

INTERACTIVE
READING GUIDE

The Brain is Kind of a Big Deal

by Nick Seluk

This humorous and informative book delves into the brain, which is the command center of the human body. Throughout this nonfiction book, you will discover how the brain is like a supercomputer in your body that makes everything else work.

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CREATE SUCCESSFUL READING HABITS

Research suggests that when children understand the purpose of why they're reading, they are more motivated to engage with books in a meaningful way.* When children are motivated and engaged, they are more likely to comprehend what they have read, and it encourages them to explore the deeper meanings of a text. When children understand what they read, they begin to see themselves as successful readers. Here are some ways to motivate your child to read and engage with books:

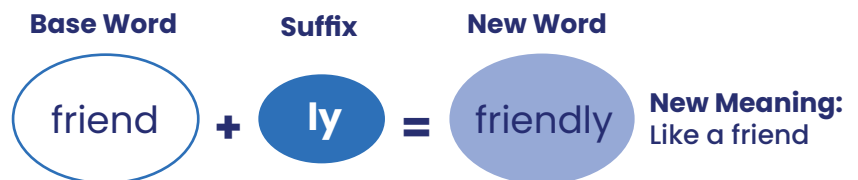
Here are some tips to get you started:

- Encourage your child to see the value in each reading activity by showing them how they use their reading skills in everyday settings. Whether it is reading a book, a grocery list, or a road sign, you can emphasize the importance of reading by pointing out the information that can be learned from real-life examples.
- Relate a new book to other books that your child has already read and enjoyed.
- Identify books on topics that your child is interested in reading. Work together to discover new and interesting reading material.
- Allow your child to choose the book they want to read. When children have a choice, they are more comfortable and motivated to read.

* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse. (n.d.). Practice Guides. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

WORD WORK

Help your child identify **suffixes** to read and understand longer words. A **suffix** is a word part that, when added to the end of a base word, changes the meaning of a word. **Base Words** are single words that cannot be broken into smaller word parts and still have meaning.



Here are some examples of suffixes from the book and a description of what they mean.

Example from the book	Suffix Meaning	Meaning
turning (p. 4)	ing (happening now)	to turn now
coolest (p. 2)	est (is the most)	most cool
stringy (p. 1)	y (is like)	like string

Use the following statements to support your child while you point to the word *turning*, and practice identifying the **suffix** together:

- "This word has the suffix *ing* at the end. The suffix *ing* means 'is happening now.'"
- "When we add the suffix *ing* to the base word, *turn*, the word changes to *turning*."
- "The word *turning* means that something is in the process of making a turn."

Repeat with the words *coolest* and *stringy*.

Find more opportunities to practice identifying and analyzing words with suffixes as you read the book together.

TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

When children encounter unfamiliar words, take a moment to talk about the words using child-friendly explanations or definitions. Here are some interesting words and child-friendly definitions to discuss from the book:

command (p. 2)

If you **command** somebody to do something, you order them to do it. The brain sends **commands** to the entire body and tells it what to do.

complex (p. 4)

Something that is **complex** has many different parts, is very detailed, and is hard to understand. Human brains are like supercomputers and can carry out many **complex** tasks at the same time.

collects (p. 16)

If you **collect** things, you bring them together from different places. The brain **collects** information about different things and stores it to use later.

specific (p. 24)

If someone is **specific**, they give instructions that are clear and exact. The brain gives **specific** instructions to other parts of the body to tell them what to do.

ASK QUESTIONS AND MAKE CONNECTIONS

Help your child understand what they read by pausing to have conversations before, during, and after they engage with a book. Encourage them to make connections to their lives, other books, and the world around them. Have your child go to the page numbers listed to help them answer the questions.

Before Reading:



- Look at the front cover. The brain is the lead singer and lead guitarist in a band! Why do you think the brain plays the leading role in the body?
- What do you already know about how the brain works?
- What are you interested to learn more about?
- As you read, look out for words in **bold**. These are special words that are explained in the glossary of the book. (p. 30 - 31)

During Reading:



- How is your brain similar to a computer? (p. 2)
- When you stand up, what messages does your brain need to send to different parts of your body? (p. 4)
- There are five sections of the brain, and each section has a tricky name. Use your third-grade word detective skills to break the words into syllables, and sound them out. Then show off your ability to read tricky words by reading them back to a friend or a family member. Don't forget to tell them what the words mean! (p. 5)
- How do your eyes and your nerves work together to tell you that you are hurt? (p. 8)
- What is something your brain does that is involuntary? How does the illustration help you understand what the brain tells the lungs to do? (p. 11)
- When you eat lots of delicious birthday cake, until you are full and can't eat anymore, what message from your brain are you ignoring? (p. 12)
- How does your brain work with your senses to warn you that stinky socks do not smell nice? (p. 20)

After Reading:



- Scientists know a lot about brains, but they don't know everything, so they keep on trying to learn more. As a third-grade reader, how are you similar to a scientist when you are trying to read tricky words? (p. 4)
- How would you react if you saw a slithering, black snake near to where you are playing outside? Would you be thrilled or frightened? How does the brain work to tell you how to react?
- Now that your brain is full of new and interesting information about how brains work, find a friend or family member and tell them why the brain *really* is kind of a big deal!

MY AMAZING BRAIN

Your brain is the boss of your body because it tells your body what to do! Think about four different parts of your body, and what each part does. Then think about what message your brain sends to your body to make it work. An example has been completed to help you get started. Finally, write a few sentences to describe how your amazing brain is like a supercomputer.

My brain



My brain				
tells my	tells my	tells my	tells my	tells my
hands				
to	to	to	to	to
turn pages				
so I can	so I can	so I can	so I can	so I can
read				

My brain is like a super computer because _____
