In this activity, children are shown a series of things (pictures, numbers, sentences) and have to work out which is different from the others. The context can be anything. Gets the children solving puzzles.

## 8. Stand Up/Sit Down

This is a good warm-up activity for the start of the day, as it will also get your kids moving around a little. Prepare some questions about a topic where the answer is either 'yes' or 'no'. Get your children to stand up and explain that you are going to ask them some questions.

For each question, if they think the answer **is 'yes'**, they must remain standing. If the answer **is 'no'** they need to sit or bob down. After each question, once the answer is revealed, anybody who answered incorrectly is 'out' and must stand to the side. The last person in the middle wins.

## 9. Gimme 5

Before the teacher starts something new, or as a simple stand-alone task they can ask the class to use the template below to record 5 things they already know about the subject matter. Alternatively, this can be used to see who can fill a five fastest about a given subject, or how many hands a child can fill about something.

### What's Going on in .....(school name)

#### An opportunity for Writing and reassuring children.

This simple Writing Activity is designed to let the children see that life in school is going on as normal. They can also include ideas which have come about due to the 'new normal' we are all experiencing.

For this activity the teacher needs a copy of the Mona Lisa painting.

The image of the Mona Lisa should be discussed and the teacher should help the teacher consider things like:

- Who painted it?
- Who is the portrait of?
- Looking at the colours in the picture
- Look at how she seems to follow the person viewing her



This discussion leads to the main point of the activity...the image of the Mona Lisa- what is the Mona Lisa looking at? What would she see if she was left somewhere in our school? The teacher could help the children to decide good places to leave the Mona Lisa in the school, where she would 'see' all that was going on and report it back to them. Then the painting could be placed in the agreed locations. In considering where to leave the picture you should ensure this does not interfere with any other classes/bubbles. The children could consider all the things she might 'see' in different

locations in the school, so the painting could visit several locations.

Over the course of the next few days children could be taken to locations to where the painting is displayed, all the while ensuring social distancing is maintained. They could spend some time there to view what the Mona Lisa is 'seeing' from her vantage point. They could record what they see by taking notes or better still by

using a camera or an ipad to record all that is going on. Everyone in the class should get at least one chance to stand with the painting to watch what is going on in the school.

Given that activity around the school may be limited, the teacher may need to organise some things to happen while the children are there. For example; ask the caretaker to spill a bucket nearby and clear it up, ask the Principal/teachers to walk by or visit a class, ask the secretary to deliver a message, etc. These events should take place in adherence to the current measures, with children observing from an appropriate distance. The teacher could also take pictures in other locations if necessary, to show what is happening elsewhere in the school. You may also rely on footage or photographs from past school events.

As the group returns to the classroom they should share and brainstorm their observations. This brainstorming will be used for their Writing piece. The **first draft** of the piece can be simply created by compiling a list, for example:

*The Mona Lisa saw, the caretaker spilling his bucket of water*

*The Mona Lisa saw, the caretaker mopping up water*

*The Mona Lisa saw, the secretary delivering a message*

*The Mona Lisa saw, children lining up*

*The mona Lisa saw, parents at the gate*

*The Mona Lisa saw, the Principal taking a call*

The children could be encouraged to pick 8-10 examples that they wish to include in their poem.

When they have these selected the teacher could help the children edit the list by explaining that we can think about how we write the list more creatively and effectively. To do this we can get rid of words we do not need to keep repeating. So, the list can be 'chopped' to look something like this:

*The Mona Lisa saw, the caretaker spilling his bucket of water,*

*And mopping up water,*

*The secretary delivering a message,*

*Children lining up a metre apart,*

*Parents at the gate,*

*The Principal taking a call.*

This version becomes the **second draft**. Now the teacher can show the children that they can create **draft 3** very easily. They could use the example of the caretaker to add another statement about the person/ people and what they were doing, such as:

*The Mona Lisa saw, the caretaker spilling his bucket of water,*

*And mopping up water.*

*The secretary delivering a message,*

*And smiling as she passed.*

The teacher may wish to discuss how these statements can be punctuated, however that is not necessary. The teacher could simply model the punctuation for the class. Alternatively, the children could decide when and where they want to write the phrase, 'The Mona Lisa saw', in their draft 3. So they may decide to make their version:

*The Mona Lisa saw, the caretaker spilling his bucket of water*

*The caretaker mopping up water*

*The Mona Lisa saw, the secretary delivering a message*

*Children lining up a metre apart*

*The Mona Lisa saw, parents at the door*

*The Principal taking a call*

The drafts, and working through the creation of the final draft, can be done easily as a group Shared Writing Activity. Once the poem is completed the children could create a title for their work. They may wish to call it:

What's Going on in...(school name) or Back to normal in...(school name)

For the older children, once a Shared or group version of the poem has been created they could work on their own to go through the same process step by step but to create an individual verse by themselves. The children could discuss how good it is to know that school is going on as normal around them.

