



**The World As We Know It (🧠 A Cognitive Health Story)
(4th Grade – 9-10 yrs.)
Physical Activity: Balancing Act**



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDE 4 (Approx Time: varies based on activities selected)

We have 5 senses that we use to get information from the world around us. We can see, hear, smell, taste and feel things (with our skin). We have a 6th sense – we also have a sense of balance. We need our senses to get information about the world that we live in so that we can survive. Our senses give us information about whether something can be eaten, or if there is danger around. Our senses help keep our bodies and brains safe.

Materials needed:

- Materials vary based on specific activities- (see below)

Preparation needed:

- Determine which activities students will complete.
 - Choose what works best for your students and circumstances.
 - Read activities, gather materials, and prepare for selected activities.

Instructions:

1. In this activity, students will learn more about their 6th sense, balance. Most students might not even know that this is one of their senses. There are several activities included. All or some may be completed with students.
2. Begin the activity by asking if anyone was surprised to hear that balance is a 6th sense. Many students might be surprised. Ask why they think balance is so important. Talk about the two different types of balance:
 - Static balance-controlling the body in a static (not moving, fixed) position
 - Dynamic balance-controlling the body position while moving
3. Complete pre-determined balancing activities.
4. After completing each activity, have a brief discussion about how they felt about it.
 - What is easy or hard?
 - What made it difficult?
 - Would it become easier over time with practice?
 - Why would an activity like this be important in “real life?”
5. In closing, review that we use our senses to get information about the world around us. Balance is our 6th sense, and it is important to help our body and brain stay safe and healthy.

Balancing Act Activities

Balance A Book

Materials Needed: a book for each student

Steps:

1. Stand with your feet hip-distance apart, with your arms at your sides and your belly button pulled back toward your spine.
2. Elongate your neck but keep your chin parallel to the floor.
3. Balance a book on your head and begin to walk slowly.
4. Take 10 steps, turn around and walk back 10 steps.
5. Repeat this exercise five times.

Close Your Eyes

Materials Needed: a book for each student

Steps:

1. Stand perfectly straight with your arms down by your sides and your eyes closed while balancing your book on your head.
2. Take one foot off the floor and hold this position for 10 seconds.
3. Do this five times and then repeat the exercise five times with your other leg.

Heel Up

Materials Needed: a chair for each student

Steps:

1. From a standing position, shift your weight to your right foot. You may need to hold onto something, such as a chair or someone's hand.
2. Bend your left knee and bring your left heel up behind you.
3. Without using your hands, hold your left foot as close to your bottom as you can get it.
4. Remain in this position for a count of 10. Return your left foot to the mat.
5. Repeat this exercise 10 times with this leg, and then repeat it 10 times with your other leg.

Put On Your Shoe

Materials Needed: students' shoes

Steps:

1. In a standing position, try putting on your shoes, one shoe at a time.
2. Repeat this 10 times and then switch to the other leg.
3. If this movement is easy for some children, have them try tying their shoes, too.

Walk the Line

Materials Needed: sidewalk chalk or tape

Steps:

1. Make a straight line by using a length of tape on the floor, sidewalk chalk on the playground or the edge of a curb.
2. Walk the line while placing your feet heel-to-toe.
3. Tell the students to keep their eyes on the end of the rope, line, or tape. This will make walking and keeping their balance a little easier.

Balance Challenge

Materials Needed: none

Steps:

1. Stand on one leg, close your eyes, and count how many seconds you can keep your balance for.
2. Repeat this 10 times and then switch to the other leg.
3. To make this more challenging, stand on one leg and try one of these four variations.
 - Place both arms overhead.
 - Raise one hand while keeping the other hand down.
 - Perform arm circles with both arms.
 - Close your eyes and try to touch your nose.
4. Repeat your chosen variation of this physical fitness exercise for kids 10 times, and then switch to the other leg.

Knee Up and Extend

Materials Needed: none

Steps:

1. Stand with your hands on your hips; shift your weight to the right foot.
2. Lift your left foot slightly so just the ball of the foot is touching the ground.
3. Lift your left knee up so that the foot leaves the ground.
4. Bring your left leg down and extend it out to the side without letting the foot touch the ground.
5. Return to the starting position. Repeat the movement 10 times and then switch to the other leg.

Balancing Kicks

Materials needed: none

Steps:

1. This activity is meant to be done at a slow pace.
2. Begin in a standing position. While keeping your arms out to your sides to help you maintain balance, shift your weight to stand on one leg.
3. Bend your other leg at the knee, bringing your foot up under you until your heel touches your bottom.
4. Kick straight out in front of your body.
5. Bring your heel back under your bottom and step back down into the starting position.
6. Repeat this exercise five times, then switch legs and do the exercise five more times.

Activity Idea Credit: <https://forkidsplus.com/physical-fitness-for-kids/#balance-games>