



# Brainwave

## TRANSITION PACK

  
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**Brainwave**

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## TRANSITION PACK

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## What is the *Brainwave Transition Pack*?

The *Brainwave Transition Pack* is a pack of printable resources for teachers to use at the start of each school year as they get to know the children in their class and begin to assess their strengths and areas to develop.

The *Brainwave Transition Pack* provides materials for each grade.

**Level 1** contains:

- background information for teachers about **school readiness** and **child development**
- ten optional **lesson plans** with **assessment rubrics**, for the first two weeks of the school year
- an **assessment checklist** to keep a record of learner abilities at the start of the year, and suggested resources to boost student achievement

**Levels 2–6** each contain:

- background information about **diagnostic tests**
- a 5-part **diagnostic test** covering knowledge of reading, grammar, vocabulary, writing, speaking and listening
- an **assessment record** to keep a record of learner abilities at the start of the year and suggested resources to boost student achievement

Using the materials in the *Brainwave Transition Pack*, teachers at each grade can get a clear idea of the starting level of their students. For First Grade, this includes **language level assessment** as well as evaluation of **school readiness indicators** such as reading and writing level, social and emotional development, cognition, and general knowledge of the world.

For Grades 2–6, the assessment provides a diagnosis of **language level**.

- Teachers will also find ways to help support student achievement using the suggested *Brainwave* resources.

Remember that the assessments you carry out at the beginning of the school year should only be used to guide you as to how best to know and teach your students. It is important to continually reassess students and measure their progress throughout the year.

**Grade**

**1**





# Welcome back to school!

Dear **First Grade Teachers**,

Welcome to **Brainwave**!

It's a brand new school year, and soon you will be welcoming lots of new faces into your classroom, and into the unfamiliar world of "big school". As you know, the first day of elementary school is all about first impressions, both for teachers and children.

You need to be well prepared, and ensure that the activities for the first few days help to make each child feel totally comfortable in the new setting. Children who don't feel comfortable will feel reluctant to participate in class in the future. Be sure to provide activities that help to develop friendships between the children, and an atmosphere of security. Children learn best when they feel safe, and when they realize they are not alone in the learning process.

The first day of school can be a stressful occasion for young pupils who don't have much experience of school and are shy. Children coming from a small preschool may not be used to being around so many other children their age, and they may lack the basic social skills to make new friends. Building friendships in the classroom will depend on children finding things in common with each other, so organizing activities that promote child-to-child integration is very important.

Getting to know the children in your class is essential for understanding how to teach them. At the beginning of the First Grade, you need to assess each child's level of **school readiness**. Are the children in your new class ready for elementary school?

The **Brainwave Transition Pack** will provide you with lots of useful information about **school readiness** and **child development**, as well as a series of **lesson plans** and **activities** to use in the first two weeks of the school year. Each **lesson plan** is supported with **guidelines for assessing** your children's language and literacy level, as well as their social and emotional development and readiness for school.

We wish you every success with this exciting challenge!

The **Brainwave Team**

# What is School Readiness?

School readiness has often been defined as the developmental stage at which children are ready to engage in and benefit from school. Although this term is more frequently used for preschoolers, little-by-little the importance of school readiness is making noise in elementary education, too.

The reason for this is very simple: in most parts of the world eligibility for elementary school entry is determined by age rather than ability. At the start of a new school year, First Grade English teachers are faced with the reality that the children arriving in their classrooms may all be the same age, but will vary greatly in their maturity or developmental levels as well as their English language levels.

Schools and, more importantly, First Grade teachers, need to be ready to receive children who have different knowledge, skills, and understandings. So often, teachers feel pressure to make progress with the course syllabus as soon as classes begin, but taking time in the first few weeks to assess children can provide essential information about their developmental stage and their individual areas of need. This information can then be used by the teacher to help plan and adapt the learning program to meet the needs of each child.



## Assessing School Readiness in *Brainwave*

The [Transition Lessons](#) provide ten optional lesson plans with assessment rubrics to be used in the first two weeks of the First Grade school year. The lessons can be used in any order, and have been developed to help teachers identify key indicators of school readiness as well as to gain an understanding of children's English language skills.

To show teachers *what* to measure, as well as *how* to measure it, activities within the lessons offer tips on the school readiness Assessment focus areas. These are centered on the following:

- Language skills
- Literacy skills
- Social skills
- Attitudes to learning
- Cognitive skills
- Motor skills

By using these lessons, teachers can get a clear idea of the starting level of their students, accurately assess each individual's readiness for school, and use the information to guide the way they teach the children in subsequent classes.

The activities are organized in a way that allows teachers to observe children interacting with each other. They can then collect information about children's knowledge, abilities, and skills. The school readiness assessment scores for each child can then be recorded on the [Assessment Checklist](#).

## Supporting Progress

*Assessing school readiness at the start of the school year only provides temporary information about children's progress and level.*

Children are excited to learn and learn quickly. Teachers should be prepared to use a variety of instructional resources to help their students achieve the required standards.

*Brainwave* provides a variety of materials as a follow-up to the initial assessment in the [Transition Lessons](#). The resources support teachers in structuring their learning environment, and cater to students' different learning styles, interests, skills, and abilities. The online [Extended Teacher Edition](#) ([www.macmillanbrainwave.com](http://www.macmillanbrainwave.com)) offers differentiated instruction strategies and techniques to address diverse student needs. These learning options can help to ensure that all students, including those who are working below grade level, those who are advanced, and those who are in the middle, receive appropriate levels of challenge.

