

Classroom Transition & Brain Break Cards: 12 No-Prep Prompts

Ages 5 to 8 (K to 3) — Teacher guide pages 1 to 2, cut-apart cards pages 3 to 4

Twelve teacher-led, screen-free prompts that reset the room in about 1 to 2 minutes. No props, no preparation — read a card aloud and do it together with the class.

When to use a card

- Between lessons when energy spikes or dips and the class needs a reset.
- After lunch, recess, or assemblies to settle the room before learning.
- Before quiet work, read-aloud time, or focused practice.
- Anytime the whole class needs a 1 to 2 minute teacher-led pause.

Simple transition script

1. Say: In 10 seconds we are going to reset together.
2. Read the card prompt aloud exactly as written.
3. Do it with the class so students mirror your pace.
4. Close with: Thank you. Eyes on me — we are ready.

Tip: use the same card at the same transition for a week so students learn the cue.

Space and body safety

Space and body safety: keep feet planted, stay in your own space with arm-length room, and move slowly. Stop if you feel dizzy. Every movement is contact-free and seated-friendly — no touching classmates, no balancing games, and no one is ever out.

Low-stimulation options

- Every card works seated at a desk.
 - Offer gaze-at-desk or eyes-open choices instead of eyes closed.
 - Lower your voice and slow down instead of adding music or timers.
 - Let students watch quietly — observing counts as joining in.
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Mix cards into routines

- Pick one card per transition and repeat it for a week so it becomes a cue.
- Let the class choose between two cards to build ownership.
- Pair movement with calm: a Move card first, then a Quiet card.
- Keep the printed cards by the board for helpers and substitutes.

Printing tips: US Letter, grayscale, low-ink. Cut along dashed lines for 12 cards. Laminate if you like for reuse.

Cut-apart cards 1 to 6 of 12

Cut on dashed lines. Each card shows its category, duration, prompt, and seated option.

Quiet Reset

Three Slow Breaths

About 1 minute

Breathe in through the nose for 4 counts, out through the mouth for 4 counts. Repeat 3 times together.

Seated option: Stay seated the whole time; close eyes or rest your gaze on the desk.

Quiet Reset

Five-Finger Trace

About 90 seconds

Hold up one hand. Trace up and down each finger with the other pointer finger, breathing in going up and out going down.

Seated option: Done seated at desks; trace on the desk surface instead of in the air for a lower-stimulation option.

Quiet Reset

Quiet Body Scan

About 90 seconds

Sitting still, notice feet, legs, hands, shoulders, and face. Soften each spot as the teacher names it.

Seated option: Always seated; students may rest heads on desks and just listen.

Move & Stretch

Reach and Fold

About 1 minute

Stand by your chair. Reach arms high, then fold forward softly with bent knees. Rise slowly. Repeat twice.

Seated option: Reach arms up from the chair, then rest forearms on the desk and breathe.

Move & Stretch

Cross-Body Taps

About 90 seconds

Tap right hand to left shoulder, then left hand to right shoulder. Keep a steady rhythm for 8 rounds.

Seated option: Works fully seated; tap the desk with alternating hands for a quieter version.

Move & Stretch

Shape Stretch

About 90 seconds

Make a tall triangle, a round circle, and a wide star with your arms. Hold each shape for 3 breaths.

Seated option: Draw each shape small with a finger on the desk instead.

Keep space between students. Every card works seated — observing quietly counts as joining in.

Cut-apart cards 7 to 12 of 12

Cut on dashed lines. Each card shows its category, duration, prompt, and seated option.

Focus & Listen

Echo the Rhythm

About 1 minute

Teacher claps a short pattern. The class echoes it back the same way. Try 3 patterns, then sit ready.

Seated option: Seated at desks; echo by tapping thighs softly or whispering the pattern.

Focus & Listen

Listen for Three

About 90 seconds

Look down and listen. Silently count 3 sounds you hear in the room, then raise a hand when done.

Seated option: Already seated and still; students may keep eyes open and gaze at the desk.

Focus & Listen

Direction Detective

About 90 seconds

Follow 3 spoken directions in order, for example: stand, touch your chair, sit tall. Freeze at the end.

Seated option: Do all 3 directions from the chair, such as hands up, hands on desk, sit tall.

Ready to Learn

Chair Check

About 1 minute

Feet flat, back against the chair, materials out, hands folded. Teacher checks each row with a thumbs-up.

Seated option: Done seated by design; students who need to may stand for the check, then sit.

Ready to Learn

Air-Write the Focus

About 1 minute

Teacher says the focus word. Everyone air-writes it big, then small on the desk. Say it once together.

Seated option: Seated; trace the word on the desk with a finger for a low-energy version.

Ready to Learn

Ready-to-Learn Whisper

About 1 minute

In your own space whisper: I am ready to learn. Take one slow breath and face the teacher.

Seated option: Stay seated and whisper to yourself; silent mouthing counts for students who prefer not to speak.

Keep space between students. Every card works seated — observing quietly counts as joining in.