### Writing Opportunities- Using Mindfulness and Stillness

These Writing Opportunities can be amended by the teacher to suit the needs of their individual class. They are designed to bring stillness, sensory experience and wellbeing as well as developing Literacy. They will hopefully allow the children to experience Writing as an enjoyable, purposeful and successful experience.

#### A Selfie of Stillness

Just like a painting a photograph is a moment frozen in time. It is a still image.

In the stillness of an image we capture many things. A photograph can capture what we look like but it cannot convey our thoughts our emotions, what's going on in our heads at the time. Unless we are outwardly showing these things.

In this activity the children are going to be still. They are going to take a '**selfie of stillness**'. They are going to consider what they feel and what happens to them in stillness.

They will need to slow down and begin to reflect on what they are trying to do. They are capturing themselves in an instance...creating a record of themselves, a stillness, a pause, a thoughtful moment. To do this they are going to consider some questions or statements.

The teacher should create the appropriate atmosphere in the classroom by playing music, reflecting on some images, lighting a candle or guiding the children through some mindful breathing.

Then the teacher should ask the children to listen as they make some suggestions, such as:

*'Pause from our busy day. Close your eyes. Breathe. Relax. Create space in your minds.'*

*Be curious...listen.*

*In stillness, we can break away from all information entering our mind and make space to think for ourselves.*

*In the stillness we can use our own creativity. We are good at making new ideas*

*In stillness, we create a space to be calm.*

*In stillness, we can listen to the little voice in our head.*

*In stillness, we can bring new ideas to life into our mind. In the stillness we can use our imagination.*

*In stillness, we can begin to sort out problems.*

*We can think about how we feel.*

The children could have some time to listen and to think. Then the teacher should ask them to write.

The children can firstly record how they **look** in their selfie. They may **look** calm or quiet. They may **look** happy or content. The teacher may wish to provide the children with some words from those used earlier to help them record they look now in this stillness.

For younger children the teacher could provide them with some of the language to help them to articulate how they look. The teacher could help the class discuss

appropriate words to convey how they look such as:

Calm      Relaxed      Thoughtful      Tranquil      Peaceful      Happy      Quiet      Still

Using the words that they have identified they can decorate their selfies with words or appropriate images such as emojis. To describe how they look in their selfies.

### **Extension Activity: A Selfie of Stillness**

Help the children explore if the words they identified **really** express how they were feeling or can the calm and peaceful 'selfie' hide other feelings going on inside, that nobody else can see on the outside. Feelings that the camera does not capture.

Leading from this explore times when the children feel negative emotions but keep them inside. Let the children use their selfie again but this time express emotions that they sometimes keep to themselves that others may not know they are experiencing, feelings no one can see. Let them write these words on the other side of the page to show that sometimes our faces don't show what we are really feeling inside.

### **Writing Opportunity-Daydream Doodles**

The teacher could ask the class what happens when they daydream...what do they do? They should then consider what normally happens when they daydream. They should think about how, either their teacher or their parents normally tell them to stop!

The teacher should explain that for this activity she will be encouraging the children to daydream. The teacher should allow the class to become calm and quiet. This can be achieved by using the mindful breathing technique or by playing some quiet music. Once the children are in their still and quiet state the teacher should allow

them to 'daydream'. They should be encouraged to do this over a suitable period of time. They should have time to record exactly what happens in their daydreams.

This activity could be organised a few times either indoors or outdoors. The children can simply jot down notes of what pops into their heads. They may 'wander' with some ideas a bit more than others and that is ok.

Once the children have had purposeful experiences daydreaming and recording their thoughts they could select which ones they want to focus on. All of the ideas, thoughts, feelings and daydreams could then be recorded in speech bubbles.

Take a picture/selfie of each child, looking pensive or in a daydream,. Once the photographs are printed the children can arrange their thought bubbles around their picture. These could be used to create a display called 'Daydream Doodles'.

