



Level 3: Cortex

• Resiliency •

Level 3 strengthens the frontal cortex which is responsible for focus, attention, higher-level thinking and problem-solving—all skills essential for success in school. This area supports **risk-taking** by weighing potential rewards and consequences, encouraging learning and exploration. It also fosters **autonomy** by enabling self-awareness and independent decision-making. Additionally, the frontal cortex helps with emotional regulation and understanding social cues, which aids in managing relationships with teachers and peers. Together, these functions make it key to learning, adapting, and thriving in any environment.

The arts help the frontal cortex by engaging skills like planning, problem-solving, and self-control. Arts activities also encourage focus, decision-making and risk-taking in a safe environment, supporting creativity and independent thinking. Through collaboration and reflection, the arts build autonomy and social understanding, helping individuals develop better emotional regulation and thoughtful life choices.

Use Level 3 in order to:

- Build problem-solving and decision-making skills for themselves and in groups
- Cultivate positive life choices and independent thinking
- Foster reflection and emotional regulation through difficult situations



"I Am" Poem

Age Range: 8+

Type of Art: Creative Writing

Goals:

- To support *regulation* by connecting students with familiar sensory experiences from their personal backgrounds.
- To build *relationships* and *respect* by encouraging sharing of diverse cultural or familial roots through imagery.
- To foster *relevance* through *reflection* and *reasoning* by deepening self-awareness and encouraging thoughtful expression of identity.
- To nurture *repetition* and *rhythm* in language for confidence and fluency in storytelling.

Materials:

- Writing paper or notebooks
- Pens, pencils, or digital devices
- Optional: drawing or collage materials to visualize place-based imagery

Directions:

1. **Introduce the Concept:** Explain that this poem is about the special places, memories, and sensory experiences that shape who they are—"where they are from." Share an example poem or a few lines that use rich imagery to describe a place and what it feels like to be from there.
2. **Prompt Sensory Reflection:** Ask students to think about the places they come from—this could be their home, neighborhood, town, or somewhere meaningful to them. Encourage them to remember sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings connected to that place.
3. **Provide a Template or Sentence Starters:**
 - I am from (a place, an object, or a feeling)
 - I see (visual details from that place)
 - I hear (sounds familiar to that place)
 - I smell (scents that remind me of home)
 - I taste (flavors from my culture or home)
 - I feel (sensations or emotions tied to this place)
 - I remember (a special memory or tradition)
 - I am from (repeat to reinforce identity)

4. **Writing Time:** Let students write their poems, emphasizing imagery that evokes strong sensory connections.
5. **Sharing and Discussion:** Offer space for volunteers to share their poems aloud. Discuss the diversity and richness of different places and backgrounds.
6. **Optional Creative Extension:** Students can create a visual artwork, collage, or digital image inspired by their poem to further express “where they are from.”

Extension:

For a more abstract poem, each of the starting lines of the prompts can be “I am” instead of “I hear” etc... For example, “I am white laundry hanging on the line.” Or “I am the bouncing of basketballs down the street.”



Tableaux

Age Range: 6+

Type of Art: Drama

Goals:

- To foster *regulation* by encouraging stillness and mindfulness within a group setting.
- To build *relationships* and *respect* through collaborative creation of shared images and stories.
- To promote *reasoning* and *reflection* by interpreting and analyzing the meaning behind posed scenes.
- To encourage *repetition* and *rhythm* through repeated practice of poses and storytelling sequences.
- To support *relational* skills by developing non-verbal communication and empathy within the group.

Materials:

- Open space (classroom, gym, or outdoor area)
- Optional: simple props or costume pieces to enhance scenes

Directions:

1. **Introduce Tableaux:** Explain that a tableaux (pronounced “ta-blow”) is a “living picture” where students use their bodies to create a frozen scene that tells a story or expresses an idea through facial expressions, body language, levels (high, medium, low), and proximity (how close or far apart they stand).
2. **Warm-Up:** Lead students through gentle stretching and movement to prepare for stillness and posing.
3. **Build the Tableaux One at a Time:**
 - One student steps into the space and strikes a pose that expresses a part of the story or theme using clear facial expression and body language.
 - That student “freezes” in place.
 - The next student steps in and adds their own pose in relationship to the first—considering levels and proximity—to build the scene collaboratively.
 - This continues one student at a time, with each adding to and interacting with the existing poses to create relationships and layers within the tableau.
4. **Hold the Pose:** Once all students have joined, the group holds the frozen image together silently for 10–30 seconds, creating a living picture that conveys a story or emotion.

