

HOCUS POCUS, EVERYBODY FOCUS

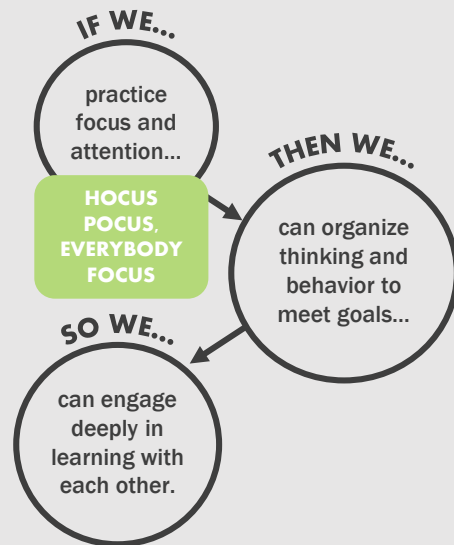
WHAT IS IT? A game to build executive function skills.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? Practicing self-control.




ALL GRADES

WHY DO THIS?



MATERIALS

 None required.

THE BIG IDEA

This game is about listening carefully as we count and remembering the right motion for a key number.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
2. Gather students in a circle. For the first round, go around the circle and count to 10 (have each person count one number). After the tenth person has said "10," the next person should say "Hocus Pocus, Everybody Focus."
3. Practice. Repeat the "1-10 + Hocus Pocus, Everybody Focus" sequence until every student has had a turn.
4. Say, "Great! Now, we're going to add a challenge. Every time we get to the number five, the person with that number will clap instead of saying the number five. Remember to just clap without saying the number. Pay careful attention to when it's your turn and whether you need to say a number, do a motion, or say 'Hocus, Pocus, Everybody Focus.' Let's practice."
5. Go around until every student has had a turn.
6. As your class becomes more comfortable with this game, feel free to add additional challenges for different numbers.

» **MUST DO:** Must require students to listen carefully for a specific number.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Change the motions and number of motions in the series.



AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- During this game, we had to pay careful attention to when it was our turn and what to say or what to do. What other times of the day do you need to pay careful attention to what to say and do?
- What strategies did you use to be successful in this game?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Ask emergent bilingual learners to say “Hocus Pocus, Everybody Focus” or a similar phrase in their native language when it’s their turn to say it.

This game can be tricky when students are first learning! The first time you play, intentionally make a mistake, and have a follow-up discussion about how mistakes are normal and to be expected in this game. Model how to move on quickly after making a mistake and how to keep playing with a good attitude.

ADAPTATIONS

- To make the game easier for younger students, try shortening the phrase to just “Hocus Pocus.” Or, only ask them to count to 5.
- Create additional challenges that have an academic focus. For example, every time you get to a certain number, name something from a subject you’re studying, such as:
 - Different animals
 - The name of a country
 - State capitals
 - Different kinds of angles
 - Addition or subtraction sentences that equal X
 - Different verbs for even numbers, different adjectives for odd numbers
 - Etc.
- Encourage the last student (i.e., the student who says “Hocus Pocus, Everybody Focus”) to make up the next challenge.