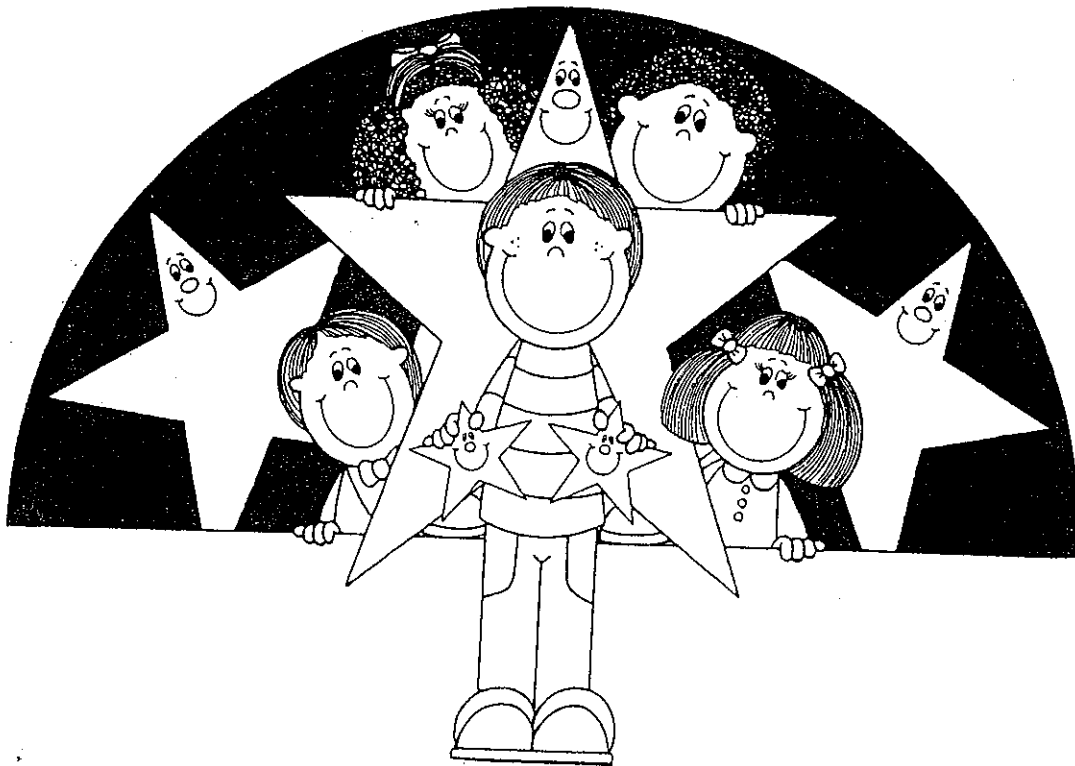


Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks



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Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

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Class Compliments

What you need..... a small space on your white or bulletin board

What you do.....

1. Predetermine a number between 10 and 20.
It might be your room number, the number of letters in your school's name, your name, or the number of letters in the current month.
2. A point is earned each time an adult compliments your whole class for appropriate behavior. Adults include other teachers, staff members, visitors, and especially administrators (which might count for 2 points!).
3. The compliments should be:
 - unsolicited. (Explain this term to the students.)
 - spoken or written to the teacher or the whole class
 - about the whole class and not just a group
 - recognized by the teacher as soon as possible
4. As soon as your class returns, add a point (or star, happy face, etc) to the Class Compliment Scoreboard.
5. When your class reaches that predetermined number, have a Class Celebration. Everyone participates. No one is excluded from this class earned event.
6. Class Celebration might be:
 - A walking field trip to a fast food restaurant
 - A Board Game Party
 - Popcorn and Juice Party with educational video
 - Books and Blankets event
 - Free Choice Party to draw, talk, choose a game, and listen to music
7. After each Class Compliment goal is reached, you will begin again to earn another Class Celebration.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Class Quilt

What you need..... precut white cardstock or tagboard squares 4x4 inch, shoeboxes, crayons or fine line markers, charts of vocabulary words, yarn, hole punch

What you do.....

1. Set up a center called Class Quilt which should include all the materials listed above. Keep the squares in one shoebox labeled "Blank Quilt Squares"
2. Display small posters of vocabulary words for current theme units
3. When a student finishes assigned work, a child may work on the Class Quilt Center by taking one square and choosing one vocabulary word. To prevent two or more students choosing the same word, you could have each person sign their name or put a check next to the word they choose. However, I do not recommend this restriction.
4. Each square needs three things- the key vocabulary word, the child's name, and a colored drawing about the word. Each square should be colored completely leaving little white space.
5. A completed square is placed in the shoeboxes labeled by the theme vocabulary. For example, if the vocabulary word came from Fire Safety, then the child's picture of the smoke alarm would go in the "Fire Safety" shoebox.
6. During planning time, the teacher takes the completed squares, punches holes around the borders and uses colorful yarn to lace the theme squares together.
7. Start displaying each quilt in the room, even though it may be only a few squares in the making. As students see their friends' word displayed, they will be inspired to be a part of each quilt construction.
8. You might even contact your Media Specialist to see if completed quilts might be displayed for the whole school to enjoy!

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Compliment and Complaint Boxes

What You Need

- 2 boxes (e.g., empty tissue or oatmeal boxes)
- colored self-adhesive paper
- scissors
- old business cards, scrap paper, or ponder pads (see page 11)

Extra! Extra!

