

Don't Lose a Minute

Make the most of "wait time" in your classroom. Use these bonus ideas to productively fill extra moments.

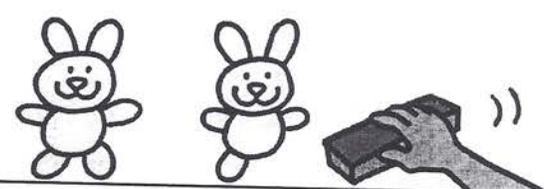
Spelling-Word Eggs

Make spelling word practice fun! Provide a basket containing plastic Easter eggs. Write each spelling word for the week on a separate piece of paper and put the papers in the eggs (one word per egg). Let one student at a time choose an egg and give it to you. Read the spelling word to the student and ask him to spell the word.



Seasonal "Hangman"

Arrange your students in teams. For each team, make a simple drawing on the blackboard. Draw a bunny for Easter, a flower for May Day, etc. Have one person from each team stand next to her team's picture. Call out a spelling word or a math problem. The first person to answer correctly gets to erase part of her team's drawing. The first team to completely erase its drawing wins.



Communicative Language Skills

Help the children learn to communicate clearly. Give each child a sheet of paper, some crayons, and a pencil. Choose a simple subject, such as a clown. Call on a student to describe one thing about the imaginary clown. Call on another student to describe another feature of the clown.

Joy: Our clown has curly orange hair.
Tommy: Our clown has a hat with green dots.



Dictionary Detectives

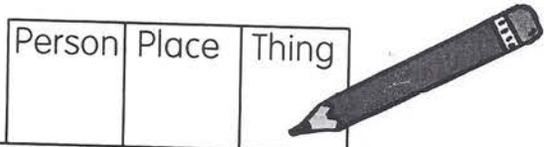
To reinforce dictionary skills, let your students find a mystery word one day each week! Throughout the day, give clues such as these:

1. This entry word is also a guide word.
2. It is found between the letters *m* and *o*.
3. There is a picture of a napkin on the page this word is on.
4. This word is the opposite of *far*. (Answer: *near*)



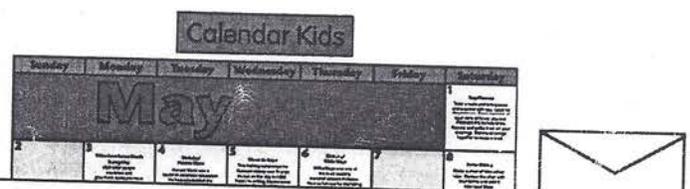
Noun Race

Ask the children to head a page in their copybooks with three columns: Person, Place, and Thing. Tell them that when you ring a bell or say "Go," they are to open up a reader or other book and list as many nouns as they can find. After a few minutes, ring the bell again and have the children tally their nouns. I check the nouns when I collect copybooks at the end of the week.



Schooldays Calendar Kids

Each month, post the *Schooldays* calendar on a bulletin board titled "Calendar Kids." Pin up a large envelope. When a student has extra time, he or she does the day's or the previous day's activity. Finished work goes into the envelope. Keep track of completed activities on a blank calendar posted below the *Schooldays* one. Give a reward to students who have done 10 activities.

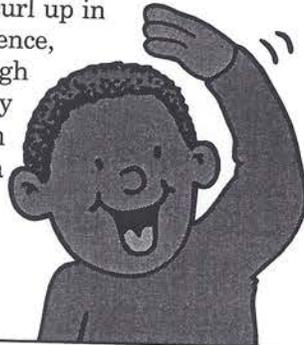


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Punctuation Positions

Review punctuation with this giggle-producing movement activity. Say a few sentences, one at a time, and let your students punctuate them with their bodies. Have the children curl up in a ball for a declarative sentence, hold both hands high overhead for an exclamatory sentence, and hold one arm curved overhead for a question.



Tongue-Twisting Phonics

Have fun with phonics. Write a few tongue twisters on the board, such as *toy boat*, *black bugs' blood*, and *Flora found forty frogs*. Challenge the students to say each twister quickly five times. Help them see that tongue twisters usually contain alternating sounds (consonants or vowels) that differ slightly from each other. Then let the students create and say their own tongue twisters.

Shy slugs sure slide slowly.

How Many Nouns?

Try this quick parts-of-speech reinforcer. Have a child choose an old greeting card picture from your collection and show it to the class. See how many nouns the class can find in the picture. Have the students look for verbs next, and then adjectives.



Construct a Paragraph

Cultivate creativity in paragraph writing. Have your students each construct a paragraph in which the words in the first sentence become the first words of succeeding sentences, as in the following examples:

Jack, come here. Come see what I have for you. Here is a new football.
Please stop that noise. Stop, I said! That's better. Noise gives me a headache.



What Does It Stand For?

List on the board several familiar abbreviations of the type shown below, and ask your students what they stand for. Challenge the students to add to the list. (Headlines are a good place to look for abbreviations.)



Sentence Patterns

Here's a five-minute oral language activity. Put a sentence pattern like the following on the board:

_____, _____.
 Call on children to supply words to make a sentence for the pattern. (Examples: *Mary, please take your seat. Yes, I am ready now. Oh, I'm not really sure.*) Then try another pattern.

Aaron,
I liked
your story.