5. **Observation and Reflection:** Invite the group or audience to observe and interpret the tableau. Discuss the emotions, relationships, and story being expressed through the poses and positioning.
6. **Unfreeze & Share:** Students can “unfreeze” one by one to describe their role, expression, or the relationship they created with others in the tableau.
7. **Repeat & Remix:** Try creating new tableaux with different themes, poses, or groupings to explore various stories or ideas.

Extension:

- The teacher can gently tap a student on the shoulder during the frozen tableau to prompt them to briefly move, make a sound, or add a short line of dialogue that their character, animal, or object might say or express. This brings the tableau momentarily to life, adding depth and encouraging creativity, listening, and spontaneity.

Adaptation Tips:

- For younger students, keep poses simple and use familiar stories or emotions.
- Encourage attention to facial expressions and body language to convey feelings clearly.
- For older students, introduce abstract or symbolic tableaux that invite deeper interpretation.
- Use music or soundscapes to inspire mood before freezing into tableaux.



Letter Alliteration Art

Age Range: 8+

Type of Art: Visual Art

Goals:

- To challenge students in developing vocabulary by creating a visual piece with *repetitive* initial sounds.
- To relate to each other through collaboration, promoting *relationship*.
- To feel a sense of reward and accomplishment through their creative process, emphasizing *respect*.

Materials (May use one or more):

- Digital option: computer or tablet with publishing or drawing software
- Poster Board; Markers; Paints; Magazines

Directions:

- Students will be given a topic (such as a place to research or their own names).
- Students may use a dictionary or the internet to find words that start with the same letter as their topic to ensure understanding of each word.
- Using the materials provided, students will create a visual piece of art that shows the letter of their topic.

Example:

"Beautiful Bangladesh Blossoms Brightly"

- Alliteration: The repetition of the initial "B" sound in the phrase.
- Topic: The country of Bangladesh.
- Art Connection: This phrase could be used as the title or theme for artwork depicting the beauty and vibrancy of Bangladesh. The alliteration adds a catchy and memorable quality to the title, enhancing artistic impact.



Emoji/Symbol Decipher

Age Range: 8+

Type of Art: Visual Art

Goals:

- To build *relationships* by creating and solving emoji or symbol-coded messages.
- Students develop problem-solving and decoding skills through *rhythm* and *repetition* of symbolic communication.
- Students experience a sense of accomplishment and belonging, supporting *respect*.

Materials (May use one or more):

- Computer/Tablet with access to emoji icons OR students can draw or cut out emojis
- Paper
- Glue
- Writing utensil

Directions:

- Instruct students to create a coded message using emojis or other symbols.
- Students show their finished message to the teacher/adult before others attempt to decipher it.
- Completed messages are numbered and placed around the room.
- Students walk around and decipher each message, writing answers on paper next to the corresponding number.
- When finished, students return to seats; the teacher may review answers with the class.



Telephone Dance

Age Range: 5+

Type of Art: Dance

Goals:

- To practice self-discipline, impulse control, and turn-taking, cultivating *regulation* and *repetition*.
- To build *respectful* peer relationships through shared focus and cooperation.
- To gain confidence and self-awareness through controlled movement.

Materials:

- Open space

Directions:

- Similar to the game telephone, students line up facing one direction.
- Optionally, have one or two students act as silent *raters* to observe if movements are repeated properly.
- The second student from the back turns around and focuses on the last student, who makes a dance movement toward them.
- Everyone else maintains self-control by facing away, waiting their turn.
- The second student repeats the last student's movement and adds their own, showing the next person.
- Turns continue until the front student performs the full sequence.
- Practice with suggested movements first; challenge students to create their own as memory improves.
- Younger students may play sitting, using emotion faces instead of dance moves to build self-control foundations.



Animal Beat

Age Range: 7+

Type of Art: Dance / Music

Goals:

- To enhance rhythm, coordination, and memory through repeated animal gestures, emphasizing *rhythm* and *repetition*.
- They foster social skills and teamwork via collaborative play, reinforcing *relationship*.
- To encourage confidence and adaptability, nurturing *respect* and *reasoning skills*.

Materials:

- Open space

Directions:

Variation 1: Zoo

- Players sit or stand in a circle, each choosing an animal with a unique hand gesture.
- One player starts with a 1-2-3 rhythm (slap thighs twice, clap on third beat).
- All shout “One, two, let's play Zoo!” and follow the rhythm.
- The starting player performs their animal gesture on the third beat.
- In following rounds, the active player performs another's gesture to catch them off guard.
- The targeted player must respond with their gesture, then pass it on.
- Players clap the rhythm when it's not their turn.
- Failing to maintain rhythm or gesture leads to elimination.
- The last player standing wins.