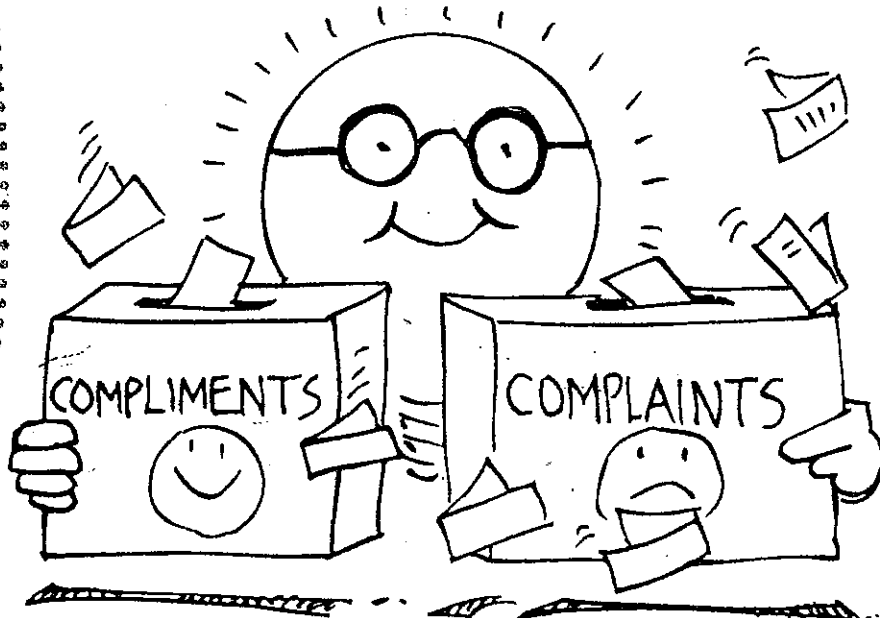
For every complaint, ask students to write two compliments.

Create a Friendship Box, and invite students to write "good news" notes or compliments to their classmates. Deliver the notes during the last 5 minutes of the day.

Do not correct notes for spelling and grammar, but use insights from recurring errors to plan mini-lessons.

What You Do

- 1 Cover two boxes with colored self-adhesive paper, and cut a slit in each lid. Label one box *Complaints* and the other *Compliments*, and add a happy or sad face, as appropriate.
- 2 Display the boxes on your desk or in a central location, and explain that students can use them to communicate important messages to you on any or all subjects.
- 3 Talk about the difference between compliments and complaints, and share examples together. Emphasize that complaints are problems that can be solved later. Explain that if a problem deals with someone getting hurt, then students should notify you immediately.
- 4 Model how to write simple complaints and compliments on old business cards, scrap paper, or ponder pads. Have students write their name and one short complaint (e.g., *I can't find my ruler*) or compliment (e.g., *Kate's science project was really cool and clever*) on each card or paper. Have them fold their note and then place it in the appropriate box.
- 5 Tell students that you will regularly check the boxes and handle complaints and recognize or pass on compliments as quickly as possible.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Concept Center

What you need..... shoeboxes

What you do....

1. Approach each lesson preparation with a determination to find at least one artifact to share with the class. For example, a lesson on fire safety might include the artifact 'smoke alarm'.
2. Some students are very familiar with this artifact, but others will find this item new and unique.
3. By providing artifacts that can be held, manipulated and explored, you are solidifying that concept or vocabulary word.
4. This kinesthetic and tactile approach is extremely important for Second Language Learners too.
5. Keep the artifacts in a Concept Center. A Concept Center should offer labeled items sorted by subject in shoeboxes that can be taken back to students' desks or to community areas like area rugs.
6. Be certain to review proper handling and use of all artifacts when introduced to the class.
7. Extend the Concept Center to include Journal Writing, Math Measurement, and paired books about the artifact.
8. The Concept Center is an ongoing, year round center that rotates items as thematic units change.

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Desk Setup (aka Ready,Set,Go)

What you want..... Students to take out a standard set of materials quickly and quietly without you having to repeat the list each time

What you do....

1. Predetermine a core set of materials that students need for most class activities. This core list might include a sharpened pencil, eraser, and notebook paper folder. This list is going to vary teacher to teacher.
2. Show the actual items on this core list to your class. Explain that when the 'code' is given, each student is to clear their table or desk of all materials and take out these core items PLUS any additional ones that you have indicated in a special area of the room.
3. This code word or phrase might be the school's mascot name, a favorite sport, etc. Consider playing a certain song or music box. Hand signal. Special clap. Anything!
4. What about that 'special area'? In one part of your room that is easily seen from any seat, place a sturdy lip top from a shirt box or similar. Whatever you want the students to have on top of their desk beside the core items, place that thing in the box. Maybe it might be their basal reading book or a spelling workbook or a box of crayons.
5. Students fold hands when their desk is ready for 'inspection.'
6. Practice, practice, practice with the whole class before you expect perfection. Give out stickers for the first ones ready with their desks in order with core items and any special item(s) you indicated. Make a game out of this procedure. After a while, this routine will become quite natural and you will not be waiting for everyone to be ready.

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Flashy Fingers

Extra! Extra!

When students flash one or two fingers, nod permission for them to use the restroom or get specific materials rather than interrupt the lesson.

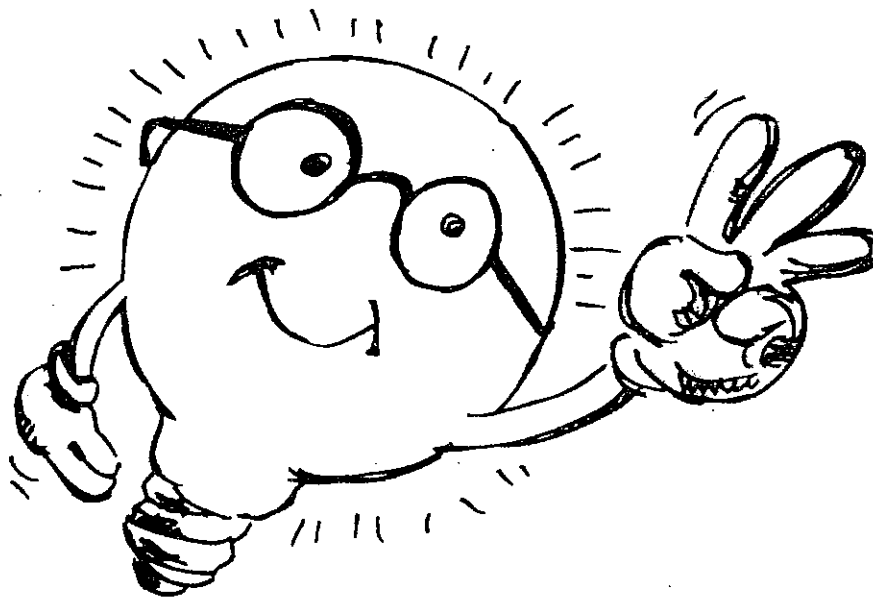
Invite volunteers to make and illustrate simple flashy finger charts to help their classmates remember the codes.

