

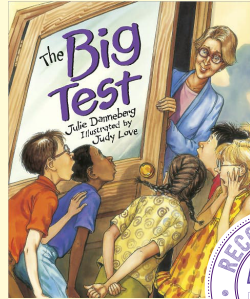


# The Big Test

by Julie Danneberg and illustrated by Judy Love

## Themes

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



Stress is building as the big test day is getting closer and closer. Even though the students are prepared to show what they know, they can't help getting more and more worried as they practice fill-in-the bubble skills and sitting still for long times. Their teacher has one last, important lesson to teach them.....stop worrying and relax!

**Note to teachers:** Tests can make students, teachers, and schools anxious, nervous and even a little crazed! Laughing is great for giving the brain a break – so why not laugh and poke fun at the commotion surrounding testing in this story, or even at your school. Hopefully, your class will relax and realize that test-taking is not so bad when they remember NED and never give up and do their best each and every day of school!

### Building Background

**BRAIN BREAK:** Short bursts of movement will help children get the wiggles out AND increase their ability to refocus on learning. 1-2 minute brain break activities every 45-60 minutes will renew, refresh and reduce stress in your classroom, making the other minutes more productive for learning. NED says...Do more with less time by giving the brain a break throughout your day!

### Key Vocabulary

**Looming:** signs of impending occurrence... “the test is looming”  
Synonyms and related words – approaching, coming, pending, threatening, nearing, inevitable, unavoidable...

### DID YOU KNOW?

Laughter is good for your body. Within minutes of laughing, stress levels drop. This infectious activity can help children relax so they can DO THEIR BEST while learning!

## Discussion Starters

1. Mrs. Hartwell told her students they were ready to take the Big Test. You are ready too! What have you done all year long to be ready for the test? How can NED help you be ready for the test?  
*Answers will vary. Worked hard, learned a lot, practiced, etc.*
2. Do you “know how to show what you know”? Have your students discuss this quote from the story. Do they know how to do this?  
*Build confidence by talking about what they know and providing some simple test taking tips (see Video Lesson plan for NED’s Top Testing Tips). Remember to never give up and do your best!*
3. What is the hardest part of test taking?  
*Answers will vary – sitting still, reading at your seat, working by yourself, reading all the directions, bubble-trouble...*



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## 4. How do you feel about the test? What can you do to relax?

Answers will vary but allow students to brainstorm what works for them by discussing their worries AND possible solutions! Eliminate distracting noises (headphones), wearing comfortable clothes (slippers), drinking water (water bottles), deep breaths, moving, holding paperclip in fidgety hand, stress balls, relaxing shoulders....

## 5. What is a brain break? Why does your brain need a break?

Answers will vary. Brain breaks can renew, refocus, refresh and reduce stress. By changing up any extended length activity, you adjust the oxygen flow to the brain. More movement means more blood moving, while providing more oxygen, resulting in better attention to learning.

## Writing Prompts

How can NED's positive message help your self-talk? How can it help when you face an obstacle in the test? Choose one of these sentence starters and begin your journal writing.

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

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

I will remember to DO MY BEST when...

## Activities

### 4 NED Brain Breaks

See the printable for detailed instructions on four brain breaks. Print BACK to BACK and cut into cards. Add to a ring and start your collection of Brain Breaks.

- 1 **LAUGH IT OUT!** Try some laughter yoga to help un-stress your students!
- 2 **WIGGLE AWAY!** Gradually wiggle from head to toes
- 3 **DETAILED DETAILS!** One-minute drawings
- 4 **VERY GOOD!** Encourage others and yourself with self-talk chanting

PRINTABLE:

*NED's Brain Breaks*

PRINTABLE:

*Make a Squish Ball*

PRINTABLE:

*Bubble Art*

**Squeeze away Stress!** 12 year-old Jadan, from the testing tips rap video, shares his step-by-step directions to make a squish ball. Help your students reduce their stress by squeezing it away.

### Bubble Art

Practice filling in test bubbles and create a colorful art pattern.

