

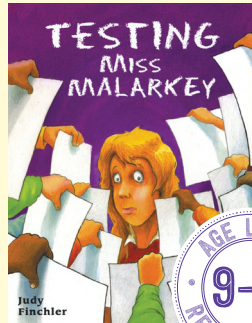


Testing Miss Malarkey

by Judy Finchler and illustrated by Kevin O'Malley

Themes

Do Your Best
Stress Reduction
Emotions & Feelings
Test Anxiety
Brain Breaks



Testing is becoming more and more stressful for our children as well as teachers and parents. This fun-loving book finds humor in the stress that takes over a school before test day. Laugh with your students and help them to reduce their stress as they DO THEIR BEST to show what they know on the not important-important test!

Remind your students: the most valuable test-taking skill they need to learn is how to relax! This story can help normalize their feelings of anxiety before a test and promote shared feelings between classmates. The test may be important but “doing your best” on everything you do in life is way more important in the big picture.

Building Background

BRAIN BREAK: Sometimes the brain needs to have a break! Too much sitting can actually shut the brain down, especially during test taking time. If we want brains to work at their best – we need to get blood moving to bring fresh oxygen and release endorphins. It’s scientifically proven that movement can improve mood and cognition. So, give your brain a break today, and everyday. NED’s brain breaks will refresh, refocus, and reduce stress in your classroom!

Key Vocabulary

Performance anxiety: when you worry that you won’t be able to do your best on something important like the big test or big sporting competition.
Acronym: a word formed from the first letters of each words/or phrase. EX: NED is an acronym. Do you remember what the N, E, and D stand for?

DID YOU KNOW?

The brain can NOT maintain attention for extended lengths of time. Try giving your students a **one to two minute brain break after every 45-60 minutes of instruction!** 90% of oxygen is stale in the brain after 10 minutes! Encourage your students to take deep breaths of fresh air when you notice them shutting down and disengaging from learning.

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Show the students the cover and first two illustrations in the book and ask students to share all that these illustrations say about Testing!

Answers will vary: On the cover: the teacher has wide eyes and no smile. She’s overwhelmed. On the First Page: Why would an armored car deliver the test? It’s protecting the questions so no one sees them ahead of time, for secrecy. On Title Page: The Delivery Man is a policeman. There are two padlocks, protecting the test. The students look scared and serious. Why does boy on left have a smile?



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2. How do YOU feel about the upcoming test?

Answers will vary. Allow students to discuss honest feelings-make a list of feeling/emotion words that they use. Remind students that sometimes we all feel differently and our feelings aren't wrong! Feelings may differ from one day to the next. We can often do things to change our feelings to be more helpful to our well-being. How can NED help change your feelings about the test?

Discussion Starters

1. The author had fun naming the characters in the story. Discuss the hidden meanings behind some of their favorite names and why they are funny. Can you think of other

funny names that could have been used?

Miss Malarkey	Meaningless talk, nonsense. "Don't give me that malarkey"
Principal Wiggins	Wig out- to become enthusiastic or anxious about something and do crazy things because of it?
Mrs. Slopdown	Slop often refers to food....as a cafeteria worker; she probably hurriedly dropped the food (slop) down on their lunch trays.
Mrs. Magenta	The art teacher has a color name - Magenta is a pinkish/red color.
Mr. Fittanuff	Play on words...."fit enough" for a gym teacher
Dr. Scoreswell	What every teacher hopes their students will do...score well on the test...even the book in the illustration is written by a playful author name....
Mr. Surley	Surly could mean irritable. Why would the janitor be irritable? How would you feel if your job was to clean up throw-up on the floor at school during testing!!!
Nurse Mend	Her job is to make everything better - to mend wounds and hurts means to take care of them.

2. Miss Malarkey said "the test wasn't that important". Is the test important? Why? Why not? *Answers will vary. Teachers, try and keep students calm about the test by reminding them they have been learners all year long - not just on the day of the test! Remember NED and DO YOUR BEST and NEVER GIVE UP! If you have been a NED head all year long - you will be ready for the test. This is your chance to show what you know!*

3. Discuss performance anxiety. What worries/fears to your students have about the test? *Answers will vary. PANIC! I will choke! I will not do as well as someone else. My fear will paralyze me and I won't be able to answer questions that I know the answers to. I won't have enough time to finish. My pencil will break. I will have to go to the bathroom during the test. I will throw-up...*

4. How can NED's positive messages help your self-talk? How can it help when you reach an obstacle in the test?

Answers will vary. If students are having a hard time talking about this - have them finish these thought starters:

On test day, I will NEVER GIVE UP by...

As we get ready for testing, I can ENCOURAGE OTHERS by....

When taking the test, I will remember to DO MY BEST by...



Writing Prompt

Complete this sentence: The closer we get to “the test day” ...

Write about how your school is getting ready for the test. Do you see silly things happening, like in the story?

Activities

PRINTABLE:

Acronym Extravaganza

Brain Break Activity

What else could N.E.D. stand for? Work in partners or small groups and brainstorm appropriate testing words and humorous phrases about your school during test taking time. Words should begin with the letters N, E and D. Use your list of amazing words to create new acronyms for “N.E.D.’s Test.”

PRINTABLE:

How Do You Feel?

How do you feel about the test today?

Use the printable that shows eight different test emotions. Instruct students to circle the emotion that best describes how they are feeling today. If they don’t see one that matches, they can draw their own. Students can write a short goal to help them change or maintain their feelings during test prep at the bottom of the page.