Develop one set of messages for students and one for yourself. For example, your signals may include

- one finger—*You did a great job!*
- two fingers—*Stand up! or Line up!*
- three fingers—*Come and sit on the rug.*
- four fingers—*Who needs help?*
- five fingers—*It's time for another activity.*

What You Do

- 1 Talk with students about all the clever ways we use our bodies to communicate ideas and feelings (e.g., facial expressions, body language).
- 2 Introduce “flashy fingers” by showing students how to wiggle or bend their fingers up and down to communicate these messages:
 - one finger—*I need a restroom break.* (students)
 - two fingers—*I need art supplies or materials.* (students)
 - three fingers—*I love you or This is great! Do this again!* (teacher and students)
 - four fingers—*H-E-L-P! I have no idea what you are talking about. Explain it further.* (students)
 - five fingers—*It's time for another activity.* (teacher)
- 3 Tell students that they can use flashy fingers to send and receive important messages during instruction time and avoid disturbing other class members. For example, a student may wiggle four fingers to signal that he or she needs help with a long division problem. Discuss what students should do if their signals are not noticed or acknowledged.
- 4 Have the class practice using flashy fingers until students are familiar with the game.



Friends

What you need....

Small fluffy stuffed animals, small puppets, and rubber snakes and lizards from a dollar store. (enough for a group and/or center)

Why are Friends important?

- Friends promote language and creativity.
- Friends are great listeners for reading aloud.
- Friends are fun to hold.
- Friends can point to words and participate.
- Friends invite children to write in their journals or creative stories.
- Friends give unconditional love no matter how old.
- Friends are going to give the teacher informal observations of children's behavior.
- Friends are colorful in the classroom and make the room "kid friendly". They look great in baskets, bookshelves, and reading rug areas.

Procedures:

Be certain to go over guidelines such as :

- "Friends do not fight."
- "Friends are in school and want to learn too."
- "Friends stay in school and do not go home."
- "Return your Friend to its special place when you are finished."
- "Only one Friend at a time."

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Hall Lines (aka Double E)

What you want.....

My class to walk quietly and properly in the halls.

What you do....

1. Explain the DOUBLE E concept. Double E stands for Excellent Effort. When you say "Double E", the student knows that their behavior is outstanding. In the class hall line, this phrase will be used.
2. Next, have a class discussion about proper class conduct when the whole class is walking in the halls. List some of these traits on the board which should include walking in a straight line, no touching, leaving a small space in front of the person in front of you, no talking, and keeping pace with the class.
3. Practice. Pick one student who is following those guidelines. Call out that student's name and then say "Double E". That person steps out of line and forms (or joins in) a second line that is walking side by side of the class line. This special line is the Double E line.
4. The Double E line always enters a room first. the Cafeteria, the library, the PE field, etc.
5. As each new class line is formed for a new destination, everyone starts out in one line, trying to earn the Double E.
6. The teacher should always walk toward the back of the line to keep an eye on the class and designate more Double E students. The line leader should have stopping points with every route.

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Left Hand, Right Hand

Extra! Extra!

Have students respond to questions with these “vigorous variations”: left thumb or right thumb on their desk; left elbow or right elbow raised; hand on head or hands on shoulders; pencil point up or pencil point down; or hold up red crayon or green crayon.

Teach younger students to make old-fashioned newspaper hats. Have them wear their headgear for a “hats on, hats off” variation of the game, or invite them to bring their own favorite headgear from home to wear for the day.

Most students have their own sunglasses and enjoy bringing them to school. Have students wear sunglasses to signify that they’re ready to be called upon. Be sure to send home a letter about this special day, and bring a few extra pairs of discount-store sunglasses for students without glasses.

What You Do

1

Talk about the importance of class participation and the “hand-raising habit” (when students ask and answer questions and share and suggest ideas). Explain that students are going to celebrate class participation by playing a special new game called Left Hand, Right Hand.

2

Share the following rules for this hand-raising game:

- When students are ready to answer a question, have them raise their *right* hand.
- If students are still thinking about their response, have them raise their *left* hand.
- Only call on students if they have their right hand raised.
- Allow students to change their mind and hand about sharing at any time.

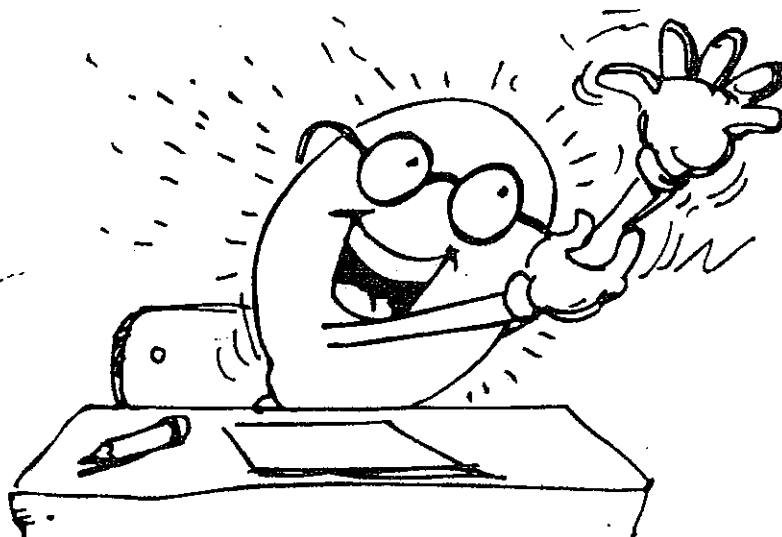
3

Model how to play the game by asking nonthreatening warm-up questions, such as

- *What did you have for breakfast today?*
- *Name a fast runner in this class.*
- *What is your favorite animal?*

4

Use the Left Hand, Right Hand game to have students review, study, and practice selected topics in social studies, science, health, math, and language arts.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks
Magic Water

What you want.....