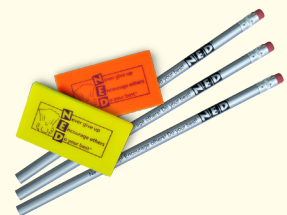
Resources

## For more info...

Accelerated Reading Quiz:  
144023

### 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](http://www.thenedshow.com/shop_ned).



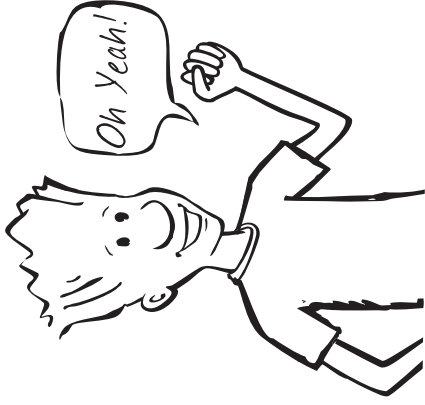


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## LAUGH IT OUT!

Try some laughter yoga to help un-stress your students! Have students stand with feet together, toes apart, shoulders up tall and hands on bellies. Inhale and feel belly expand. As you exhale, force out the air while saying “I, I, Aye, chee wah wah.” Repeat 4-5 times and watch the room fill with laughter! End with “OH YEAH!” and pump your arm in victory.



**NED**

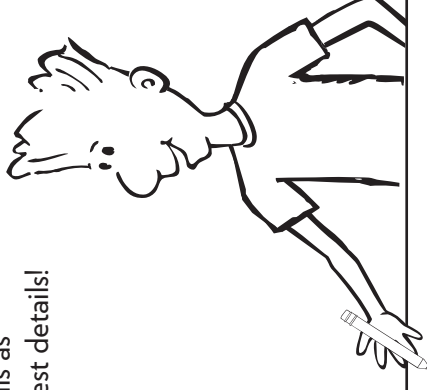
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## DETAILED DETAILS!

Give students 30 seconds to think and 1 minute to make a drawing of \_\_\_\_\_. Encourage them to draw for the entire minute and include as many details as possible. Share and discuss the best details!

Suggestions for drawing:

- Snowflake
- Something with stripes
- A favorite vacation spot
- An alien
- A combo of two animals
- A favorite plate of food
- A superhero



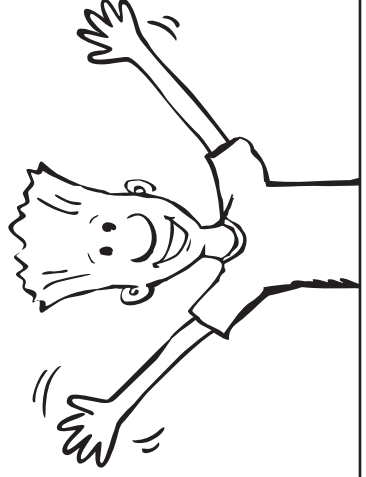
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## WIGGLE AWAY!

Starting at your head – wiggle! Children gradually move the wiggle down their body as you name body parts....Head, shoulders, left hand, right hand, hips, left leg, right leg, left foot, right foot. Invite students to WIGGLE free form, and then freeze!

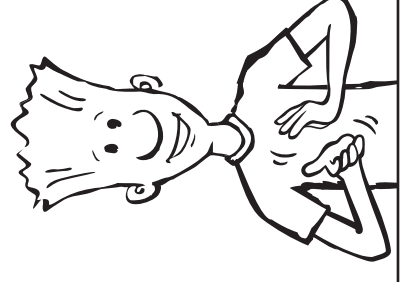


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## VERY GOOD!

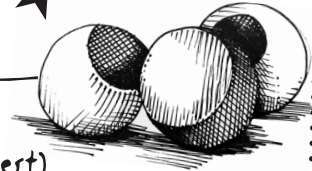
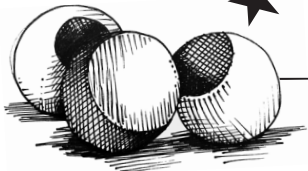
Have students stand. Say: “Very good” (clap), “Very good” (clap), “YAY” (raise hands). Repeat but give students intonation directions each time...slow motion, fast motion, low voice, deep voice, high voice, robot voice, etc. Try it with different words: “You’re amazing” (clap), “I’m amazing” (clap) “Woo Hoo” (raise hands).



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# HOW TO MAKE A SQUISH BALL BY JADAN



You will need:

Three balloons (note: one will not be seen)  
 Plastic bottle (2-liter bottles work best)  
 Funnel (if you don't have one, make one out of paper)  
 1 cup rice (1/2 cup for small balloons)  
 Scissors  
 Clear tape

1. Use the funnel to put the rice into the plastic bottle.



2. Blow up the balloon you don't want to see, and fit the neck over the bottle neck.



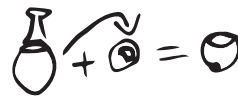
3. Turn the bottle upside-down so the rice flows into the ~~ball~~ balloon. Remove the balloon carefully.



