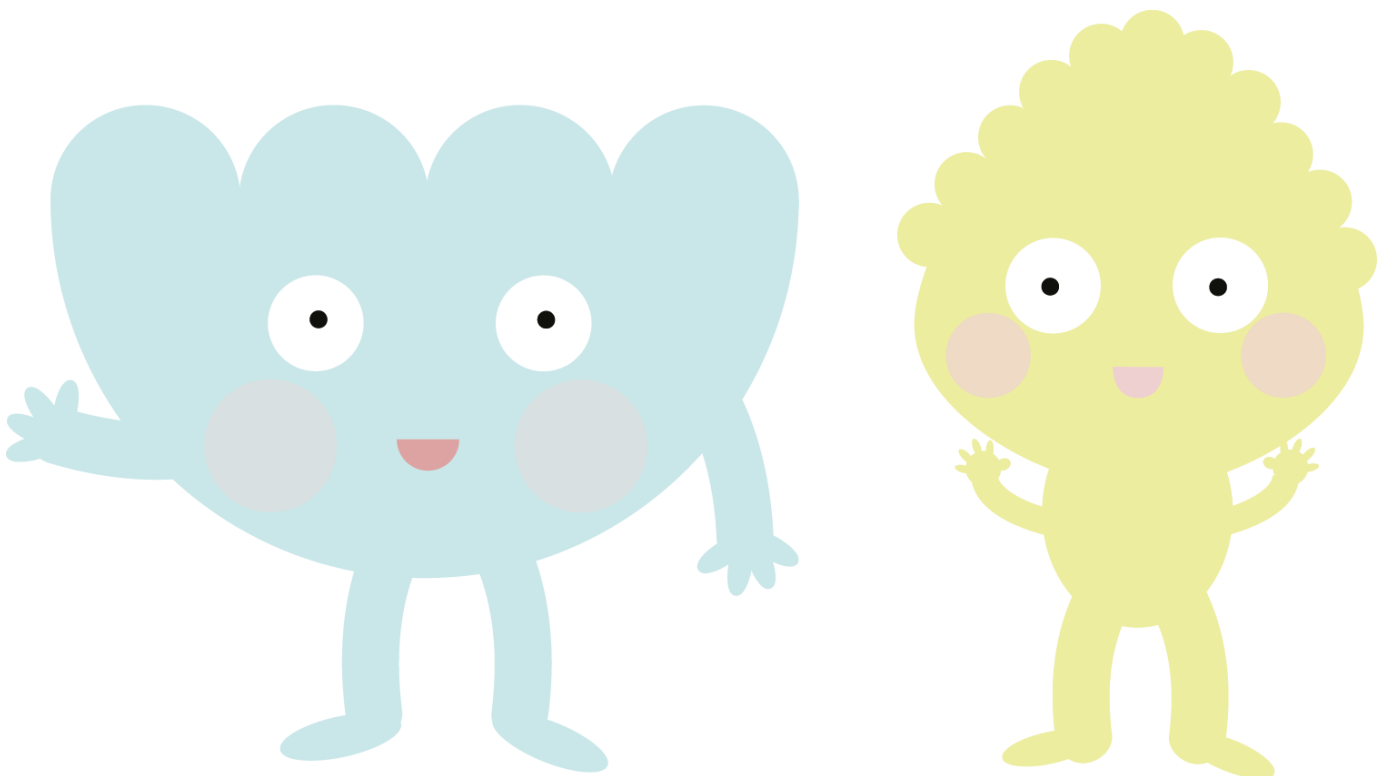




Teach Your Class: Meet Your Brain

Year 5

# Meet Your Brain



The Meet Your Brain module is all about how your brain works and how you can help it to be at it's very best!

## Meet your brain - Module overview

This module is focussed on giving children a foundational knowledge of the brain and teaching them how they can look after their minds to be at their very best. It is critical that the children understand the following key concepts/topic areas by the end of this module as they form a key component of the CARE model which follows.