Students to participate in class discussions.

What you do....

1. Buy a clean and colorful spray bottle from a dollar store
2. Fill it with water and write the words Magic Water on the outside.
3. Set the spray nozzle to give a mist of water. Not a stream nor a strong spray.
4. During a challenging teaching time, (like after lunch) take out the Magic Water. The first time, explain that this water is guaranteed to make you smile and go around and ask each child if he/she would like to try it. **Give those 'yes' children one light mist spray right above the top of their head so the mist falls down on them. Do not spray directly on the face or eyes.** Guaranteed to make giggles.
5. Tell the class that Magic Water does not go to anyone who asks for it. Magic Water likes children who participate, have good listening habits, sit up straight in the chair, answer questions, ask good questions, and smile.
6. Watch your class perk up!
7. No child should end up really 'wet'. Always ask, "Magic Water?" before spraying each time.

Variation:

When you pick up your class from PE, bring along the Magic Water for those children who are in Double EE line or those who are waiting in line properly. Magic Water is a real must on Field Days too!

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Materials Bank

What You Need

- 6 shoe boxes
- colored self-adhesive paper
- assorted writing supplies (e.g., crayons, pencils, markers, staplers, glue)
- small resealable plastic bags
- notebook paper

Extra! Extra!

Before seasonal celebrations, add your name to the My Holiday Wish List reproducible (see page 50) and send home copies to request consumable "gifts" for your classroom (e.g., boxes of facial tissue, resealable plastic bags, sticky notes).

What You Do

1

Cover six shoe boxes with colored self-adhesive paper, and label them *Lost and Found*, *Crayons*, *Emergency Pencils*, *Emergency Paper*, *Handouts*, and *Writing Supplies*.

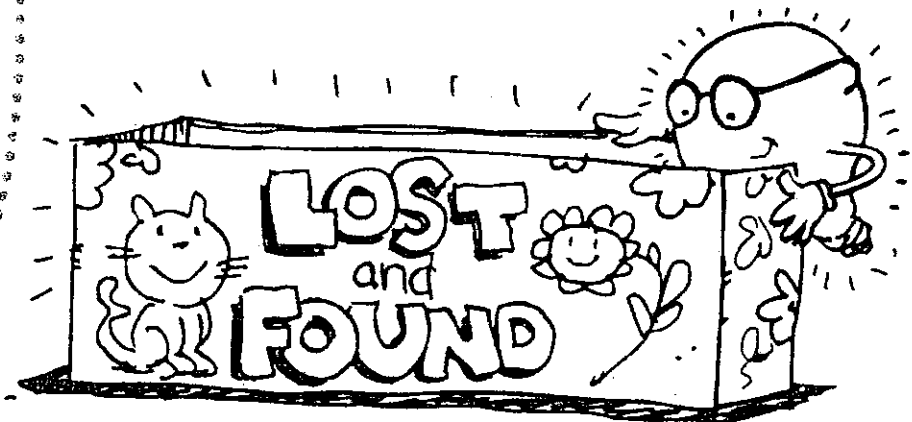
2

Organize the boxes as follows:

- Have students place found items (other than money or jewelry) in the Lost and Found Box. If they lose an item, invite them to look in the box. If students do not find their item, ask them to write a note and place it in the Complaint Box (see page 35) for your later attention and assistance.
- Place sets of old crayons in plastic bags in the Crayons Box. Allow students to borrow crayons, as needed.
- Place free pencils from hotels, banks, and other sources (e.g., students' small pencils) in the Emergency Pencils Box for students to use when they need a pencil.
- Fold pieces of notebook paper in half, and place the paper in the Emergency Paper Box. If students keep turning in work on folded paper, remind their family about needed supplies.
- Place additional copies of notices and worksheets in the Handouts Box. When students cannot find handouts, allow them to take one from the box.
- Purchase basic items from garage sales and discount stores for the Writing Supplies Box. Invite students to use and return tools and materials to the box, as needed. (Store extras at the writing center.)

3

Place the boxes in an easily accessible "special area" away from quiet reading and learning centers, and discuss how and when to use them.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Minute Mini-Books

unlined paper

scissors

crayons or markers

Extra! Extra!

Help students make mini-books for math, science, or social studies vocabulary. Tell them to include a word, its definition, and an illustration on each page.

Ask students to make mini-books for narratives. Have them include a title page, the setting, and a list of characters (first page), sentences about the beginning of the story (second page), the problem (third page), the solution (fourth page), the closing or a return to the beginning (fifth page), and author information (sixth page).

Give students a copy of the Terrific Topics and Super Starters reproducible to keep in their writing folder or journal.

What You Do

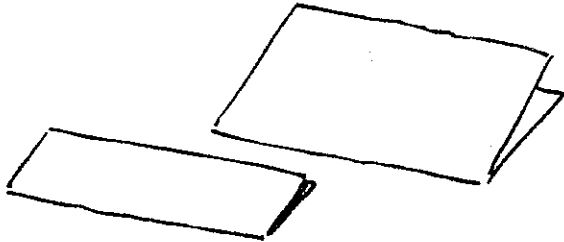
- 1 Give each student a sheet of unlined paper and a Minute Mini-Book reproducible. Have students follow the directions on the reproducible as you model how to carefully fold the paper to make a mini-book.
- 2 Help students make additional books until they are familiar with the procedure. Encourage them to assist their classmates, as needed.
- 3 Assign a topic for students to write about in their mini-book, such as *A Book about Me* or *Things I Learned in School This Week*. (Refer to the Terrific Topics and Super Starters reproducible for ideas.)
- 4 Invite students to illustrate and share their book with classmates. Display students' publications on tiny bookshelves in "micro-libraries."



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Minute Mini-Books

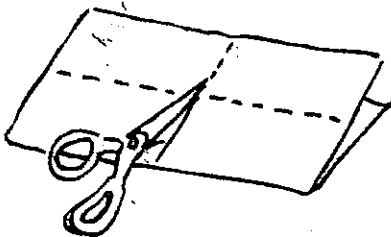
1. Fold the paper in half widthwise. Then fold it once more in the same direction.