Explore with the children how they felt when they were daydreaming. Consider how they were relaxing and using their imaginations. They could write what they felt when they were daydreaming and add captions to their display about how it can be good to 'daydream'!

### **Writing Opportunity: In Stillness I See...**

The purpose of this activity is to train children to look closely at a stimulus, such as nature and to learn to say what they see. It stands alone as a Writing lesson or can be used to encourage mindfulness. The activity can promote::

- Talking and listening
- Writing
- Communication
- Language Acquisition
- Working with Others
- Self Management
- Being Creative

As a stimulus for this activity the older children could have some time to go outside to explore a subject matter they wish to photograph. They should take photographs of whatever they wish and capture them **in stillness**. An ipad would be perfect for this. Once back in the classroom they can use the image on the ipad or save their image on a Word Doc so that they will be able to ‘zoom’ in on the image, to take a closer look at it. The children can discuss what they see looking more closely at their photos. They could note things they did not initially see in the photos they took or notice when they were outside. They could share these with a partner

Then the teacher could give the children the set of images below which replicate the ‘zoom in’ idea. The images allow us to zoom in on a photo of a field.

To start the Writing process, discuss what can be seen in each of the images, one at a time with the children. The children should record what they see as they ‘zoom in’ on the scene, step by step/ image by image. Each step ‘zooms in and allows the children to look closer at the image and to begin to see the details of the image as they emerge.

**The children could record what they see** as they zoom in picking out the details in the image more and more. It may be necessary to point out the details to younger children. Perhaps give them the images one at a time from the image of the field to the image of the bee. They could see how each image takes a closer look.

For this example, the picture of a field, the child may have these ideas recorded:

1. A picture of a field
2. A closer look at the field with some grass and flowers
3. An image of some clover flowers
4. The image of this clover flower and the bee
5. Another zoom in could reveal just the bee.

The first draft of the writing is simply this record -what was seen at each stage.

The teacher can then help the children in a shared Writing activity to **highlight**, or ‘**zoom in**’, on the important words in the statements. These should be selected and

written down, one at a time. The teacher may give as much direction or model as much for the children as required.

So the second draft becomes: A picture of a field

A closer look at the field with some grass and flowers

An image of some clover flowers

The image of this clover flower and the bee

Another zoom in could reveal just the bee.

Next, the children could work in groups, at distance, or as individuals to add adjectives to this draft of the poem to bring more detail to each of the statements.

For younger children the teacher may continue with a shared activity, helping the children understand how adjectives help us describe and create a better picture of something when we write.

Older children can brainstorm suitable adjectives for each statement. A collection of suitable words and phrases should be gathered to describe the image at each step of the 'zoom in'. Once there has been plenty of discussion and good descriptive language collected, the children will then make a decision as to what way they want to use adjectives in the poem. They could choose adjectives to add to the skeleton of the poem created at the previous stage. This may be done in groups or individually.

They will begin to create their own drafts of the poem. For Example:

A green, country field,

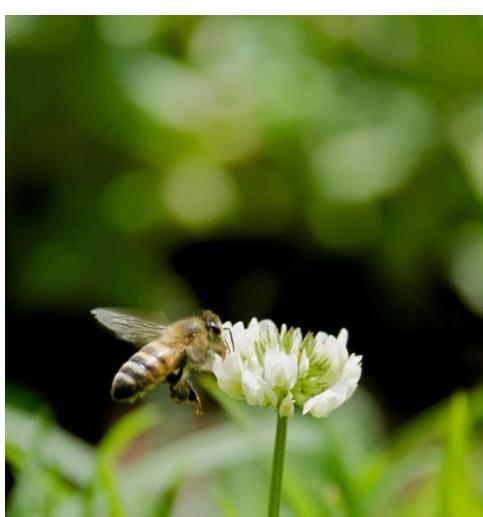
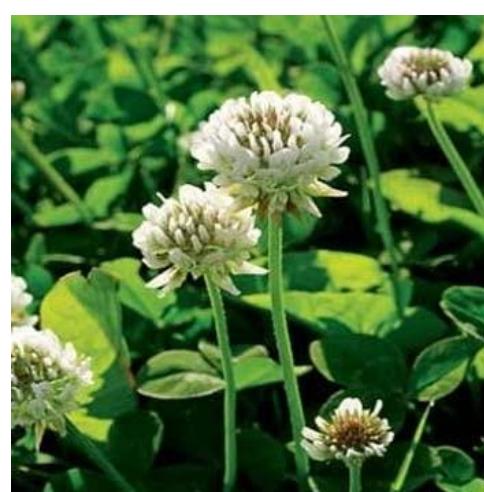
Spiky grass and small flowers,

Round, white clover flowers,

Busy bee on a bright flower head,

Buzzing bee with see through wings.