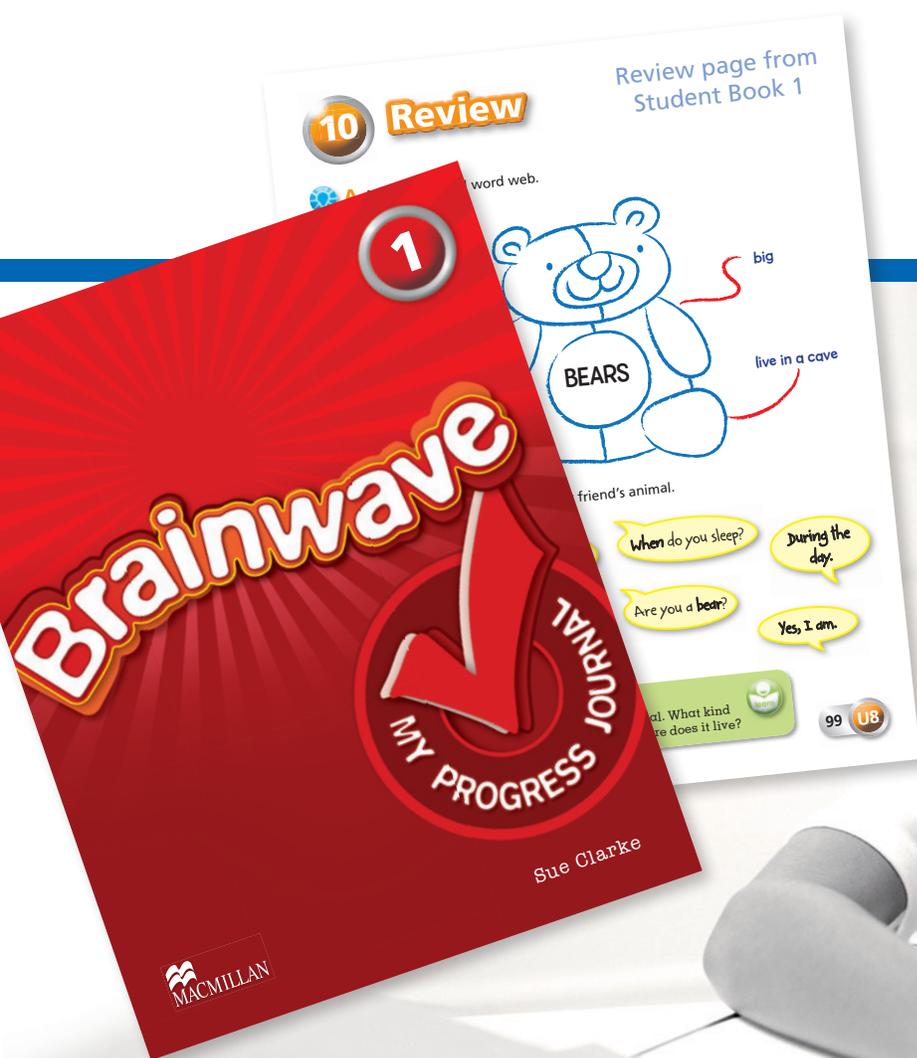
*Brainwave* provides materials for children to grow and progress. For those who need further support in language skills, the [Student Website](#) ([www.macmillanbrainwave.com](http://www.macmillanbrainwave.com)) provides a range of engaging online resources for practicing and improving reading and listening skills as well as improving specific areas of grammar and vocabulary.

## Ongoing Assessment

*Teachers should continually reassess students at regular intervals during the course to measure their continuing progress.*

To this end, *Brainwave* offers a range of assessment materials including Review lessons, Unit tests, and a [Test Builder](#) tool for teachers to create tailor-made exams.

The *Brainwave Progress Journals* allow children to self assess, become aware of themselves as learners, and measure their own progress.



# Child Development

**songs + games + movement = healthy child development**

Teachers will find that some children develop more quickly in some areas than others. There are stages of development at every age, and these cannot be taught or hurried. If a child is forced to perform beyond their abilities, it may damage their self-image or cause negative attitudes about school.

*There is a tendency these days to do too much, too soon, too fast.*

Children have a lifetime to be adults, so it is vital to allow them to enjoy their childhood with playful, interesting, and developmentally-appropriate activities:

- Play fosters total development and should be integrated into everything they do.
- Sensory learning emphasizes the need for a variety of media and materials to stimulate children's senses.
- Movement is important in helping children learn. Children cannot learn sitting quietly and pushing a pencil for long periods.

The *Transition Lessons*, as well as the course material for Level 1, has been carefully designed to promote learning through games, songs, multimedia, and a variety of kinesthetic activities that will stimulate children's creativity and their senses, and ensure that the learning experience is engaging and positive.

## Tips for Successful Transition

Starting a new school year is exciting for children; they are eager to use their new books and school materials and show enthusiasm in everything they do. The challenge for the First Grade teacher is to maintain that enthusiasm.

***What happens in the first weeks of school can determine the atmosphere for future classes.***

On the first day, teachers can help the children establish their own personal work area by showing them where they can keep their books and materials. Helping children build pride in their work starts with simple steps like assisting them in writing their names on their worksheets and displaying these worksheets in the classroom.

First Grade teachers can help children build self-esteem by using praise and encouragement whenever possible, but children also need rules and procedures. Children should be involved in setting these rules for the classroom in order to establish a productive and cooperative working environment. A good example could be setting the rules in a mind map way as follows. This discipline mind map should be displayed in a visible place and children could start each lesson by remembering the classroom rules.



***Rules promote a work-oriented atmosphere and create a clear expectation of the things that are important, but they should also be simple, fair, enforceable, and consistent.***

## Future Planning

Before the school year ends, preschoolers can be invited to spend a fun day at the “big school” to meet with the First Graders, visit the classroom, and learn what to expect. This experience is sure to help transitioning children become less fearful of the move to elementary school, and to help them feel comfortable, secure, and confident as they get ready to **groW**.



**comfortable + secure environment = confident children**