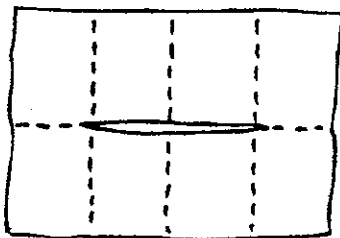
2. Fold the paper in half in the opposite direction.



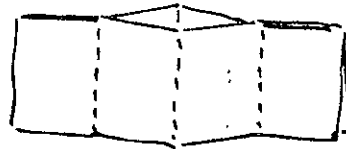
3. Open the paper to a half sheet. Starting from the folded edge, cut along the crease. Stop where the fold lines intersect.



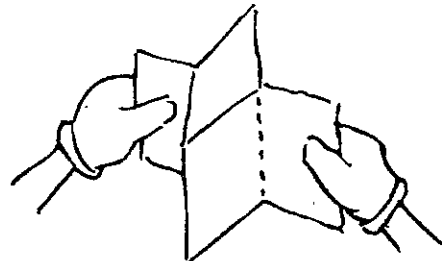
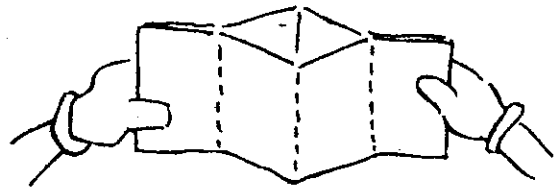
4. Open the paper completely.



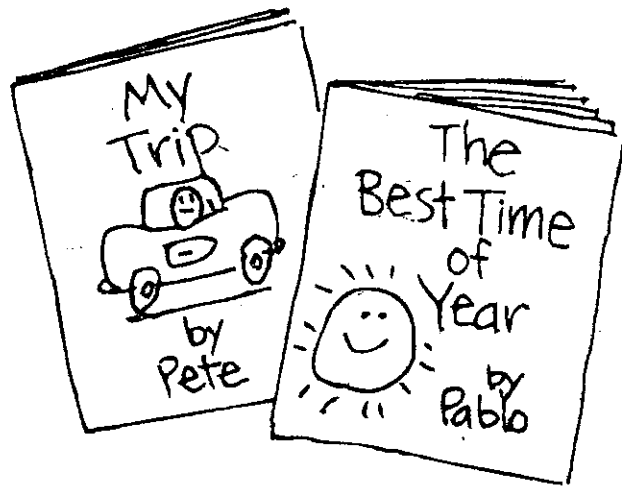
5. Fold the paper lengthwise.



6. Grasp the outer edges, and push them towards the center to make the opening "pop" out. Keep pushing until you form a book with four sections.

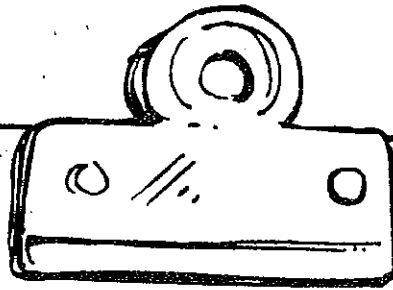


7. Fold the pages closed to complete the mini-book.



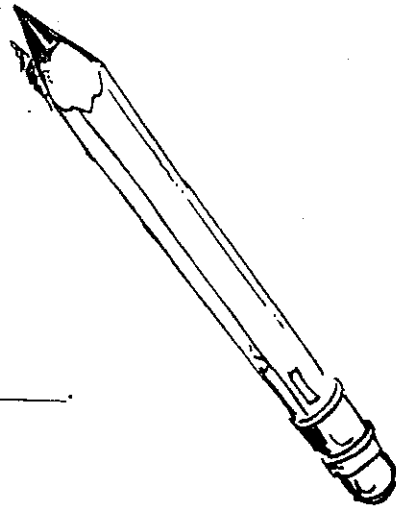
Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Minute Mini-Books



Terrific Topics and Super Starters

- My Last Birthday Party
 - Things I Have Found/Lost
 - A Monster Book
 - Possible Career Choices
 - A Book about Me
 - Six Things I Like to Do on Weekends
 - About My Favorite Book Character
 - Things I Learned in School This Week
 - Ways to Say No to Smoking/Drugs
 - Activities I Did Before School Today
 - Activities I Did After School Yesterday
 - More people should _____.
 - I wish I had more _____.
 - Things I Would Like to Change about School
 - Not-So-Goods (Foods, School Subjects, Chores)
 - Best/Terrible Days Are When _____
 - If I had \$100, I'd buy _____ for my family.
 - _____ is a very good friend because _____.
 - If there was no school tomorrow, I would _____.
 - When I grow up, I want to be a _____.
 - The world would be a better place if _____.
 - Our cafeteria should serve more _____ because _____.
 - Activities I Did When I Went to the Beach/Lake/Park/Pool
 - The Best . . . (Time of Year, Ride at the Fair, Breakfast, Snack in the Universe, Dessert, Place to Read)
 - If I could live anywhere, I would prefer _____ because _____.
 - Favorite (Sport, Food, TV Show, Color, Time of Day, Relative, Holiday, Activity at the Mall, Book Character, Movie Star, Music Group)
 - Whenever I am very angry, I feel better when I _____.
 - When I am sad, _____ makes me feel better.
 - I feel scared/happy when _____.
 - It would be great to have _____ as my teacher for one day.
- Jokes and Riddles
 - If I Won a Million Dollars
 - Why School Is Important
 - An Interview with a Friend
 - A Time I Will Never Forget
 - A Funny Story
 - An Important Person
 - How to _____
 - Words That Make Me Laugh
 - A Book of Future Inventions

