

Words That Jump

An SEL Story About Pausing Before You Speak



INCLUDES

- **Storybook – “Words That Jump”**

Printable SEL story about Wendy (age 8–10) who blurts and interrupts because her words “jump out.” She learns STOP + One-Beat PAUSE to notice body clues, slow down, and choose respectful timing and words.

- **Comprehension Questions**

12 open-ended questions covering plot, characters, feelings, body clues, cause-and-effect, and Wendy’s change from impulsive blurting to using PAUSE.

- **Reading Check**

A three-part page with True/False, Multiple Choice, and Put the Story Events in Order.

- **Story Map (with hint prompts)**

Graphic organizer for Characters, Setting, Problem, Important Events, Solution/Ending, and Theme/Lesson—with short prompts to help students know what to write.

- **Feelings Vocabulary (Word Bank + practice)**

Story-connected feelings/strategy word bank plus a quick activity to match words to meanings and use them in sentences.

- **SEL Reflection Sheet**

Students identify their “words that jump” moments, notice body clues, and make a simple PAUSE plan (including a repair sentence).

- **Writing Prompt – “Pause Power”**

Choice writing page (Letter to Wendy or “What If?” rewrite) with word bank and a short checklist.

- **Role-Play Cards (4) – “Practice the Pause”**

Four short scenarios to practice pausing, turn-taking sentences, and repair language.

- **BONUS Printable Worksheet – “Pause Budget: Spend Your Words Wisely”**

“Word coins” worksheet where students decide when to speak vs. save words by using PAUSE, then write respectful sentences.

- **BONUS Printable Foldable – “My Pause Remote (Cut & Glue)”**

Cut-fold-glue foldable with STOP/BREATHE/OBSERVE/PROCEED flaps for students’ personal reminders and respectful sentence starters.

- **Coloring Pages (6)**

Six black-and-white coloring pages based on story scenes and symbols. Line-art only, no text.

- **Teacher Guide**

Detailed teaching notes with objectives, lesson flow, discussion prompts, differentiation, and extension ideas.

Words That Jump

Wendy's words did not walk.

They did not tiptoe.

Wendy's words jumped—like popcorn in a pan, like frogs in tall grass, like a jack-in-the-box that couldn't wait for the music to end.

On Monday morning, Wendy sat on the classroom rug with her legs crisscrossed and her sneakers tucked under her knees. The rug smelled faintly like crayons and clean soap. Around her, kids wiggled and whispered. The room buzzed the way a beehive buzzes—busy, warm, alive.

Ms. Hart stood by the whiteboard with a marker in one hand and a smile in the other.

"Good morning, friends," Ms. Hart said. "Let's start with our Morning Meeting question. What is one thing you're looking forward to this week?"

Hands shot up.

Wendy's hand shot up so fast it almost made a sound.

Ms. Hart pointed to a student across the circle. "Jayden?"

Jayden began, "I'm looking forward to—"

"I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO ART!" Wendy burst out.

A few heads turned. A couple of kids giggled. Jayden stopped talking, like someone had pressed PAUSE on him.

Wendy's cheeks went hot. Her fingers kept moving anyway—tap, tap, tap—against her jeans.

Oops, her brain whispered.

Ms. Hart's eyes were kind, not sharp. "Wendy," she said gently, "I can tell you're excited. Let's hold our words and let Jayden finish."

Wendy nodded hard. Her thoughts felt like they were bouncing inside her head, bumping the walls.

Hold my words? she thought. How do you hold words? They're slippery.

Jayden finished. Then Ms. Hart asked someone else. Wendy tried to sit still, but her knees wiggled and her mouth felt full of ideas.

The next student shared. Wendy made it all the way to the end of the sentence.

Then another thought sprang up.

"I ALSO—" Wendy started.

She stopped herself mid-syllable. Her lips made a funny little shape, like a fish that had changed its mind.

No one laughed this time. Ms. Hart gave Wendy a small nod, as if to say: I saw that.

Wendy's stomach fluttered—half proud, half jittery.

Later, during read-aloud, Ms. Hart held up a chapter book with a bright cover.

"Today," Ms. Hart said, "we're reading the part where the main character tries to solve a problem in the silliest way possible."

Wendy loved silly.

As Ms. Hart read, Wendy leaned forward. Her eyes grew wide. When the character said something ridiculous, Wendy's laugh popped out like a sneeze.

"Hah! He's totally going to trip!" Wendy blurted.

A few kids laughed with her.

