

Change It Up - Levels F-3

PLAY

To help students practise adaptability by engaging in a fun and familiar game with surprising twists. Pluto may be the smallest planet (or not a planet at all, depending on who you ask), but it teaches us that flexibility, curiosity, and openness to change are powerful life skills.



Learning Intentions

Students will learn to follow changing rules in a game. This builds cognitive flexibility and adaptability.

Students will practise staying calm when things are different or surprising. This strengthens emotional regulation and open-mindedness.

Students will learn to have fun and stay positive even when things don't go as expected. This promotes resilience and positivity.



Success Criteria

I can listen closely to changes and follow new instructions. This supports concentration and flexible thinking.

I can try new rules without giving up or getting upset. This helps develop problem-solving and persistence.

I can enjoy learning new ways to play. This encourages curiosity and a growth mindset.

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Objective:

To help students practise adaptability by engaging in a fun and familiar game with surprising twists. Pluto may be the smallest planet (or not a planet at all, depending on who you ask), but it teaches us that flexibility, curiosity, and openness to change are powerful life skills.

Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students as a whole class or small groups

Materials:

- Open space for movement
- No equipment required (optional music for transitions)

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Begin by reading the Pluto page from *The Playful Astronauts* and discussing:

- “What does adaptability mean?”
- “What happens when things change suddenly?”
- “How do we feel when a game has a surprise rule?”

Let students know they’ll be playing a shape-shifting version of a game they know but with some fun twists from the planet Pluto!

Gameplay:

Step 1 – Start with Familiar Game:

Begin with a well-known game like *Simon Says*.

Example: “Simon says touch your toes,” “Simon says jump.”

Step 2 – Pluto Takes Over:

Partway through, announce that *Simon* has gone to space, and now *Pluto Says* is in charge!

But with Pluto... things are a bit different!

Introduce changes such as:

- Now you only follow *Pluto Says* if it’s said in a silly voice
- Pluto spins the direction of the game backwards
- You do the opposite (e.g. “Pluto says sit” = you stand!)
- Everyone adds a jump after every action



Change It Up - Levels F-3

PLAY

Step 3 – Keep It Changing:

Continue adjusting the rules in playful, gentle ways. Encourage laughter and mistakes, encourage students to try again if they get mixed up.

Pause between rounds to ask:

- “How did it feel when the game changed?”
- “Was it hard to keep up? What helped you adapt?”

Winning the Game:

Everyone wins by trying, laughing, and staying flexible. Pluto reminds us that even when things feel uncertain or unexpected, we can adapt with a smile.

Variations:

Musical Pluto:

Play upbeat music during the game. When the music stops, Pluto announces a new rule or twist.

This keeps students alert and engaged while adding rhythm and anticipation.

Student Pluto:

Let different students take turns being “Pluto,” inventing their own rule changes (e.g., “Now everyone moves in slow motion!” or “You have to talk like a robot!”).

This promotes leadership, creativity, and fun.

Backwards Challenge:

Play a round where all instructions are reversed, walking backward, clapping before instead of after, or turning the wrong way on purpose.

Encourages laughter and flexible thinking.

Team Pluto:

Split the class into two groups. Each group creates one new rule for the next round, helping the entire class adapt together.

Builds collaboration and group problem-solving.

Reflection Circle Extension:

After the game, students sit in a circle and complete this sentence:

“When things change, I can...”

This helps connect play to emotional awareness and real-life adaptability.

For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Ensure all actions have seated or adaptable options (e.g., “Simon says touch your shoulders,” “wave your hands,” “spin your chair,” “lift your arms high”).
- Use upper-body movements for all commands, allowing everyone to participate safely.



Change It Up - Levels F-3

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- Allow wheelchair users or mobility-impaired students to become “Pluto” and give instructions to the group, ensuring leadership inclusion.
- If space is limited, play using gestures, facial expressions, or sound effects instead of full-body movement.
- Emphasise the emotional adaptability component, responding calmly and flexibly to verbal changes rather than physical ones.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Encourage laughter, mistakes, and positive self-talk:
- “It’s okay to get it wrong, that’s how we learn to adapt!”
- Pair students strategically so they can support each other during fast changes.
- Use inclusive language that celebrates difference:
- “Pluto isn’t like the other planets, and that’s what makes it special!”
- “We all play in our own way, and that’s what makes the game fun.”
- Model calm adaptability, when rules change, react with humour and curiosity.
- Finish with a group affirmation inspired by Pluto:
- “Change can be tricky, but we can all adapt, stay positive, and keep having fun!”

Additional Notes:

Change It Up turns change into a celebration. It helps students become more comfortable with uncertainty, while building confidence that they can handle new situations. Like Pluto, distant and mysterious but full of possibility, students learn to embrace the unknown with courage and creativity.