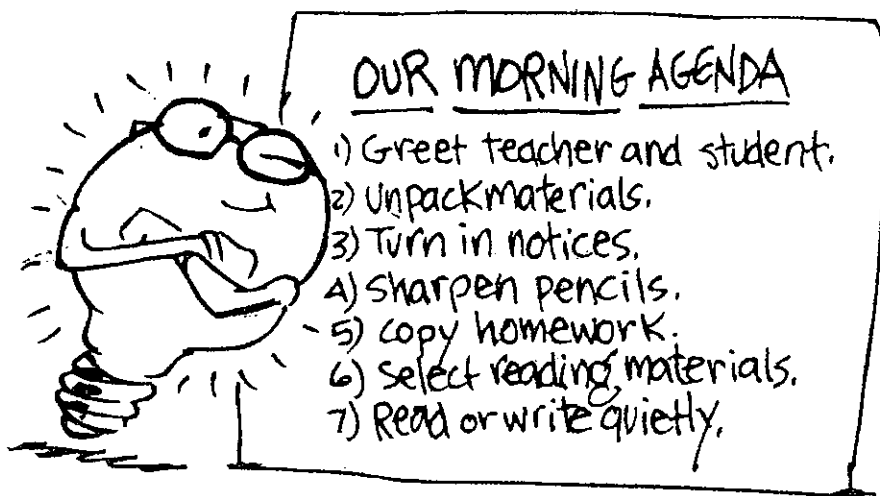


Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Morning Agenda

What You Do

- 1 Make multiple copies of the Great Starter Awards on colored copy paper or construction paper. Cut apart the certificates, and store them in a plastic bag.
- 2 Brainstorm steps for a morning agenda for your class, and write the agenda on chart paper to help your students organize themselves for the school day. For example, you may have students practice their manners by saying *Good morning* when they enter the room, place their materials neatly in or on their desk, sharpen pencils *before* or *after* school—rather than during the day, and copy daily assignments each morning.
- 3 Encourage students to read or write quietly and independently while you take attendance and complete morning paperwork tasks. Offer reluctant readers easy-to-reach baskets of reading materials, and provide indecisive writers with daily prompts on the board or overhead projector.
- 4 Have the class practice the routines until students can independently complete the tasks.
- 5 Discuss reasons for being properly prepared for the workday, and review and modify the agenda with your students as needed.
- 6 Reward students who follow the morning agenda each day with a Great Starter Award at the end of the week.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Participation Points

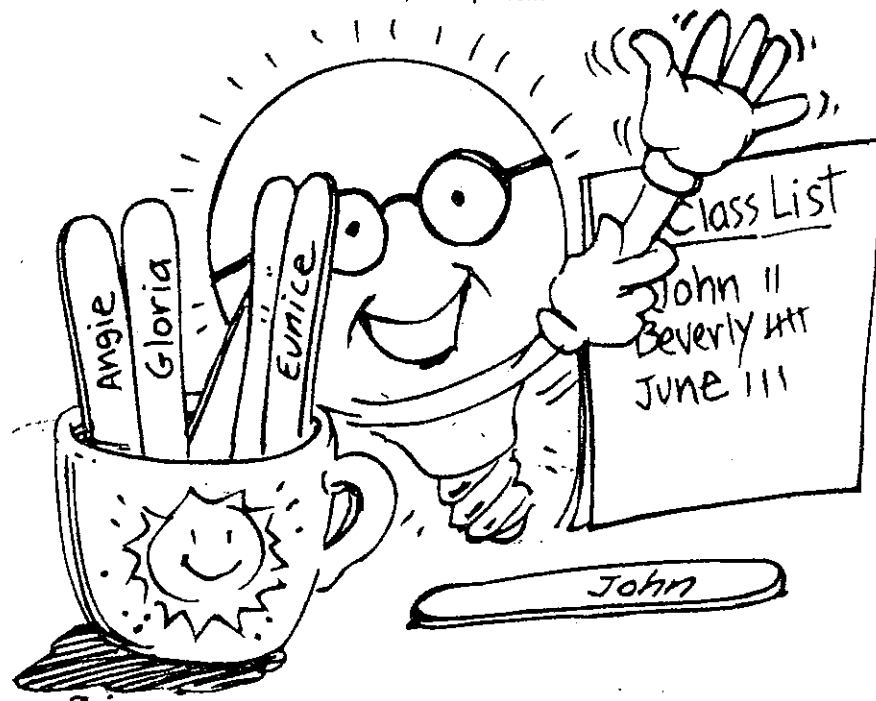
What You Do

- 1 Introduce Participation Points as a way to celebrate class involvement. Brainstorm ways students may respond in class (e.g., raising hand to give right or wrong answers, sharing ideas, asking good questions).
- 2 Choose two students as Point Monitors, and give them a class list to record points. Have monitors place an X next to students' names each time they participate in class. If monitors are unsure about whether a response is considered "participation," help them with a thumbs-up signal, or say *Point*.
- 3 From time to time, have students indicate how many points they have received by holding up the corresponding number of fingers. Make an effort to call on students who only have a few points.
- 4 At the end of the day, write on chart paper or bulletin board the names of the ten students who earned the most points, and reward them with Super Kid stars (see page 39), praiseworthy notes home, or "lunch first" privileges.
- 5 Record daily participation scores in your grade book to help evaluate students on effort or class participation.

Extra! Extra!

Simplify the task by dividing the class list in half and assigning monitors to different groups to observe.

Have students keep track of their own participation rates on old business cards, scrap paper, or ponder pads (see page 11). Allow students to give themselves points when you give the thumbs-up sign or say *Point*, and have them choose their own creative ways to record their data (e.g., tallies, dots, stars, happy faces).



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Ponder Pads

What You Need

clean, used paper, printed on only one side

scissors

stapler

cardboard box or plastic container

Extra! Extra!

Check for clean, recycled paper (printed on only one side) in the bin next to your school's copy machine.