Then Wendy heard a different sound.

A sigh.

The class erupted in laughter.

Mateo groaned dramatically. "That's a crime."

Wendy laughed too, but her laughter felt steady, not wild.

Ms. Hart said, "Wendy, that was excellent timing."

Wendy felt proud in a quiet way. Like a small lamp turning on.

When the final bell rang, Wendy packed her folder and slid the Pause Pebble into her pocket again.

Outside, the hallway was loud and bright. Voices bounced off the lockers. Shoes squeaked.

Wendy felt her energy rise like soda fizzing.

A friend called, "Wendy! Did you see—"

Wendy's words leaped up, ready to spring.

Wendy touched the pebble.

She stopped.

She breathed.

She noticed her wiggly fingers.

She waited one heartbeat.

Thump.

Then she spoke.

"Yes," Wendy said, "and I want to tell you something funny."

Her friend leaned in, listening.

Wendy's story came out—bright and silly and very Wendy—but it came out at the right time, like a jump that landed on two feet instead of one.

As Wendy walked toward the bus line, she thought:

My words can jump... but I have a brake.

And Wendy liked that.

She didn't feel smaller.

She felt stronger.

PREVIEW





Name: _____ Date: _____

STORY MAP

Words That Jump

Characters:

Who is in the story? Who is the main character? Who helps Wendy?

Setting:

Where does the story happen?

Problem:

What is Wendy's big challenge at the beginning? What keeps happening with her words?

Important Events:

What are 3-4 things that happen that help Wendy learn and practice pausing?

Solution / Ending:

How does Wendy solve the problem? What strategy does she use by the end?

Theme / Lesson:

What does Wendy learn about impulsivity and pausing? What lesson can you use in your own life?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Words That Jump

Directions: Use the Word Bank to complete the activity.

Word Bank

1. impulse
2. interrupt
3. pause
4. frustrated
5. body clues
6. steady
7. respectful
8. proud
9. repair
10. observe
11. proceed
12. blurt

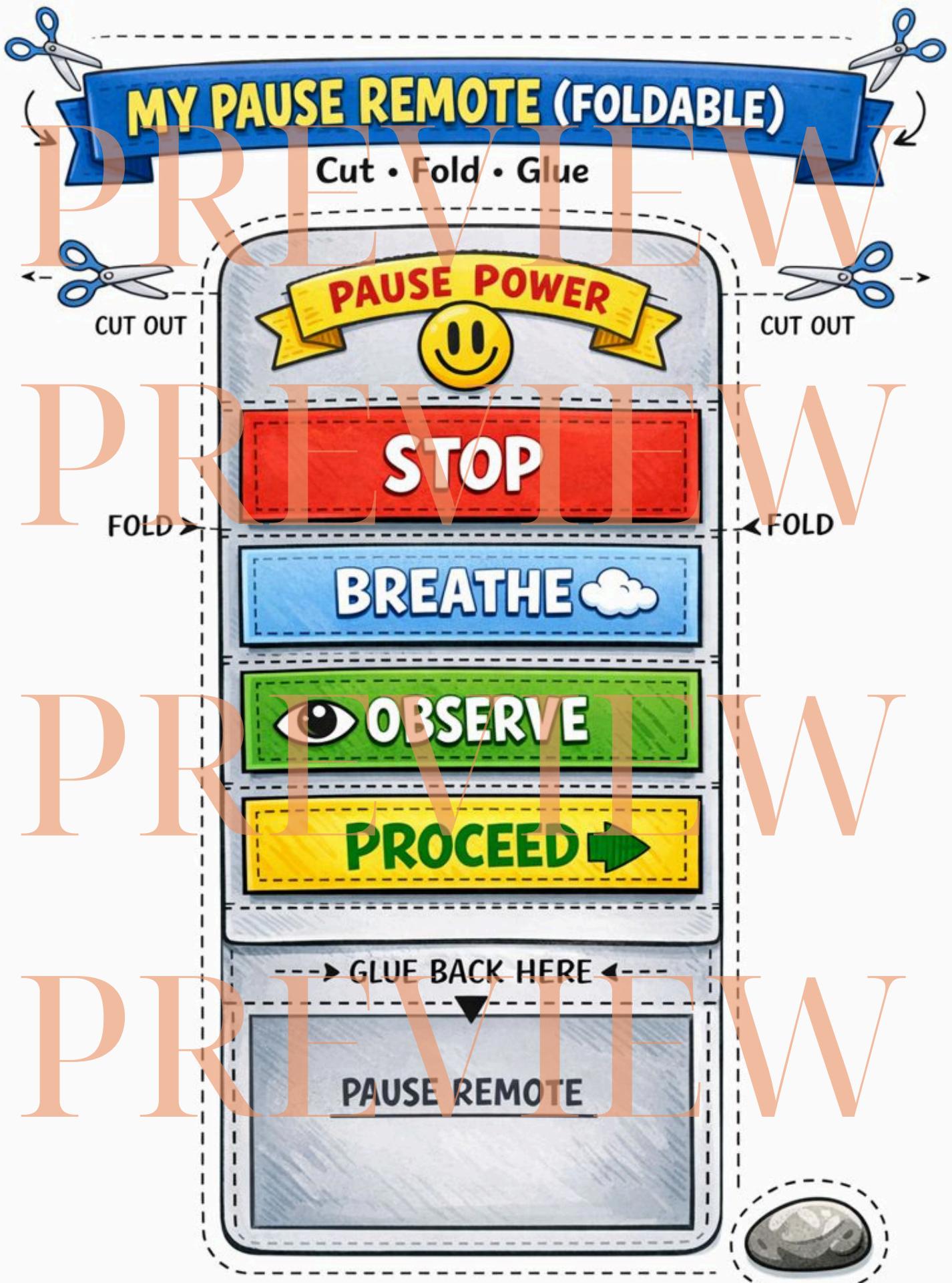
Activity: Match & Finish**Directions:****A) Match the word to the meaning.****Write the correct number from the Word Bank.**

