



## What's going on this week?

The newest toy craze sweeping schools called Pop-Its has replaced the fidget spinner as the must-have item in the hands of both young and old. TikTok exposure is behind their rapid popularity increase, with the hashtag '#popit' gaining over two and a half billion views! Pop-Its are the newest sensory fidget toy where users repeatedly pop dimples in and out in the same way you may pop bubble wrap. Pop-It style toys were originally created to be used as a stress-reliever to help some children concentrate in school. But in some schools, they have been thought of as a classroom distraction.

### Main question:

#### Is there a place for sensory toys in the classroom?

##### Listen, think, share

- Look at this week's poster and talk about what we can see, does anyone know what it is? Explain that it is a new popular sensory toy called a Pop-It. Explain how it works, (by popping the plastic backwards and forwards), is it something you think you would enjoy doing? Explain that it is what's called a sensory toy. Does anyone know what is meant by a sensory toy? Talk about our senses and how the toys focus on one or more of our senses to help distract us.
- Read the information found on the assembly resource about the Pop-It sensory toy and how they help some children. What do you think of Pop-Its? Have you found that these types of toys have ever helped you in any way? If not, think about how they may help others.
- Can you think of a time when you felt worried or stressed, did you use any strategies to help you feel calmer? E.g. taking deep breaths or playing a game to distract you. Can you see how these types of toys may help some people relax?
- Watch this week's useful video (link found overleaf), which explores why the Pop-It toys are so popular. Think about similar toys that you have used. Discuss what you think the next popular sensory toy might be?

##### Reflection

There may be times at school or home when we feel stressed or anxious. When we feel like this, there are different things we can try to help us to feel calmer, sometimes this may be a type of sensory toy.



## KS1 Focus

### Question:

#### What is a sensory toy?

##### Listen, think, share

- Write 'senses' on the board. Explain that we have five senses. Can you name any of them?
- Share that our five senses are sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Discuss examples of when we might use our senses e.g. when we have a meal we might look at the food, smell it, taste it and even touch it.
- Explain that there are some toys that are designed to encourage us to use one or more of our senses. We call these sensory toys. Look at resource 1, which shares some examples of sensory toys. Have you ever played with any of these toys before? Which do you think you would enjoy playing with most? Why?
- Do you think everyone will enjoy playing with the same sensory toy?
- Focus on the sensory balls. Which senses do you think they would encourage us to use? Explain that they are brightly coloured and one of them even flashes to stimulate our sight and they have spikes or strands and can be squeezed and squashed to stimulate our touch. Some sensory balls even have a scent and may also make a sound!
- Look around your classroom. Can you see any sensory toys or sensory areas/activities? Which do you like best? Why?

##### Reflection

Sensory toys are toys that encourage us to use one or more of our senses. There are many different sensory toys for us to explore and enjoy.



## KS2 Focus

### Question:

#### How can sensory toys help us?

##### Listen, think, share

- Think about some of the sensory toys you may have played with now or in the past. Create a list on the board e.g. fidget spinners, sensory balls, sensory mats.
- Explain that sensory toys are designed to engage one or more of our five senses. What are our five senses?
- Write 'sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste'. Discuss the ways sensory toys might be designed to engage your senses e.g. using bright and vibrant colours to capture attention, rustling, crinkling, clicking sounds to support auditory engagement.
- Look at resource 2, which explores some of the ways sensory toys can help us. Can you think of any other ways sensory toys can help us? How have they helped you?
- Some sensory toys can be used as a form of stress relief. The squeezing, fiddling, clicking, spinning can help to make some people feel calmer and more relaxed. Have you ever used a sensory toy in this way? Do you think everyone needs to use sensory toys to help them feel calm and relaxed? Are there certain times when a sensory toy is more helpful than others?

##### Reflection

There are many different ways sensory toys can help us. They can support our development and learning, engage our senses, help to relieve stress and can be fun to use.

## KS2 Follow-up Ideas

**Option 1:** Ask the children to design a sensory toy! Remind them that a sensory toy is designed to engage one or more senses. Think about:

- What will be the purpose of my toy? To relieve stress, to develop a skill?
- What senses will my toy engage?
- What colour, shape, size will it be?
- Will it have a smell?
- Will it make any sounds such as clicks, rustles, pops?
- Can it be chewed?

Encourage the children to draw and label their design, explaining the purpose of each feature. Extension – design a persuasive poster to encourage someone to buy their sensory toy.

**Option 2:** Give each child a selection of Lego pieces. Explain that building with Lego is a multi-sensory experience. Discuss the bright colours used, how it sounds when pieces are snapped together and the contrasting feel of the smooth sides and bobbly tops. Using their Lego pieces, complete the following challenges:

- Can you create a repeating pattern?
- Can you create a symmetrical pattern?
- Can you close your eyes and build something using touch only?
- Can you give instructions to a partner to build something?
- Can you make something using an odd/even number of pieces?
- Can you make something using only a prime number of pieces?

## KS1 Follow-up Ideas

**Option 1:** Write the five senses on the board. Explain that you are going to explore using them. Provide the children with a small food item e.g. a piece of fruit, breadstick, cheese (check allergies before bringing in).

- What does it look like?
- What does it feel like? Smooth, hard, cold, slimy, rough?
- What does it smell like? Sweet, flowery, delicious?

Ask the children to pop it in their mouths.

- What sound can you hear as you chew it? Crunch, click, slurp?
- What does it taste like? Tangy, spicy, sweet?

You could repeat the activity but remove a sense such as sight!

**Option 2:** If possible, gather as much sensory PE equipment as possible and set up outside or in the hall for the children to explore in their session. You could provide a carousel of challenges such as:

- Bean bag colour sort – run and collect the bean bags and place them in the correctly coloured pile.
- Stepping stones – use balance domes or floor spots to step across the course without touching the floor.
- Tunnels or a large sheet – crawl through or underneath.
- Quoits or textured rings – throw them into a hoop.
- A range of different balls – throw each ball up in the air and then catch it. Try and clap before you catch it!

Once the children have tried each activity, discuss which equipment they liked the look, feel, sound, smell of. Think about how it felt to crawl through the tunnel, what the beanbag sounded like etc.

## This Week's Useful Websites

This week's news story

<https://bit.ly/3xZ8w7A>

## This Week's Useful Videos

Why are Pop Its so popular?

<https://bbc.in/33CzNid>

## This Week's Virtual Assembly

[www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss](http://www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss)

## This Week's Useful Vocabulary

**Anxious** – feeling or showing worry, nervousness or unease.

There may be times at school or home when we feel stressed or **anxious**.

**Concentrate** – focus all of your attention on something such as an object or activity.

Pop-It style toys were originally created to be used as a stress-reliever to help some children **concentrate**.

**Craze** – when an object or activity becomes very popular for a short period of time.

The newest toy **craze** sweeping schools called Pop-Its has replaced the fidget spinner.

**Distraction** – a thing that prevents someone from concentrating on something.

In some schools, they have become seen to be more of a classroom **distraction**.

**Exposure** – when information is revealed, shared or discussed.

TikTok **exposure** is behind their rapid popularity increase.

**Sensory** – relating to the physical senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch.

It is a new popular **sensory** toy called a Pop-It.