Variation 2: King Elephant (Advanced)

- Players sit in a circle with assigned animals in a food chain order.
- The King Elephant starts a 1-2-3-4 rhythm: pat knee, clap, own animal gesture, then another's.
- Players respond with their animal gesture and pass on a new one.
- Funny animal sounds encouraged.
- Mistakes lead to becoming the “worm,” others move up.
- Goal: move up the chain to become King Elephant.



Music Sleuth / Guess the Leader

Age Range: 8+

Type of Art: Music

Goals:

- To improve observation, communication, and quick thinking through rhythmic imitation, supporting *rhythm*, *repetition*, and *regulation*.
- To build collaboration, trust and social connection, emphasizing *relationship*.
- To exercise creativity and *respect* for group dynamics.

Materials:

- Open space

Directions:

- Form a circle, ensuring all see each other.
- Select one guesser to leave the room or close eyes.
- Secretly choose a leader from remaining players.
- Leader begins simple actions (clapping, snapping, stomping).
- Others copy leader immediately.
- Leader periodically changes actions, others follow quickly.
- Guesser returns, stands in the middle of the circle and tries to identify leader within 3 guesses.
- Correct guesser becomes new leader; select new guesser.



Story Building “Yes, and Then”

Age Range: 5+

Type of Art: Drama

Goals:

- To engage in collaborative storytelling, practicing *relationship* and listening through “Yes, And...” responses.
- To foster creativity and abstract thinking through *rhythm* and *repetition*, fostering creativity and abstract thinking.
- To experience safety and *respect* in shared narrative creation.

Materials:

- Open space
- Writing materials

Directions:

1. **Set the Scene:** Groups or whole class agree on basic characters, setting, and situation.
2. **Start the Story:** One student begins with a statement about the scene.
3. **“Yes, and then...” Responses:** Each player adds to the story starting with “Yes, and then...”, building on prior ideas.
4. Continue until all have contributed.

Extension: Students can extend the story onto paper, writing the story that they just created together, adding on, or changing it slightly.



Poetry Slam

Age Range:13+

Type of Art: Drama

Goals:

- To connect emotionally with an audience, fostering *relationship* and *respect* through expressive performance.
- To strengthen cognitive and creative skills through writing and performing poetry involving *rhythm* and *repetition*.
- To build confidence through a safe and calm environment for sharing.

Materials:

- Writing materials (paper or digital)

Directions:

Preparation:

1. Choose a theme (e.g., “self-expression,” “nature,” “a better world”).
2. Establish rules: original work, time limits, no props.
3. Provide writing and practice time.
4. Recruit open-minded judges.
5. Prepare a performance space.
6. Encourage practice for confidence.

Event Day:

1. Introduce the slam and judging criteria.
2. Assign performance order.
3. Students perform within time limits.
4. Judges score content, delivery, originality.
5. Announce winners and recognize all performers.
6. Offer positive feedback emphasizing creativity and bravery.



Gesture Dance

Ages: 8+

Type of Art: Dance

Goals:

- To support self-awareness and self-expression through personal, meaningful gesture-based movement.
- To build *relational* connection through sharing and blending movement ideas with a partner.
- To strengthen regulation and resilience by offering a creative outlet for emotion and routine, and encouraging flexible thinking and collaboration.

Materials / Set-up:

- Open space. (Optional: light background music to support movement flow.)

Description:

1. **Personal Gesture Creation:** Ask students to reflect on what they typically do when they get home from school—e.g., hang their backpack, grab a snack, flop on the couch, pet a dog, etc. Invite them to choose 3 *clear gestures or movements* that represent their after-school routine. Each gesture should be repeated once or twice and linked together smoothly to create a short personal "gesture dance." Tell students to make the gestures larger than life, using space and time.
2. **Practice the Solo Dance:** Give students a few minutes to explore and refine their gesture dance. Encourage them to use their full body, make each gesture distinct, and repeat the sequence a few times to commit it to memory.
3. **Partner Share & Combine:** Pair students up. Each student performs their gesture dance for their partner. Then, the pair works together to **combine** their two dances into one sequence. They may choose to:
 - Do one dance after the other (A then B),
 - Intertwine gestures from both, or
 - Mirror each other during certain parts.
4. **Rehearse and Perform:** Give pairs time to practice their new duet version of the gesture dance. If time allows, invite pairs to perform their combined dances for the group.
5. **Reflect (Optional):** Lead a brief reflection:
 - What did you notice about your partner's gestures?
 - Was it easy or hard to combine your dances?
 - How did it feel to move in a way that reflects your daily life?