1. _____ A strong “do it right now!” feeling
2. _____ To say something too fast without thinking
3. _____ To stop someone while they are talking
4. _____ A short stop (even one heartbeat)
5. _____ Signals your body gives you (hot cheeks, wiggly hands, fast heart)

B) Finish the sentence using a Word Bank word.

1. When Wendy touched the Pause Pebble, she tried to _____.
2. Ms. Hart taught Wendy to _____ her body and thoughts before she spoke.
3. Wendy used a calm, _____ voice in the lunch line.
4. Wendy made a _____ with Lina by apologizing.
5. Wendy felt _____ after she waited one beat and shared at the right time.







Teacher Guide – Words That Jump

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson or mini-unit, students will be able to:

- Retell the main events in Words That Jump and describe the key characters (Wendy, Ms. Hart, and classmates such as Jayden, Mateo, Lina).
- Explain in kid-friendly language what an impulse is and what it means when “words jump” or “blurt” out.
- Name at least 2–3 body clues that show up before they blurt or interrupt (e.g., hot cheeks, wiggly hands, fast heart, tight chest, bouncy legs, shallow breath).
- Describe and practice a simple STOP/PAUSE strategy (Stop → Breathe → Observe → Proceed; One-Beat Pause).
- Use respectful words to wait, share, and repair after interrupting someone.
- Answer comprehension and reading-check questions using details from the text.
- Use the SEL Reflection Sheet to connect Wendy’s experience to their own “words that jump” moments and create an If–Then plan for next time.
- Write a short letter or “What if?” mini-story showing how pausing can change the ending of a situation.
- Act out role-play situations using STOP/PAUSE, body clues, and repair sentences.

Standards Alignment

SEL Competencies

- Self-Awareness – noticing impulses, thoughts, and body clues and how they affect behavior.
- Self-Management – using tools like One-Beat Pause, one breath, Pause Pebble, and Pause Remote to manage impulses.
- Social Awareness – considering how classmates feel when they are interrupted, cut off, or talked over.
- Relationship Skills – practicing respectful sentences, taking turns, apologizing, and repairing after blurting.
- Responsible Decision-Making – choosing when to speak, when to pause, and how to respond in tricky social moments.

ELA Skills

- Reading Comprehension – characters, setting, problem/solution, sequence of events, internal vs. external change.
- Speaking & Listening – participating in partner and whole-group discussions, listening without interrupting.
- Writing – narrative and reflective writing about real or imagined “words that jump” experiences, using feelings vocabulary and SEL language.

Materials Needed

From this resource:

- Printable storybook – Words That Jump (student pages with text and illustrations).
- Comprehension Questions page (open-ended questions about key scenes, body clues, STOP strategy, Pause Pebble, repair with Lina, and what Wendy learns).
- Reading Check page (True/False, multiple choice, and sequencing of story events).
- Story Map graphic organizer (characters, setting, problem, important events, solution/ending, theme/lesson).