



SIMON SAYS

ALL GRADES

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

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? Practicing self-control.

WHY DO THIS?

THE BIG IDEA

This game is about listening for a key phrase (Simon Says) before you do the motion.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
2. Ask students to find their own space in the room where they can move around without bumping into anyone else.
3. Say, “Watch me and copy my actions, but only when I say ‘Simon says’ first. For example if I say, ‘Simon says touch your nose,’ you should touch your nose. But don’t do anything if I just say, ‘Touch your nose.’”
4. Give a series of fun, active commands – some with “Simon says” before, some without.
5. End with “Simon says sit down for our Post-Game Talk.”

»» **MUST DO:** Must require students to replace an automatic response with an opposite response/motion.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Change the phrase “Simon Says” or the actions to copy.

MATERIALS

None required.

IF WE...

practice slowing down and thinking before we act...

→

will be in charge of what we say and do...

SIMON SAYS

can engage deeply in learning with each other.

→

THEN WE...

SO WE...



AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- In this game, Simon is telling us what to do. In real life, our brains tell our bodies what to do. The brain is a very special muscle that can grow and become stronger with regular practice and exercise.
- What does it feel like when you are trying NOT to do something you want to do? What does it feel like to tell your body to Stop and Think?
- Do you ever talk to yourself to help yourself do something the right way? You can build your Stop and Think Power by noticing what you are doing and thinking about whether you are doing the right thing: We can say, “Hey Brain, let’s stop and think right now!” What are other ways we can help our brains Stop and Think?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



For emergent bilingual learners, invite them to share how to say “Simon Says” in their native languages, and play in different languages.



For students who may need additional support, play with them 1:1 beforehand to help them understand the rules of the game.

Allow all children to play even after they make a mistake during practice rounds. Feel free to play one final round where you ask children to line up or go to the rug for the next activity after they make a mistake.

ADAPTATIONS

- As students get better at the game, increase the speed that you play.
- To practice careful listening, insert other, but similar, phrases like “Simone says.”
- To make the game more challenging, you can do the action yourself whether or not you say “Simon says, which tempts players to follow instead of listening closely.
- A more challenging variation that also practices mental flexibility: after a few rounds, change the rules. “Now we’re going to pretend it is opposite day. You will copy my actions only when I DON’T say ‘Simon says’ first.”