

Fun stuff for schools

BrainPop



If you are looking for a website that delivers good quality movies and activities to enhance the curriculum, BrainPop certainly achieves this in the seven curriculum areas it covers. The site's aim is to engage students and provide enjoyable learning. At the forefront of this is a lovable character called Tim and his robot friend Moby.

When logged on, students can select one of seven curriculum areas. Once the student has selected a subject, movies can be selected by browsing topic icons, categories or searching for a specific subject. Navigation is simple and quick.

The movies are succinct and can be paused and played by the student or teacher to re-enforce specific areas. Tim and Moby appear throughout to guide the student. For instance, when playing the Adjectives and Adverbs movie in the English section, different coloured text appears to emphasise the words as they

are referred to by the characters. Related movies appear alongside the movie, showing appropriate progression for students.

Teachers have a dedicated blog that demonstrates how to use BrainPop successfully, such as taking a graded quiz before a movie and again after a movie to show how much the student has improved. A useful curriculum tool allows teachers to match an area from the National Frameworks in England and Scotland with the movies in BrainPop.

Pricing is flexible and affordable for both school and home use.

There is no tracking system for the teacher to use, but this is not the point of the website. BrainPop is a fun addition to lessons and provides an enjoyable learning experience.

VERDICT 9/10

5-a-day.TV



5-a-day Fitness's 5-a-day.TV provides great videos encouraging movement and activity at a range of levels. The fitness videos are aimed at primary school students and can be shown in any classroom environment

with little teacher preparation.

There are different themes in the videos that can be incorporated into thematic teaching areas such as pirates and cowboys and cowgirls. Routines are updated regularly and star rated to indicate the difficulty of each. There are also extension activities that can be printed and completed as additional worksheets and inspiration cards that students can use to choreograph their own routines.

As well as energetic fitness routines, there are two-minute relaxation videos. These can help students to focus after a break or lunch time. They use the same principle as the fitness videos, so there is no need for the teacher to be the next Jane Fonda or Mr Motivator to deliver them.

An extremely useful, and perhaps underestimated, feature is the use of Spanish and French in the videos. There is an option to have the commentary in one of the languages with the text of the language also appearing on screen.

5-a-day.TV is a great product. The routines are ideal for schools where space for physical activity is limited, or they can be used in a hall full of primary school pupils, or with a small group learning a modern foreign language. Rather than linking everything to national curriculum levels, the site focuses on creating enjoyable active routines and engaging students, a great way to encourage children to find exercise entertaining and worthwhile.

VERDICT 10/10