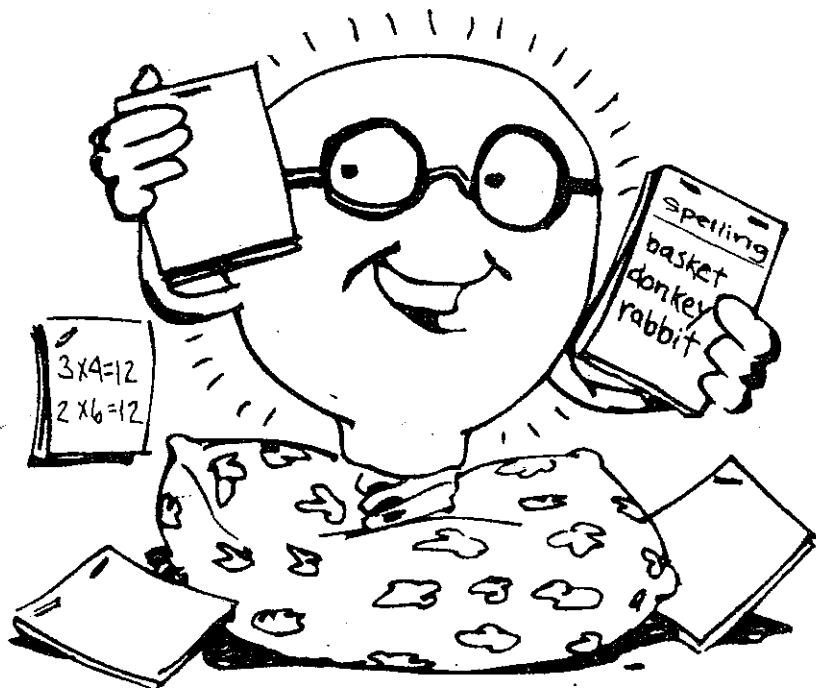
Make large, bold ponder pads and teeny, confidential ones to add variety to daily routines.

Have students write reflective responses for questions from social studies, science, or health on ponder pads instead of in journals.

Enlist the help of adult or student volunteers to make additional pads.

What You Do

- 1 Cut pieces of paper into small pages, about 3" x 5" (7.5 cm x 12.5 cm). For each student, staple several sheets of paper together to make a "ponder pad."
- 2 Have students store their pad in their desk or table. Place extra supplies in a convenient cardboard box or plastic container in the classroom.
- 3 Have students use their ponder pad for the following activities:
 - write down the name(s) of their favorite character(s) after listening to stories read aloud in class
 - practice math facts by listening to oral problems and writing down their answers
 - record answers for short quizzes in all subject areas
 - make up and respond to questions about specific lessons
 - write notes for Compliment or Complaint Boxes (see page 35)
 - self-monitor their behavior when they use Participation Points (see page 41) or Conduct Cards (see page 42)



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Question Concept Cards

What you want.....

- Short mini-lessons when you have those spare minutes
- Practice of past skills
- Motivate students

Materials

- Lots of index cards and quart size zippered bags

What you do....

1. At the end of each lesson, take one minute to jot down 1-3 questions and answers about that lesson. Write both the question and answer on an index card on the same side. On the back of the card, write a short description of the unit. For example, **Math Voc.** or **Map Words** or from a story, **Henry and Mudge** or a science unit, **Weather**
2. Make a zippered bag for each unit, writing the name in permanent marker. (i.e., Map Words)
3. Each time you revisit the lesson topic, add onto the cards. Students can suggest questions and answers too.
4. Keep these bags in a colorful basket by your centers. Students may quiz themselves or work with friends.
5. When you find yourself with those extra minutes waiting for the special area teacher to arrive, or your class's name to be called for pictures, or five minutes before lining up for PE, or ten minutes before dismissal..... then pull out the Concept Cards. Tell the class the topic and call out the questions. You don't have to give out prizes, but stickers are loved by all ages! Consider a quick tic-tac-toe game!
6. Encourage your students to make up questions and answers for this basket. They must submit them to you for approval and that you will call out their name if their card is used.

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Show Time

What You Need

brown paper lunch bags

personal items and memorabilia (e.g., photograph, certificate, poem)

students' personal items

large plastic bin or basket

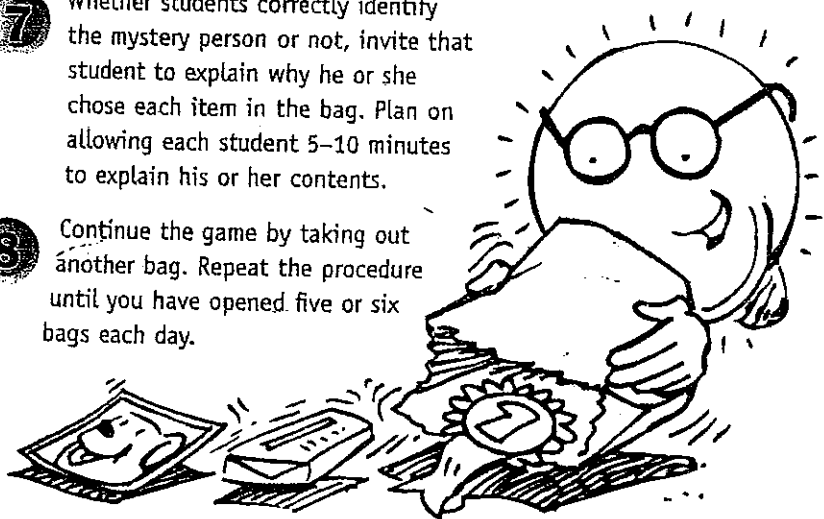
Extra! Extra!

Take time with this activity, and extend it over six or seven days to provide valuable information about your students.

Use Show Time as a great opener for the school year.

What You Do

- 1 Prepare a sample Mystery Bag by placing three personal items (e.g., photograph, coffee mug, library card) in a brown paper lunch bag. Fold the bag closed.
- 2 Show students your Mystery Bag, and talk about its possible contents. Carefully reveal each item, and briefly explain its importance to you.
- 3 Give each student a paper lunch bag. Ask students to take home their bag and put three special items in it to create a Mystery Bag. Talk about possible items students can include in their bag, and explain that they should choose objects that tell others about themselves. Invite students to draw pictures of items that are too big, valuable, or sentimental and place the pictures inside their bag. Tell students not to write anything on the outside of their bag.
- 4 When students return their bag to school, have them place it in a large bin or basket. Keep the bags closed, and do not reveal the contents.
- 5 Begin "show time" by removing one bag from the bin or basket. Show and describe each item.
- 6 Ask students to raise their hand if they think they know who the mystery person is. Give students three guesses. If students do not correctly identify the person after three guesses, lead the class in a "drum roll" on their desks, and say *Would the person who brought in this Mystery Bag please stand.* Invite the class to applaud when the student stands.
- 7 Whether students correctly identify the mystery person or not, invite that student to explain why he or she chose each item in the bag. Plan on allowing each student 5–10 minutes to explain his or her contents.
- 8 Continue the game by taking out another bag. Repeat the procedure until you have opened five or six bags each day.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Student Sticks

What you want....