Note: The teacher should help the children to punctuate their work as appropriate to their age and ability. A set of images for this activity are provided below.



## Plenary

Use the Writing Activity to highlight that we can get clarity and see things clearer as we are still and take time to look closely at everything that is around us. When we look at things, we see more and take more notice- we are more mindful! During lockdown this was one of the positives about the whole experience. People had more time to slow down and be mindful of what really mattered. The children could discuss and record things they noticed during lockdown or things they learned that they have not taken the time to do beforehand.

Note: The teacher could source any sequence of images as a stimulus for this writing activity. Stimuli could include:

- nature as in the example but in any context
- a piece of art, such as a Lowry painting and each 'zoom in' takes you closer and closer to one figure in the painting
- family and zoom in to finish on one member

## Writing Opportunity- Using Our Senses!

Some Poems explore how we experience our world through our senses. W.B. Yeats tells us:

**"The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper."**

The senses are always an excellent way to explore and write poetry. We can lead the children as they explore their world through their 5 functional senses and their 6<sup>th</sup> sense of emotional response. This exploration develops mindfulness and enhances wellbeing. The easiest way to do this is to take your children outside to a peaceful or quiet area and allow them time to consider what they experience. This can be recorded by each child as:

I see.../ I saw...

I hear.../ I heard...

I smell.../ I smelled...

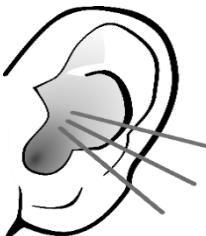
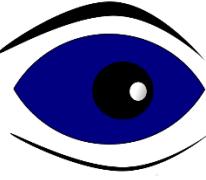
I taste...I tasted...

I touch.../ I touched...

Alternatively, the teacher could allow the children to sit quietly outside and to practise some mindful breathing before they consider the experience through their senses.

The teacher could help the children to calm down and to breathe in slowly, hold their breath for the count of 4 and then slowly release. Do this a few times until everyone is peaceful and ready to notice what is going on around them. Address each of the senses one at a time and make some suggestions to the children to help them identify what they can see, hear, smell, etc. The activity is outlined below and a sample template for recording is provided. The teacher can discuss with the children how we access our world through our senses.

Stop! Breathe! Be still! Use your senses to record what you experience.

Sense:	Experience:
Hear 	I can hear the birds singing. I can hear the traffic in the distance.
See 	I see birds flying. I can see leaves floating.
Smell 	I can smell the grass being cut. I can smell the fragrant flowers.
Taste 	I can 'taste' the grass. I can taste the sweetness of the air
Touch 	I can feel the crisp cool air. I can feel the dampness in the air.

**Stop! Breathe! Be still! Use your senses to record what you experience.**

1. Listen carefully - what do you hear? Sounds are carried in the air.
2. Take a good look around you...what can you see in the air?
3. Breathe in! Smell! Smells are carried in the air too.
4. Sometimes we smell things so strongly we can almost taste them. How does the air taste?
5. How does the air around you feel?

Now work in pairs or small groups and share all your ideas. Look for ideas that you had that were the same or similar. Look to see how you were on the same wavelength as each other. Use the ideas you have in common to create short pieces of descriptive writing based on your experience of using your senses. Share your work with the rest of the class.

Create a display of your words, drawings, or paintings to depict your experience using your senses in the environment outside.

Explore how we feel better when we are outside and include these positive feelings on your display. Think about how you worked together and used their senses.

### Bubbles Breathing Activity

The word bubble will be one the children will hear used often when they return to school. Bubbles generally provoke joy and feeling happiness...they are fun! In this activity the children will play with bubbles, make bubble paintings/pictures, and write about bubbles. **To start, they will use bubbles to help them breathe mindfully.**

Provide the children with a variety of sizes of bubble blowers. Let them see how, when they blow too hard the bubble does not form or it pops. Explain how they need to blow gently and calmly so that the bubble forms and floats away on the air. If the children cannot blow bubbles themselves the teacher should source some images or videos of bubbles for them to watch.

