

---

## ACTIVITY TWO: READ TO BEAT THE CLOCK

---

There are several aspects that teachers must consider in order to promote learner engagement. In last week's Teacher's Corner, we discussed the importance of building a strong classroom community. This week, we offer a strategy that targets another aspect of learner engagement: *behavioral engagement* (Parsons, Nuland, & Parsons, 2014). Behavioral engagement focuses on getting students actively involved in class activities. While active participation is closely related to a student's level of comfort in the classroom, there are a number of techniques teachers can use to promote active participation in activities and lessons.

This week we explain how to use time as a tool to engage learners in reading tasks. Time is a great tool for fostering competition and engagement in the classroom because the stakes are relatively low but signs of progress for each learner are clear.

---

### LEVEL

---

High-beginner and above

---

### MATERIALS

---

- Reading text (any text used in a previous lesson appropriate to learner level and age)
- Clock with secondhand

---

### PREPARATION

---

- Prepare enough copies of the text if it is not in students' books
- Plan for students to work in pairs; make a list of students who will work together paired by reading ability. For example, put strong readers with strong readers.
- Write these rules on the board:
  1. One student reads.

2. One student is the timekeeper.
3. The reader reads silently for 1 minute. The timekeeper stops the reader after one minute of reading.
4. The reader underlines the last word he/she read.
5. The reader reads again for 1 minute starting from the beginning of the text. The timekeeper stops the reader after one minute of reading.
6. The reader underlines the last word they read.
7. The reader counts the words read and writes down the number of words read the first time. The reader counts the words read the second time and writes down the number of words. The reader compares the two numbers.
8. The timekeeper and reader switch roles.
9. Repeat steps 3-7.

### PROCEDURE

---

1. Tell students that they are going to see how fast they can read silently.
2. Put students in the pairs planned before class.
3. Give students a copy of the text they will read or ask them to take out the text if it is something they have in their books or folders.
4. Review the rules on the board with the students.
  - a. Modeling this activity can be useful.
  - b. Ask the class to be the timekeeper and you are the reader. Tell students that when the secondhand hits 12, they should say “go” and when it hits 12 the second time, they should shout “stop.”
  - c. Read silently for one minute.
  - d. When the class shouts “stop,” stop reading and show them how you mark the last word.

- e. Show students how to count the words that you read and write the number on the board.
  - f. Tell students that they will each do this 2 times.
- 5. As the students engage in the activity, circulate to ensure that they are on task and completing the activity correctly.
  - 6. When they finish, tell them that they will do this regularly in order to track their progress in reading.

---

### VARIATIONS

An alternative to this activity is to have students track their progress reading aloud. The words per minute will likely be less than the words per minute for silent reading, but it also gives the students a chance to track their own progress.

---

### REFERENCES

Parsons, S. A., Richey Nuland, L., & Ward Parsons, A. (2014). The ABCs of student engagement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(8), 23-27.