PRINTABLE:

Countdown Activity

“The 10 Days of Testing”Countdown Activity

Discuss what a brain break is and why it is needed. Plan a NED BRAIN BREAK every day (or repeat anytime during the day when you see your students need it!) Brain breaks can renew, refresh, refocus, and reduce stress for your students! Here are a few easy to do brain breaks...or make up your own!

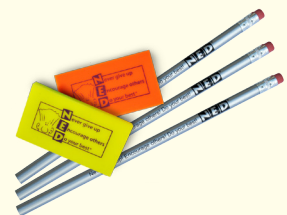
Resources

For more info...

Accelerated Reading
Quiz: 59570

NED Pencils & Erasers

Did you know you could purchase NED #2 pencils for your test takers? What a great reminder during the test to never give up and do your best! Special savings with NED’s test bundle - 30 pencils and 30 NED erasers for \$25.00. Visit www.thenedshow.com/shop_ned.



Acronym Extravaganza!

Directions: Brainstorm a list of words that describe the test or your school during test prep. Remember, each word on the list must begin with the same initial letter. Try for a range of words from humorous to serious to descriptive.

Example:

N

nerve-racking

never-ending

no homework

E

easy

exhausting

endurable

D

doable

dot-filled

day-stealing

Now, look over your list and create humorous acronyms for "N.E.D.'s Test." Be appropriate in your word choices!

Example: The NED Test: The Never-ending, Exhausting, Dot-filled Test!

The **N** _____ **E** _____ **D** _____ Test!

Next, write out the first letters of the name of your upcoming test (examples: STARR, FCAT, CST, PARCC, etc.). Then, repeat the exercise by making a list of words and a new acronym based on your test name.

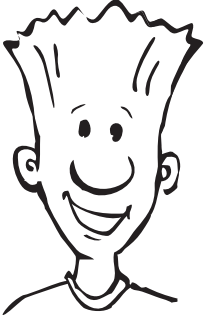
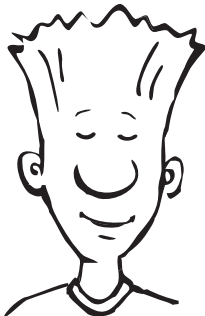
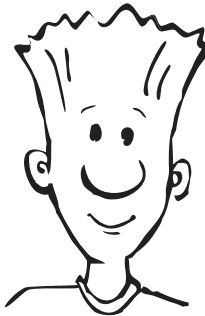
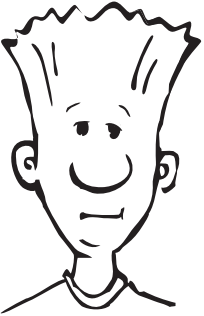
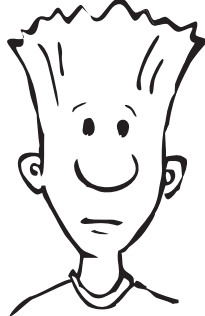
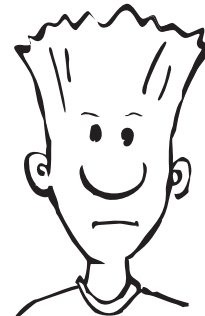
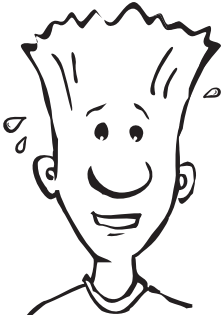


The _____ !

Name: _____

Date: _____

How do you feel about the test today?

Directions: Circle the face that best describes you today. Don't see one for you? Draw your own!

 <p>Confident Bring it on! Let's take it now!</p>	 <p>Calm I'm ready and will be fine.</p>	 <p>Hopeful I think I can do this</p>
 <p>unconcerned What test? It's no big deal.</p>	 <p>Concerned I'm a little worried and uneasy</p>	 <p>Frustrated Quit talking about it</p>
 <p>Nervous I'm scared and worried.</p>	 <p>Freaked out I'm dreading it!</p>	 <p>How do YOU feel?</p>

Write a short goal to help you feel confident about the test.

“The 10 DAYS of TESTING” Countdown Activity

Each day, do the suggested brain break. These brain breaks can be sung to the 12 Days of Christmas tune for a humorous musical brain break! Students can act out each day as it's sung.



On the 10th day of test prep, I gave my brain a break.

10 jumping jacks

9 noses twitching

8 earlobe stretches

7 silly laughs

6 sit down stand ups

FIVE deep, deep breaths

4 giant yawns

3 swimming strokes

2 friendly handshake

And a stretch that reaches higher than the sky!

DAY 10 **jumping jacks**
Repeat 10x

DAY 5 **deep, deep breaths**
Repeat 5x

DAY 9 **noses twitching**
(rotate your nose in circles)
Repeat 9x

DAY 4 **giant yawns**
Repeat 4x

DAY 8 **earlobe stretches**
(pinch ears with hands and touch knees with opposite elbow)
Repeat 8x

DAY 3 **swimming strokes**
(do the breaststroke, sidestroke, backstroke in the air)
Repeat 3x

DAY 7 **silly laughs**
Repeat 7x

DAY 2 **friendly handshakes**
(between 2 partners)
Repeat 2x

DAY 6 **sit down stand ups**
Repeat 6x

DAY 1 **Stretch...**
...to the ceiling, as tall as you can!
Hold it!