Discuss what bubbles are filled with...they are little parcels of air...full of our breath. When we blow bubbles, we are using our breathing out. Let the children explore again how we need to blow out gently to make the bubbles.

Ask the children what the difference between the gentle breathing is, that allows us to make bubbles, and the other breathing that doesn't make bubbles.

Ask the children which type of breathing is best and why.

Then ask the children to feel their breathing as they breathe in gently and out gently and notice how we become calmer the more slowly we breathe.

Invite the children to slow their breathing down by closing their eyes and imagining they are blowing bubbles, big bubbles, slowly and calmly.

Count in inhales and exhales with the children and help them to regulate their breathing by imagining they are getting ready to blow a bubble, inhaling, holding, and exhaling.

Ask them to imagine their lungs filling with air just like a bubble as they take in the air. Ask them to hold their breath, then to breathe out, Emphasis breathing out, asking the children to blow gently until they must stop! Ask them to imagine that they are filling the air around them with beautiful bubbles.

children to talk about how they felt and what they noticed about their minds during the bubble breathing activity.

This activity can be repeated on occasions when the teacher wishes to calm the class for purposes of starting the day, an event, a learning opportunity.

Use the breathing strategy to start (or finish) the school day for a week. Discuss with the children the impact this has on them as they begin (or finish) their day.

Use a simple strategy, such as, Dot Voting to record how the children feel after they have done the breathing. To do this a simple sheet could be displayed which has following comments written on it:

I feel no different	I feel much calmer
I feel ready to begin my work	I feel relaxed and calm

The children can use a marker to put a dot under the comments which they think are relevant to them. The teacher can lead a quick discussion based on the responses the children make, highlighting the positive response from the children to their breathing activity.

### Extending Bubble Breathing- Adagio Adagio Rachmaninov

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNRxHyZDU-Q>

As an extension activity use a few minutes of this piece of music, Adagio by Rachmaninov, and play it for the children while they practise their mindful breathing. Ask them to imagine the air filling up with the bubbles they are blowing, and ask the children to gently float away in the air as well. Gently ask them to float like a bubble. As they 'float' ask them to imagine what they see around them. Allow them to experience this for a few moments. Encourage them to notice what type of place they are floating in. Are there trees? Is there water? What does the sky look like? What colours do they see around them?

When the children have had time experiencing the music, bring them back into the classroom. The children can use this experience to complete the following template, recording what they experienced while listening to the music.

**When I was listening to the music- Adagio**

**How did it affect your stillness?**

**How did it affect your mood?**

**What emotions did it make you feel?**

**What did you see when you were listening to the music?**

### Getting Arty

Listen to the above piece of music and ask the children to get comfortable and



close their eyes, asking: what colours did you see when you were listening to the music?

Give the children a selection of paints and allow them to pick the colours they saw during their visualisation.

The colours can be recorded on the simple template below (or in a rough book). Then the children could use the same colours to paint the scene they saw during their visualisation.

A display can be made using their paintings. The children could make bubbles by cutting clear plastic into different sizes of circles and adding these to the display.

### Bubble Breathing Colour Card



### Writing Opportunity

The poem below, can be read before, during and after the children have a chance to make and play in the bubbles. It could be read to the children during a session of mindful breathing. (Bubble breathing)

#### *Bundles of Bubbles*

Splish and splash in water and soap,  
Plenty of bubbles from this, I hope.  
Dip in the stick, and gently blow,  
See them dance, watch how they go!  
Bundles of bubbles bouncing by,  
Beautiful colours catch my eye,  
See the yellow, the purple and pink.  
Children, doesn't it make you think.  
How something so lovely, so fragile and bright,  
Can catch the colours and keep the light.  
Round watery rainbows, from heaven they fall,  
Then POP! They disappear!  
Leaving nothing at all!

*By Anne McErlane*

Encourage the children to talk about how the bubbles in the poem are described.

**Some questions to ask:**

What colours words are used to describe the bubbles?

What other words are used to describe the bubbles in the poem?

What do the bubbles in the poem look like?

What are the bubbles in the poem doing?

How are the bubbles in the poem moving?

Help the children to record their answers on the following template or similar:

Note: the template has been completed for reference.

