

My Amazing Brain: A Week of Discovery

Subject Areas: Science, Health, Language Arts (Reading & Writing), Physical Education (Movement)

Grade Level: Ages 7-9 (approx. 2nd-3rd Grade)

Overall Goal: To understand the basic functions of the brain, learn how thoughts and feelings happen, and develop creative strategies to turn challenges into opportunities for growth.

Materials Needed:

- Large sheets of paper or poster board
 - Markers, crayons, and colored pencils
 - Play-Doh (at least 3 different colors)
 - A clear jar with a lid (like a mason jar)
 - Glitter, water, and clear glue (for the "Mind Jar")
 - Index cards
 - A soft ball or beanbag
 - A notebook or journal for writing
 - Access to a library or online resources for short articles or videos
 - **Suggested Reading:** *My Amazing Brain* by Pat Thomas, *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain, or short, age-appropriate articles/videos about the brain.
-

Daily Lesson Plans

Day 1: Meet Your Brain Team!

Focus: Science (Brain Anatomy), Writing

Learning Objectives: The student will be able to identify three main parts of the brain and describe their basic jobs in a creative way.

Activities:

1. **Introduction (15 mins):** Start with a question: "What is the boss of your body?" Discuss how the brain controls everything we do, think, and feel. Read a chapter from a book or watch a short video about the brain's main parts.
 2. **Science - Build a Brain (30 mins):** Use three colors of Play-Doh to build a simple brain model. Assign a personality to each part:
 - **Cerebrum (The Smart Captain):** The biggest part. Use the main color for this. Explain that it helps you think, learn, and remember. It's the captain of your brain-ship!
 - **Cerebellum (The Motion Master):** A smaller part at the back. Use a second color. Explain it controls balance and movement, like a talented acrobat.
 - **Brain Stem (The Automatic Pilot):** Connects to the spine. Use a third color. Explain it does all the automatic stuff you don't think about, like breathing and your heartbeat.
 3. **Writing - Brain Team Comic Strip (25 mins):** Create a short comic strip where the "Smart
-

Captain," "Motion Master," and "Automatic Pilot" work together as a superhero team to accomplish a task, like riding a bike or reading a book.

Day 2: Brain Messengers & Movement

Focus: Science (Neurons), Movement, Reading

Learning Objectives: The student will demonstrate how neurons send messages and explain that learning creates new connections.

Activities:

- 1. Reading & Science (20 mins):** Read about neurons, the brain's messengers. Explain them like tiny messengers running along pathways, carrying notes to different parts of the brain and body. Emphasize that every time we learn something new, we build a new pathway!
- 2. Movement - Neuron Tag (15 mins):** This is a game to show how messages travel.
 - You and your student stand a short distance apart.
 - Start with a simple "message," like "clap your hands."
 - Toss the soft ball (the "message") back and forth. Whoever catches it must do the action.
 - Make the messages more complex ("pat your head and rub your tummy") to show how the pathways get busier. Explain that practicing makes the message travel faster!
- 3. Creative Activity - Map Your Learning Path (25 mins):** On a large piece of paper, have the student draw a "path" for a new skill they want to learn (e.g., learning to bake cookies, mastering a video game level). They can draw the start, the tricky parts, and the finish line. Explain that each time they practice, they are making that brain path stronger and smoother.

Day 3: The Feeling Brain & Our Inner Alarm

Focus: Science (Amygdala), Emotional Regulation, Art

Learning Objectives: The student will identify the brain's role in emotions and create a tool to help calm big feelings.

Activities:

- 1. Science & Discussion (20 mins):** Introduce the Amygdala as the brain's "Guard Dog" or "Alarm System." It's a tiny part that keeps us safe by reacting to scary or upsetting things. Sometimes, though, its alarm is too loud for the situation (like when we spill milk). Discuss times we've felt a "big feeling" like anger, frustration, or sadness. Validate that these feelings are normal.
- 2. Reading (15 mins):** Read a story about a character who has big feelings, like *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Discuss how the character felt and what they did.
- 3. Hands-On Science - Make a "Mind Jar" (25 mins):**
 - Fill the clear jar almost to the top with water.
 - Add a big spoonful of clear glue.
 - Add a few spoonfuls of glitter. Explain that the glitter represents our thoughts and feelings.
 - Shake the jar. See how the glitter swirls around like a "thought storm" when we are upset or worried? It's hard to see clearly.
 - Now, watch as the glitter slowly settles. Explain this is what happens in our brain when we take a moment to be still and breathe. Our thoughts calm down and we can think clearly again. Practice breathing deeply while watching the glitter settle.

Day 4: The Wise Owl & Positive Choices

Focus: Science (Prefrontal Cortex), Writing, Problem-Solving

Learning Objectives: The student will identify the "thinking" part of the brain and create a personal list of positive coping strategies.

Activities:

- 1. Science & Discussion (20 mins):** Introduce the Prefrontal Cortex as the "Wise Owl" or "Team Captain" of the brain. It lives right in the front, behind our forehead. Its job is to help us solve problems, make good choices, and calm down the "Guard Dog" (amygdala). Explain that this part of the brain is still growing and getting stronger until we are adults! Practice helps it grow.
- 2. Creative Writing - Coping Strategy Cards (30 mins):** On index cards, create a set of "Wise Owl Power Cards." Brainstorm and write/draw one strategy on each card. These are things to do when the "Guard Dog" is barking too loudly.
 - Examples: Take 5 deep "owl" breaths (breathe in, then puff out cheeks and say "Hoo").
 - Go to my Mind Jar and watch the glitter settle.
 - Listen to my favorite song.
 - Draw my feelings.
 - Ask for a hug.

Keep these cards in a special box or on a ring for easy access.

- 3. Writing - The Two Endings (20 mins):** Write a very short story starter, like: "Sam was building the tallest tower ever when their little brother ran by and knocked it over. Sam's Guard Dog started barking loudly and they felt super angry. They wanted to scream..." Have the student write two different endings: one where the Guard Dog takes over, and one where the Wise Owl helps make a better choice.

Day 5: Growing a Positive Thought Garden

Focus: Application, Creativity, Review

Learning Objectives: The student will create a visual representation of transforming negative thoughts into positive ones, summarizing the week's learning.

Activities:

- 1. Review & Discussion (15 mins):** Briefly review the Brain Team, the Neuron Messengers, the Guard Dog, and the Wise Owl. Ask, "Did you know we can actually teach our brain to be more positive?" Explain that our thoughts are like a garden. We have to take care of it.
- 2. Creative Art - My Thought Garden (30 mins):**
 - On a large piece of paper, draw a garden.
 - Talk about "weeds" – these are sticky, negative thoughts that aren't helpful (e.g., "I can't do this," "I'm not good at math," "Nobody wants to play with me"). Draw some weeds in the garden and label them.
 - Talk about "flowers" – these are the positive, true, and helpful thoughts we want to grow (e.g., "This is hard, but I can try," "I can ask for help," "I am a kind friend").
 - Practice transforming the "weeds" into "flowers." For every weed, draw a beautiful flower next to it with the new, positive thought. This shows we are not just ignoring the bad feeling, but turning it into something good. For example, turn "I can't do it" into the flower "I will try my best and see what happens!"
- 3. Wrap-up - My Amazing Brain Poster (20 mins):** As a final project, create a poster that shows

everything learned this week. It can include a drawing of the brain parts, a neuron pathway, the Mind Jar, and a picture of their favorite "Wise Owl" strategy. This serves as a great visual reminder of their new skills!