

Freeze and Think - Levels F-3

STAY ACTIVE

To help students explore the connection between movement and mindfulness by playing a fun freeze dance game with a calming twist. When the music stops, students practise a "cool-down" action to help them think clearly and settle their bodies, mirroring the lessons from Mercury, where big emotions can be balanced with thoughtful actions.



Learning Intentions

Students will learn how to use movement to help their bodies feel calm and in control. This helps them connect physical movement with emotional self-regulation.

Students will practise calming actions such as taking a deep breath or giving themselves a gentle hug. This introduces mindful strategies to manage frustration or conflict.

Students will learn to stop, think, and choose a peaceful action when the music pauses. This supports the development of self-awareness and intentional decision-making.



Success Criteria

I can move safely and creatively while the music plays.
This allows students to express energy and enjoy movement with purpose.

I can freeze my body when the music stops and practise a calming action.
This promotes control, focus, and calming physical strategies.

I can take part in the game while listening carefully and showing care for others.
This reinforces teamwork, self-control, and peer respect.



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Objective:

To help students explore the connection between movement and mindfulness by playing a fun freeze dance game with a calming twist. When the music stops, students practise a "cool-down" action to help them think clearly and settle their bodies, mirroring the lessons from Mercury, where big emotions can be balanced with thoughtful actions.

Players:

Ideal for 6–26 students, moving in an open indoor or outdoor space.

Materials:

- A music player or speaker
- Upbeat, fun music (instrumental or familiar songs)
- Optional: Visual cards of calming actions (e.g. "Take a deep breath", "Hug yourself", "Stretch tall") (You can brainstorm these as a class prior to starting the activity).

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Clear a space for safe movement. Explain that today's game is called *Freeze and Think*, and it will help students practise how to calm their bodies and minds, especially when something unexpected happens.

Revisit the *Mercury* page in *The Playful Astronauts* book and remind students that Mercury is a place of extremes, very hot and very cold. Sometimes, we can feel like that during a disagreement, but there are things we can do to cool down and feel calm again.

Gameplay:

Explain the Game:

Tell students that they will dance freely while the music plays. When the music stops, they must freeze and immediately do a calming action like:

- Taking a deep breath
- Hugging themselves
- Slowly stretching their arms to the sky
- Placing their hands on their heart

You can use visual cards or demonstrate each option beforehand.



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Begin the Game:

1. Play the music and let students dance and move however they like.
2. Pause the music at random. As soon as the music stops:
 - Students freeze.
 - Then, everyone completes one calming action (teacher can call it out or let students choose).
3. Restart the music and continue the game with a few rounds.

Encourage creativity during the dance, and calm, focused actions during the freeze moments. If letting the students choose their own calming actions encourage them to try a different action each time the music stops (encourage them to watch others to learn new calming actions).

Encourage Calm and Reflection:

At the end of the game, gather students and ask:

- "How did it feel to stop and do something calming?"
- "Which calming action helped you feel most relaxed?"
- "Could you use one of those if you felt upset during the day?"

Winning the Game:

There are no winners or losers. The aim is to have fun moving and to learn how to use calming actions during moments of big energy or emotion, just like we learn to cool down and think clearly during conflict.

Variations:

Younger Students: Use slower-paced songs or short clips. Limit the calming actions to just two choices (e.g. "Take a deep breath" or "Hug yourself").

Mindful Moves Edition: Between rounds, add new calming actions like "count to three," "shake it out," or "smile and breathe."

Partner Edition: When the music stops, students turn to a partner, mirror each other's calming action, and then resume dancing.

Slow-Motion Edition: During one round, play the music softly and challenge students to move in slow motion to focus on control and breathing.



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For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Ensure all calming actions can be completed from a seated position (e.g. stretching arms up, shoulder rolls, deep breathing, or gentle hand squeezes).
- Keep the space clear and wide enough for comfortable, safe movement.
- Encourage students to move creatively using upper-body motions, expressions, or rhythmic clapping.
- Use visual and verbal cues to indicate when to freeze and begin calming actions.
- Allow use of assistive devices (e.g. switches or adapted instruments) for controlling or contributing to the music pauses.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Model the freeze and calm actions yourself, this helps visual learners and sets a supportive tone.
- Reinforce that everyone's calming action can look different, and that's perfectly okay.
- Offer gentle praise for effort rather than precision: "I love how you froze so quickly and took a calm breath!"
- Allow students who prefer not to dance to sway, tap, or move their hands rhythmically, every form of movement counts.
- End the activity with a class affirmation:
- *"When we stop, breathe, and think, we can choose calm, just like Mercury shows us balance."*

Additional Notes:

"Freeze and Think" is a joyful, active way to integrate mindfulness into everyday classroom movement. It provides students with tools to pause, reset, and respond thoughtfully during challenges. By practising this skill in a safe and playful way, students begin to see that they have the power to choose calm, just as Mercury teaches us to balance extremes and find peace in the pause. Try to come back to the calming actions regularly as the teacher, randomly ask students to practice their calming actions, a great way to start a class or after a lunch break.