### Your brain and your mind are different:

Children learn that their brain is an organ that changes and grows and that they control their minds in terms of where they focus it and how they look after it. This is a key concept as it starts to build a sense of 'ownership' and an understanding that, children can take control of and look after their own minds.

### Neuroplasticity:

To formulate a basic knowledge of the concept of neuroplasticity i.e. That the brain can grow and change when you practice and work on something. When we do something, or learn something, neural pathways are created in our brain. Each time we repeat the activity, the neural pathway or connection is made stronger and it gets easier for us to complete the activity.

### Team H-A-P:

The children will learn about three key parts of their brain; Hippocampus, Amygdala and Prefrontal Cortex. We call them Team H-A-P for short and they each have a special role:

Hippocampus - is like a scrap book storing our memories and things that we learn. Amygdala - is there to react to keep us safe when there is danger. It cannot assess danger though, it can only react if it senses it by fighting, freezing or flighting! Prefrontal cortex - Helps us to make decisions, understand different perspectives, solve problems, analyse and make choices.

## Meet your brain - Module overview

The key concept here is that we can be at our best when Team H-A-P are working together. When we feel stressed or worried, Team H-A-P cannot work well together and our Amygdala will take over and cause us to react (without thinking) rather than respond (assessing our actions before we take them).

When we feel stressed, worried or sense danger the Amygdala takes over and Team H-A-P don't work well together. This happens because the oxygen supply goes straight to the Amygdala which, effectively shuts down the Prefrontal cortex and Hippocampus and the functions that they help us to perform.

The children learn that when this happens, the best thing that they can do is something called Happy breathing, this is slow calm breathing and is scientifically proven to help calm the mind especially, the Amygdala.

## Extension activities and top tips

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### Key resources include:

myHappyMind journals which include the key concepts taught about Team H-A-P and neuroplasticity and plenty of space for reflection and learning notes

Poster's of the key concepts to have on display

Poster to capture neuroplasticity moments

Snow globe for use in MWO 4

The journals and posters have multiple uses, the key is to talk about the new concepts and terms as much as possible and to keep them highly visible!

## Specific notes for each Mind Workout (MWO):

### MWO 1

During this MWO lots of terms and language will be introduced that the children may not be familiar with. Please do spend the time you need to ensure they grasp them through discussion and or any other teaching methods you see fit.

### MWO 2-

There is lots of recap activity in this MWO. It is useful for the children to have their journals with them to help them with this and take their own notes.

During the happy breathing exercise, there may be some children who struggle to focus. This is OK. Some will find it hard to do this at first but with practice they will improve. It is important that they are given this message so that they try it again. We suggest that you get the children settled and sat quietly before you click the happy breathing button on the relevant slide. Note there is a couple of seconds delay after you have clicked it before the exercise starts. We find that when children understand the science of what happens when they do happy breathing they are more willing to try it. So, ensuring this understanding is solidified before they start the exercise is key. We also introduce the concept of self guided happy breathing, this may be a nice activity to set for homework.

### MWO 3

There is happy breathing in this MWO so please ensure your class is set up appropriately. There is also lots of opportunity for discussion and group work.

### MWO 4

There is happy breathing in this MWO so please ensure your class is set up appropriately. There is also lots of opportunity for discussion and group work. You will need the snow globe for this MWO.

## Specific notes for each Mind Workout (MWO):

### MWO 5

There is happy breathing in this MWO so please ensure your class is set up appropriately. There is also lots of opportunity for discussion and group work.

### MWO 6

There is happy breathing in this MWO so please ensure your class is set up appropriately. There is also lots of opportunity for discussion and group work. This MWO is highly focussed on recapping and ensuring the concepts are solidified, please ensure that you take the time to do this.



*"In a world full of doing,  
doing, doing it is important to  
take time to just breathe and  
just be."*

