

20 Time Fillers

1. I Spy Something...
2. 2 Truths and a Lie
3. Hangman
4. Handouts with word finds and cross word puzzles
5. Jokes and riddles
6. Daily Oral Reading
7. Class discussion on major topic in the news
8. Just a Minute ☺

This is a classroom version of the radio show called "Just a Minute". It is great for encouraging listening skills, for collaborative play, and for development of vocabulary.

The only resource you will need is a stopwatch. First, choose a topic, such as "My dream holiday". Choose a child to start. The child has to speak on the topic for an agreed length of time (perhaps start with 30 seconds). The catch is that the rest of the children can challenge the speaker (putting up their hand and being selected by the adjudicator - yourself), and take the topic from them, for any of the following reasons:

(i) Hesitation - the easiest challenge, awarded if the speaker ums and ahs. You can decide as a group how lenient to be at first.

(ii) Repetition - the speaker is not allowed to repeat any words or phrases which are not contained in the topic title itself, although obviously pronouns, prepositions etc can be repeated. The children soon cotton on to this idea, and can get very good at adapting their words to avoid repetition.

(iii) Deviation - a tricky one, best only used with more advanced speakers (eg. Y6 and beyond). A challenge can be lodged if the speaker goes off the given topic. For most speakers, they never get that far!

Agree with your class on rules to suit yourselves - we award team points or similar to anyone with a correct challenge, anyone who is incorrectly challenged (and therefore keeps the topic) and an extra point to whoever is speaking at the end of the time.

9. Guess the Celebratory ☺

Pick 3 children to stand with their backs against the whiteboard. Above their heads write the names of three famous people. The children standing up have to ask 5 questions to find out who they are. The rest of the class can only answer yes or no.

10. The Ship Game

Pretend you, the teacher, are going on a cruise. Tell them two things you are going to take. Ask if anyone wants to come along. Students who want to join have to say two things they want to bring.

In order for the student to be allowed to join the cruise the things they plan to bring have to begin with the same letters your items began with. Example: teacher brings an apple and a notebook; student brings an anchor and a needle (this student can join the cruise); student brings an orange and a table (this student may not join the cruise).

11. Team X ☺

This activity is enjoyed by children of all primary ages and all you need is a book of any kind (story book, poetry, information text etc).

Draw up two columns on the board and label them Team X and Team Y. Tell the class that they are all members of Team X and you are the only member of Team Y. Draw a sad face on the top of the Team X column "because you are going to lose the game" and a happy face over Team Y "because I am going to win." You will immediately get howls of protest which will motivate the children to try harder.

Now tell the children that you are going to read them something and then ask some questions about what you have read. If someone answers the question correctly, they score a point. If they are incorrect, you score a point. If anyone talks, you will also score a point.

Warn them that you hate losing and if they are getting too many points, you may try to get someone to talk by asking irrelevant questions. (They love this bit, so if you are getting behind, suddenly put the book down and say something like "Rebecca, do you like netball?")

Read about a paragraph to a page (depending on the class level) and then ask questions about names, dates etc. If it is something like poetry, have them supply missing rhymes. If they are going really well, make it harder by doing an oral cloze where they have to supply the missing word. If a child gets something wrong, and others sigh or moan, then you score a point.

12. Odd One Out ☺

Write a list of say four or five numbers in a line. They should all be answers in a certain times table except one number which should be the 'odd one out'. The children need to find the odd number and be able to say why. For example: **16, 64, 27, 8, 32**. The odd one is 27 as the others are in the 8x table.

This can be as easy or hard as you like according to the age and ability of the children. You could also change the list so that it includes concepts from other subjects (e.g. find the odd one out in a list of countries).

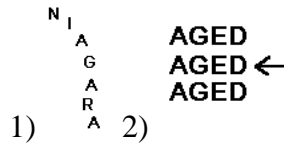
13. Kids' Questions ☺

There is a book called "The Kids' Book of Questions" by Gregory Stock that is filled with 260 of kids' most-asked questions. Each day, pick out a couple questions. Read them aloud and ask them to answer them truthfully in a daily journal. You will be amazed at some of the responses you will get from these kids. At the end of the school year, have them go back and see if any of their

answers have changed. It not only give the students a chance to feel important, but it also helps them put things into a new perspective.