Words to <b>describe</b> the bubbles?	What words tell us about the bubbles <b>moving?</b>
pink	dance
purple	go
lovely	bouncing
fragile	fall
bright	pop
round	
watery	
Beautiful (used in the poem to describe the colours but children may not spot this)	

Remind the children that the describing words are called adjectives and the moving words are verbs.

Use images of bubbles, videos of bubbles or allow the children to blow bubbles to inspire some new language to use in the Writing activity.

Younger children could focus on adjectives, and the older children could create both lists. Discuss the words with the children, taking their suggestions and adding them to the adjectives list and/or the verbs list. When some suitable words have been added, provide the children with the following template. They are going to use this to begin creating their poem.

To do this they should select words they want to use from the lists to make phrases that describe the bubbles. Extending the phrases will also tell us how bubbles move. The teacher can direct the children as to how many phrases they must create.

**Note: for the purpose of the piece ask the children to write all verbs ending in 'ing'.**

Adjective/ Describing word		Verb/ moving word
	<b>bubbles</b>	

The children will create phrases such as:

***Beautiful bubbles bouncing***

***Fragile bubbles dancing***

***Lovely bubbles floating***

Once the children have their phrases written they can cut the template into strips. They can then move their phrases around, changing their order. This is an example

of editing and creating drafts of their writing. When the children are happy with the order of their phrases, they have their poem!

**These could be added to the visualisation display.**

### Experiment to Demonstrate Plants Creating Oxygen

This plant experiment for creating oxygen is fun and easy to do. It is based on the fact that plants take in carbon dioxide and expel oxygen. For this demonstration, the teacher could ask the children if they know that plants can 'blow bubbles' too?

#### MATERIALS

- Green leaf
- Clear glass
- Water
- Sunlight
- Small hand lens optional



#### DIRECTIONS

1. Cut a green leaf from a plant and fill a glass with water.
2. Place the leaf in the glass and put glass containing the leaf in a sunny location.
3. Ask the children to make a prediction about what you will see in an hour.  
Write down their prediction.
4. After an hour carefully look at the leaf and side of the glass.

5. You should be able to see lots of tiny bubbles that have formed on the edges of the leaf and on the side of the glass. If you are having a hard time seeing the bubbles you might get a small hand lens or magnifying glass to observe the edges of the leaf.

### Extending the experiment

1. Leave the plant in the sunlight for several more hours. Ask the children to predict what will happen? Did the bubbles increase or decrease?
2. Take two glasses of water and place a fresh leaf in each one. Place one leaf in a dark area and the other in sunlight for two hours. Then observe both, are there bubbles in each? Has the light affected how many bubbles there are? What can you say about how much oxygen each leaf produced in relation to where they were kept?

### Science behind the experiment

The bubbles you observed on the leaf and sides of the glass were oxygen. Leaves take in carbon dioxide and through the process of photosynthesis; they create food for the plant.

Oxygen is a by-product of this and goes into the air. The air we breathe contains 21% oxygen produced by plants. Without plants, we do not have enough oxygen to live. Therefore, protection of the forests of the world is vital for life on earth.



**See the Foundation Pack for further ideas based on blowing bubbles and the concept of being in a ‘bubble’ in school.**

**To add to the KS1 piece on kindness:**

**Listen to the story, Be Kind- a children’s story, by Pat Zietlow Millar**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6NUJ2JZz50>

**Talk about the story with the children and help them understand the concept that small deeds and actions can cause kindness to spill out all around us.**

**Talk about how small acts of kindness can turn into big acts of kindness!**

### **Opportunity for Writing- Look at me I'm back in school**

During this activity, the children will write a quick poem about themselves. Ask the children to jot down in 5 minutes as many adjectives they can think of to describe themselves. Then explain that a simile allows you to describe someone or something very clearly by comparing it to something else.

Ask the children if they have heard some similes being used, such as:

- As quiet as a mouse
- As strong as an ox
- As green as grass

Discuss how the simile paints a clearer picture for us. Ask the children to take the words they have written about themselves and turn them into similes. Demonstrate some examples for them. Alternatively, for the younger children the class can create a bank of similes and children can select which ones they wish to use to create their own poem about themselves. The poem could be set out in the following format. The poem could be connected to being back in school or alternatively it could simply be a poem about themselves, entitled; 'This is me'.

I am back in school...

As funny as

As quick as

As happy as

As brave as

As silly as

As strong as

As loud as

As tall as

I am ready for school!

-End -