



My Brain Keeps Me Alive (🧠 A Brain Facts Story)
(2nd Grade – 7-8 yrs.)
Think, Pair, Share: Don't Blink
Partner Activity



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDE 9 (Approx Time: 15-20 mins)

The things your brain does automatically for you are things you must do all the time to stay alive. These are things like breathing, pumping blood to your body and getting energy from your food. If you had to think about doing these things all the time, then your brain would be using too much energy. Thinking takes LOTS of energy.

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Stopwatch or clock with a second hand
- Protective eye gear such as glasses, goggles, safety goggles, etc. (Part III is optional)

Preparation needed:

- Determine what activity students will complete for Part I (reading quietly/aloud, drawing, writing, or coloring).
- Determine if students will complete Part III (optional)

Instructions:

1. This activity ties in with the idea that there are many things that the brain does automatically that we do not have to think about. This think, pair, share activity explores blinking.
2. First, have students independently think about and jot down the answers to the following questions:
 - a. Why do we blink?
 - b. Do we have to think about blinking?
 - c. What makes us blink?
3. After a few minutes, discuss their thoughts and ideas to the questions.
4. Pair up students. Ask students to choose A or B.

Part I: Natural Blinks

5. Explain that Student A will be doing a pre-determined activity. Student B will be counting how many times their partner blinks naturally in one minute. This means Student A is doing their activity (reading, drawing, writing, or coloring) and not thinking about their blinking. The activity distracts them from thinking about blinking. Student B will count how many blinks Student A does during the one minute of activity.
6. Ask students if they have any questions or need any clarification. Clear up any misunderstandings.
7. Start the timer and have students begin their task. The natural blinks will be counted for one minute and recorded.

8. When the timer goes off, both students stop.
9. Student B will record the number of natural blinks.
10. Then switch roles. Student B will not complete the activity and Student A will count blinks.
11. When the timer goes off, both students stop.
12. Student A records the number of natural blinks.
13. Now that both students have completed each task, take a few minutes to talk about the data collected.
 - Ask students to compare the number of natural blinks.
 - Ask students what observations they noticed
14. Remind students that blinking is necessary, but it is not something we have to think about doing. It is automatic and involuntary.

Part II: Staring Contest

15. The second part of this activity is a staring contest. Students will keep the same partner.
16. Explain to them that they will stare into each other's eyes. A stopwatch will be running in the room. They will stay there staring at one another until one of them blinks. When one of them blinks, the partner raises their hand and shouts "BLINK." They will listen for the elapsed time to be said out loud and the blinker will record the time on the paper.

For example: "My partner is Jose. We will stand like this (model for students). Jose sees me blink first. He raises his hand and shout BLINK! We hear the teacher (me), say 11 seconds. I will write 11 seconds on my paper."
17. Ask students if they have any questions or need any clarification. Clear up any misunderstandings.
18. Have all students turn to face their partner. Begin the stopwatch.
19. Call out the elapsed time as students shout "BLINK!"
20. Continue until everyone has blinked.
21. Discuss the results and the time elapsed for various students.

Suggested Questions:

 - Why can some keep their eyes open longer?
 - Do the conditions in the environment make a difference?
 - Did the person who kept their eyes open longest have a strategy?
22. Talk about that even though they could somewhat control their eyes from blinking in a voluntary way, eventually, they would have to blink.

Part III: Made Ya Blink! (OPTIONAL)

23. The last part of the activity is optional and will require eye protection to be worn by the students. The eye protection can be glasses, goggles, safety goggles, etc.
24. Explain that one partner will throw the paper ball at the other partner keeping tally marks for how many times they blink when the paper is thrown.
25. Have the partner groups ball up a piece of paper.
26. Allow each partner to complete this activity for one minute.
27. After everyone has settled down, talk about the results of this activity. Discuss the data and why they think it occurred the way it did.
28. In closing, students should get that many things that happen in our bodies occur because our brain does them automatically for us. They are involuntary. Some actions, like blinking, we can try to control (staring game), but ultimately our brain takes over and does it for us. Our brain does this to keep us healthy and alive.

Activity Idea Credit: <https://gettingnerdywithmelandgerdy.com/muscles-move-you/>