14. Rebus Puzzles ☺

A rebus is a representation of a name / word / phrase using pictures. Look at the following images and try to work out what they mean...



More rebuses at: <http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/timefiller/rebusesws.htm>

15. The Minute Game ☺

The pupils have to raise their hand when they have counted a minute in their heads. The closest one is the winner. This game can be extended to the two minutes (or any other length of time) when the children get good at it.

16. Word Hunt

When you've got a few minutes to spare, allow students to practice word creation and spelling skills in this quick and simple activity. Have a student look for a long word in the dictionary and write it on the board. Teach students the meaning of the word and then ask them to take out a piece of paper and write the word at the top of their paper. Have students use the letters in the word to create new smaller words. Give students five minutes to complete the task and then discuss as a group. <http://www.glc.k12.ga.us/trc/cluster.asp?mode=browse&intPathID=4754>

17. Have students make random lists of things.

(<http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Mountain/9112/TimeFill.html>)

- * Name five body parts above the neck that have three letters
- * Name the continents in alphabetical order
- * Name as many gems or precious stones as you can
- * Name as many cartoon characters as you can
- * Name as many breeds of dogs as you can
- * Name all the musical instruments that begin with "t"
- * Name as many things as you can that are made of cloth, plastic, other
- * Name as many languages as you can
- * Name as many sports as you can
- * Name a proper noun for each letter of the alphabet
- * Name a kind of food for each letter of the alphabet

- * Name as many kinds of transportation as you can
- * Name all of the kinds of tools that you can think of
- * List all of the personal pronouns
- * Name as many teachers at your school as you can
- * Name as many kinds of ice cream as you can
- * Recite the multiplication facts for a certain number
- * Name as many states as you can
- * Name as many state capitals as you can
- * Name as many countries as you can
- * List items in the classroom in alphabetical order

18. Buzzwords (<http://www.patchproducts.com/teachers/buzzword.asp>)

Using *Buzzword* in the classroom is a perfect way to build your students' problem solving and vocabulary development skills. In the game, players are given a set of 10 clues and a "buzzword" that is shared among each clue's answer. Try a set of clues with your students and see how many answers they can come up with. Or, give the class a "buzzword" and ask for as many common phrases they can create incorporating this "buzzword".

19. Orange, Orange, Orange 😊

- The children sit in a circle.
- Each child is given the name of a fruit.
- One person is chosen to stand in the centre of the circle and repeats the name of one of the fruits three times e.g. orange, orange, orange.
- The person around the outside of the circle who is the orange, must interrupt by shouting the word orange, before the other person has managed to say it three times.
- If they interrupt successfully the person in the middle chooses another fruit.
- If they are not quick enough they replace the person in the middle.

It is a really fun game and encourages the children to concentrate and tests their reactions. It can be used as a time filler or a warm up to a circle time session.

20. Frog and Flies 😊

You can change the numbers, but the basic game is: 1 detective and 1 frog (select the frog by getting all kids to close their eyes and tap someone on the head. The detective can be selected later).

The game starts and the detective looks for the frog (the person who 'eats' the flies by sticking their tongue out at them). The flies can die dramatically with lots of buzzing and spinning if they wish! The detective may be given a limited number of guesses.

Alternatives: you can play with 2 detectives and 2 frogs (or more!).

Another fun addition is a 'fly saver'. This person can bring 'dead' flies back to life by looking at the dead fly and giving a special signal (my students use a quick hand gesture indicating 'get up!'). If a detective sees a fly saver doing the gesture, they can point it out to the teacher, and the fly saver is out of the game (becomes a dead fly and can no longer save flies).

The game ends when a detective correctly identifies a frog, or when the frogs eat all of the flies!

Any activity with a 😊 next to it was found at:

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/timefiller/contents.htm>