

## TAKE A BREATHING BREAK

---

**Three or more deep breaths** activate the body’s internal “brake,” the parasympathetic nervous system. When we feel afraid, worried, angry, or overstimulated, we can “apply the brakes” using slow, focused breathing. We can learn techniques to calm ourselves down and bring about changes in our physical and emotional states. This kind of breathwork allows us to mindfully shift from one activity to another, find peace when we feel anxious or nervous, or create space for our bodies and brains to rest.

Special Note to Parents and Caregivers: Breath work is a component of mindfulness that helps us explore or change how we feel in our bodies. For example, when we are worried and tense, our breath tends to become shallow and quick. On the other hand, when we feel relaxed and safe, we tend to breathe more deeply. For thousands of years, yoga practitioners and others have shown us we can alter our emotional state – from feeling afraid to feeling peaceful, from feeling overwhelmed to feeling calm and ready – by harnessing the power of the breath. Breathing exercises are easy to teach and learn, and their benefits are difficult to overstate.

## PREPARATION

### Key Vocabulary

Identify and describe:

- Inhale
- Exhale
- Ribs/rib cage
- Belly
- Expand
- Contract

## FOLLOW UP

### Breathing Break // Student Handout

With this handout, students identify their mood before and after the breathing break and then think about other times in the day that they might want to add a breathing break.

### Notice + Name It!

1. How do you feel in your mind after taking this breathing break? How do you feel in your body?
2. Do you think it would be helpful to you to take more breathing breaks?
3. If so, when during the day might you take a breathing break? Examples: when I’m worried about something, before I leave for school, when I arrive at the dentist, etc.