

PRE-LEARNING

FOR KS2 (YEARS 3-6)

Activate today, prepare for tomorrow!

Practical games and activities that spark thinking, build confidence and set children up for successful learning.

1 ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE



- "What do you already know?" (mind maps, quick jot ideas)
- True or false? statements
- Odd one out (with reasoning)
- Picture prompt discussions

Focus: retrieval, curiosity, engagement

2 ORACY & REASONING



- Think-pair-share
- Debate corners (agree/disagree)
- Justify your answer challenges
- Sentence stems (e.g. I think... because...)

Focus: confidence, vocabulary, reasoning

3 VOCABULARY & LANGUAGE



- Word of the day (deep dive)
- Word association chains
- Definition matching games
- "Use it in a sentence" challenges

Focus: understanding before application

4 READING READINESS & COMPREHENSION



- Prediction from title/image
- Sequencing events (before reading full text)
- Spot the inference (what can you work out?)
- Summarise in 5 words

Focus: understanding, inference, prediction

5 WRITING READINESS



- Sentence combining (improve simple sentences)
- Expand and improve (add detail, clauses)
- Model imitation (mimic a structure)
- Quick-fire planning grids

Focus: structure, ideas, confidence

6 MATHS PRE-LEARNING



- Estimate first, calculate later
- "What do you notice?" number patterns
- Multiple methods challenge
- Error spotting (teacher mistakes!)

Focus: reasoning, flexibility, number sense

7 PROBLEM-SOLVING & THINKING



- Logic puzzles
- "What's the rule?" games
- Strategy games (chess, connect, logic grids)
- Open-ended challenges (many possible answers)

Focus: resilience, deep thinking, perseverance

8 COLLABORATION & DISCUSSION



- Group challenges with roles (leader, recorder, reporter)
- Build something together tasks
- Shared problem-solving tasks
- Peer explanation games

Focus: teamwork, communication, accountability

9 INDEPENDENCE & LEARNING HABITS



- "Plan it first" routines
- Time challenges (beat your best!)
- Self-check stations
- Choice tasks with increasing challenge levels

Focus: ownership, self-regulation, independence

10 RETRIEVAL & MEMORY BOOSTERS



- Quick quizzes (low stakes)
- Flashback 5 (previous learning recall)
- Matching games (key facts/definitions)
- Teach someone else what you remember

Focus: recall, long-term memory, automaticity

KEY PRINCIPLES



Activate thinking before teaching



Encourage talk and reasoning



Focus on how children think, not just answers



Keep it short, sharp and purposeful



Build independence gradually

BIG IDEA

Pre-learning in KS2 is about moving from support → strategy → independence