- Give all students an equal chance to participate
- Encourage the shy students to participate
- Motivate students

Materials...

- Jumbo colorful craft sticks (the size of tongue depressors)
- Two decorated empty soup cans (or similar size). Decorate each can differently, but add a star on one can.

What you do....

1. Write the name of each child on the front and back of each craft stick with bold black permanent marker
2. Place all Student Sticks in the can without the star.
3. The object is to get your Student Stick in the Star can and this is done by random selection by the teacher.
4. When you need to pick a student for a job, a helper, or to answer a question, use the can of Student Sticks. Dramatically close your eyes and reach in the can. Pull out a stick and read off the name. State the question or request and ask the child, "Would like to move to the Star level? (the star can) If the child says yes and completes the task or answers the question, move their stick to the star can. That child will not be picked again until all the sticks have been moved to the star level. If a child says no to the task or question, just quietly keep the stick in the first can and pick another student. In one lesson with a dozen different questions, you could have a dozen student sticks change to the Star level. Everyone like to earn that Star rating!
5. When all the sticks have been moved, return all of them back and begin again.

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Sticky Note Publishing

What You Do

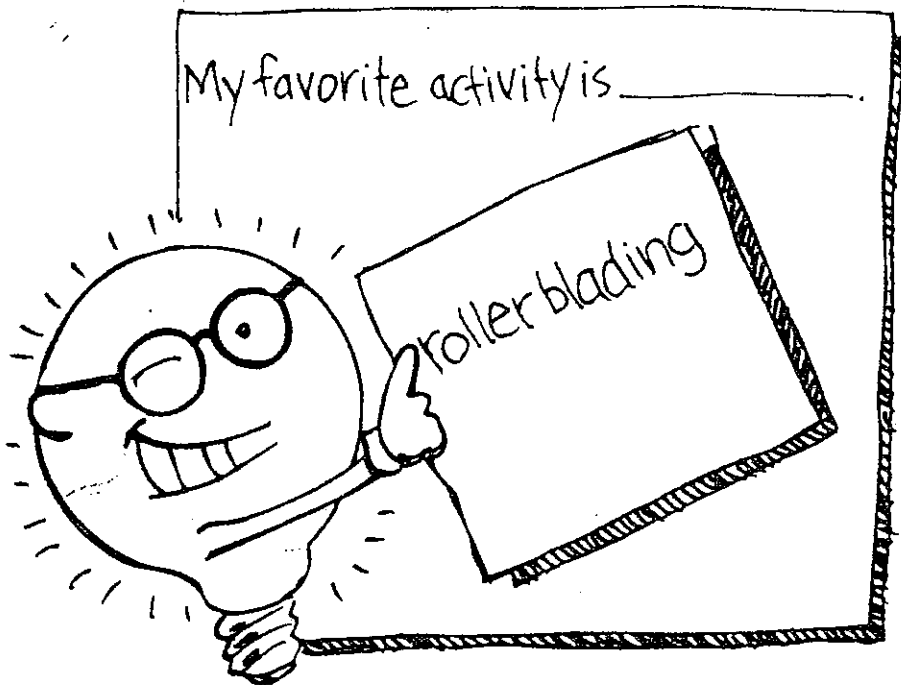
- 1 Write numerous sentence starters or topics, such as *My favorite time of day is _____* or *When I grow up, I want to be a _____*, on sentence strips. (Refer to the Terrific Topics and Super Starters reproducible for ideas.)
- 2 Display a sentence strip on a bulletin board. Brainstorm with the class words to complete the sentence or ideas to list beneath the topic. Write each word (or list of topic ideas) on a separate sticky note. Invite students to record the words on their ponder pad, if desired.
- 3 Show students how to place a sticky note on the sentence strip to complete the sentence. Then, give each student several sticky notes. Invite students to write their name and a brainstormed word on each sticky note.
- 4 Have students take turns placing their sticky notes on the board and sharing their words, phrases, and ideas with the class.

Extra! Extra!

Use this writing activity as a great Monday morning picker-upper or as a fun way to motivate junior writers.

If younger students have difficulty writing their ideas on sticky notes, have them use larger notes or half-sheets of paper and use a glue stick to attach the notes to sentence strips or charts.

Give students a copy of the Terrific Topics and Super Starters reproducible to keep in their writing folder or journal.



Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks

Take a Break!

What you want.....

- Give all students a chance to stand and stretch
- Activate endorphins by laughter. Endorphins help us think better.

What you do.... Here's several ideas for that 3 minute break!

1. Simon Says

The only difference is that the teacher is Simon and she does the opposite of what she says. Students need to listen for Simon Says AND to follow the oral directions, not what the teacher is doing! A very fast paced game and students love it!

2. Back to Back Detective Game (or CSI for older students)

Students pair up and stand back to back. During one verse of a familiar tune or counting to ten, both students move one object they are wearing to a different position, such as changing a ring on a different finger, or swapping left and right shoes, or hiding a necklace, etc. When the tune or count stops, they face each other and get three tries to figure out the change. Repeat or change partners. Lots of laughs!

3. Sing

There are so many sing along recordings. Singing is not just for the young. Singing is relaxing and helps fine tune many other areas such as phonemic awareness (rhyming words), vocabulary, historical awareness, and so on. At first, you may have many shy singers, but that will pass as you model your eager, enthusiastic singing! To make this singing more effective, have the students stand, swing, sway during the singing.

4. Dance

Hokey Pokey, Chicken Dance, Electric Slide, or one you made up. Move to music. A great way to stretch, relax and smile for three minutes!

Keeping Your Students Engaged: 20 Terrific Time-on-Task Tricks
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