4. Cut off the lumpy part of the balloon neck, and tape the rest of the neck down.



5. Cut the entire neck off of the second balloon, then wrap the neckless balloon around the ball so the taped-down neck of the ball is on the opposite side of the hole on the neckless balloon.



6. Repeat step five, but put on THIS balloon so the hole is on the SAME side as the taped-down neck of the ball.  $\ominus + \ominus = \omin�$

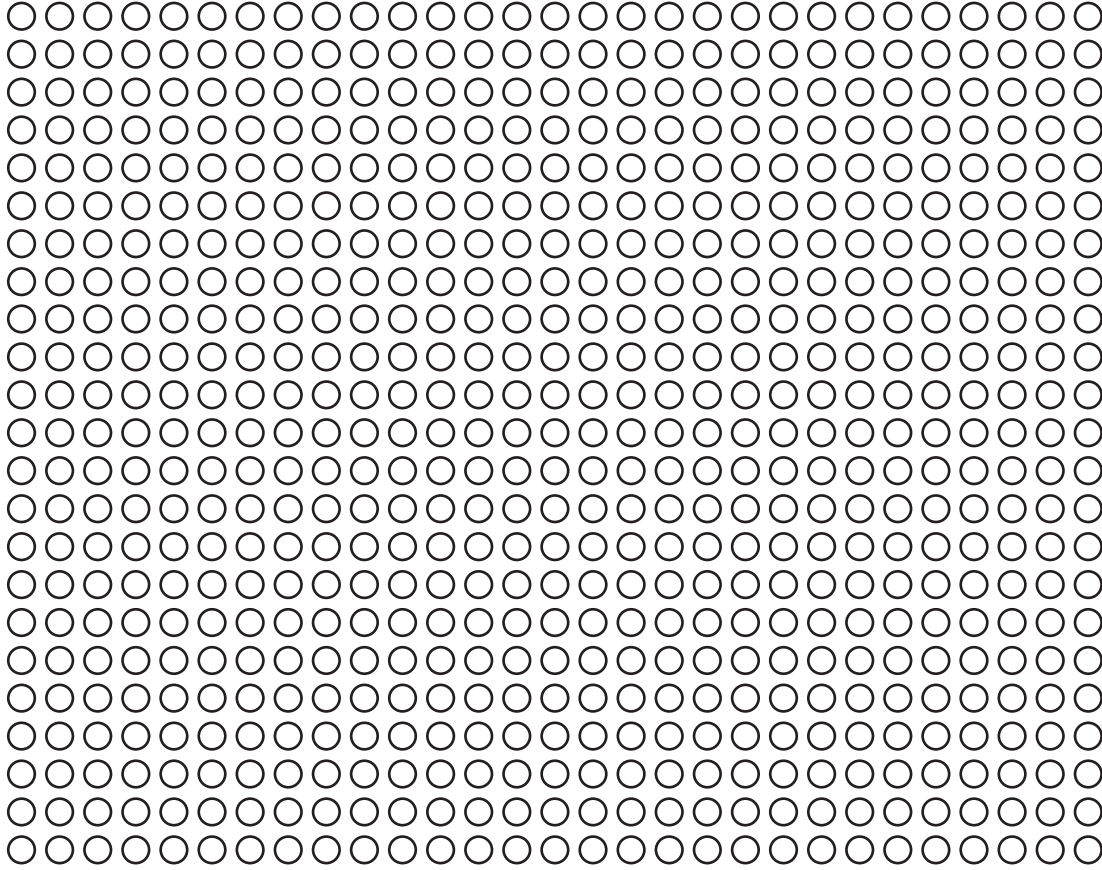
7. You're done! Use as a stress ball or for ~~the~~ juggling. The leftover balloon necks make great whistles!



\* Don't use in class

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bubble Art!** Directions: Practice filling in test bubbles! Use colored pencils and practice filling in test bubbles – make a pattern or a piece of art! (*Use a #2 pencil for actual test-taking!*) Be sure to not make any stray marks. Erase bubbles as thoroughly as possible. Do not erase so hard that a hole is rubbed through the paper.



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