



Reading Counts



What to do With an Extra 5 Minutes!

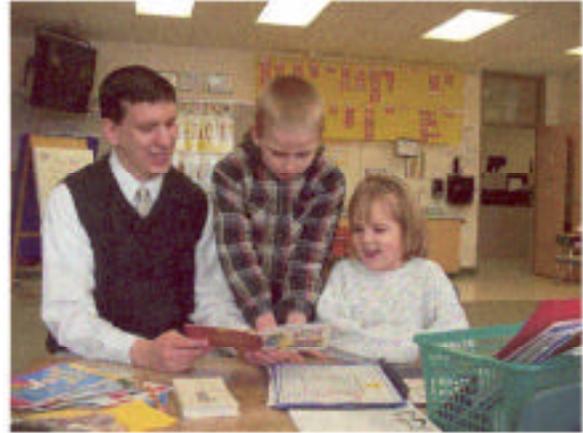
Laura Perry
Team Leader - Head Start/Preschool Programs

Your lesson plan is done. Your tutoring time doesn't end for another five minutes. ACK! Here are some quick and easy ways to fill that time with educational activities.

Reading:

- **Parking Lot:** During tutoring time, if a student asks a question unrelated to the lesson, have them write it down on a car cut-out, and put the question in the 'parking lot.' At the end of the tutoring time, return to the parking lot to answer their questions. Materials: Pencil, car shaped cut-outs, parking lot poster/paper
Skills: Writing, asking questions, waiting your turn
- **Self-concept Award:** After completing a lesson, have the student(s) create an award for themselves based on what they learned that day. For example, the award might read "I am doing great at learning my sight words. Signed, _____."

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America Reads Tutor David Smith with students from Livonia Central Schools

Advice for Tutors from a Geneseo America Reads Teacher

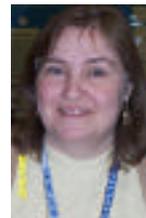
Jamie Mullaney
Team Leader- Geneseo Central

Keitha Sleggs, Kindergarten teacher at Geneseo Elementary School was asked:

"What advice can you offer to tutors in the America Reads/America Counts Program."

Her advice reflected the diversity in the classroom that all America Reads and America Counts tutors can anticipate. She said:

"You will come in contact with children who have a variety of background experiences, interests, and learning styles. Be prepared to use a variety of strategies and techniques to help the students become successful. Expect to learn a lot from the students about the diversity of learners."



Mrs. Sleggs

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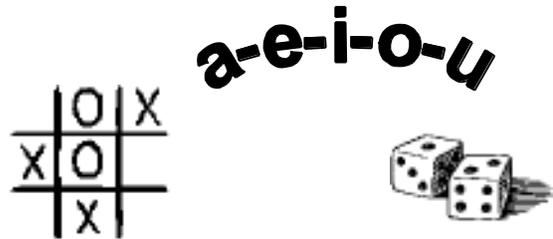
Time Fillers, *continued from p. 1*

Materials: Construction paper, markers, pencils
Skills: Self-concept, lesson review, writing

- **Scavenger Hunt:** After working on a specific skill, have the students find examples in their classroom/library/tutoring environment. The student might find letters, phrases, or words.
Materials: none (magnifying glass prop if desired)
Skills: lesson review, application of learning to real-world environment
- **Helpful Materials:** These materials are handy to have around to create many time-fillers
Materials: letter cards/magnets/tiles, paper, file folder, paper bag. Many templates, patterns, and ideas can be found in [Alternatives to Worksheets](#) in the SES library or your tutoring bags.

Math:

- **Catching the Bus:** In a game similar to Hangman, students need to guess a word by guessing its letters. For students learning time, have them start at 2:00, and count by 10 minutes until 3:00 when they have to catch the bus. For students learning money, have them start at \$4.00, and go down a quarter, dime, or nickel for each letter missed. Post their progress at the top of the paper, and have students figure out the next amount (i.e. \$4.00- 25 cents = \$3.75).
Materials: Pencil, paper, word lists.
Skills: Spelling, time, money, addition, etc.
- **Dot Drawings:** On dot grid paper, draw a shape. Have the younger students copy that shape. With older students, have them try to make the shape while closing their eyes, or give directions to make a shape without letting them see the model.
Materials: Dot paper, pencils
Skills: Geometry, following directions, etc.
- **Personal Word Problems:** After learning about a certain math concept, have students write out or think out word problems that feature themselves and their friends, and ask a question about the skill they just learned. Have them trade problems with a friend to solve.
Materials: Paper, pencils
Skills: Any math concept, writing, word problems
- **Timed Calculation:** Using calculators, have students roll dice to subtract numbers from 100. The student who gets to zero fastest wins. With more time, students can record their calculations.
Materials: calculator, dice, paper, pencils
Skills: Subtraction, calculation
Helpful Materials: dice, deck of cards, graph paper, dominoes, calculator, ruler, loose coins, cubes. Many templates, patterns, and ideas can be found in [Instant Math Centers](#) in the SES library.



Learning Vowel Sounds with Tic-Tac-Roll!

Dave Smith

Team Leader- Livonia Schools

Learning short and long vowel sounds in words can give students a lot of headaches. So how can we make it fun and engaging? Easy! Challenge them to a game of Tic-Tac-Roll! All you need is two Tic-Tac-Toe boards, a six-sided die with a short or long vowel printed on each side (you can do three vowels on one six-sided die), and a stack of words you want the student to learn.

First, ask the student to recite all the long and short vowel sounds. Then do a word sort. In one row, the student will read words with short vowels, like lob, can, cap, pin, etc. In the next row, long-vowel words: lobe, cane, cape, pine, etc. Say, "When we add a silent 'e' to the end of the word, the vowel says its name!"

Once you see the student understands, play Tic-Tac-Roll! Take the batch of cards you just used to do the word sort and shuffle them together. Place one card, face down, on each square of both Tic-Tac-Roll! boards. To play, roll the die and then choose a card on the board. If you flip over a long "o" and you picked the word "mope", then you get to keep the card! If the vowel sound on the die and the card is different, like a short "i" and the word is "cane", then the card gets turned back over. Be sure the student is saying aloud both the vowel sound on the die and the word on the card every time, and is able to tell the difference. The first one to get three cards face-up in a row wins the game! Just take it easy on the kids and let them win once in a while, okay?

Need a short and quick game to fill a little time with some antsy students in a classroom? Tell them they're going to be "mind readers." Have them look at the word wall. For example, for the word "wake," say, "I'm thinking of a word. It has one syllable and the same beginning sound as 'water.' It rhymes with 'fake.' Can you guess the word I'm thinking?" For older kids, you could give clues like the definition of a word, or its medial vowel sound, etc. This is a great game to play when the kids are waiting in line for lunch or to be dismissed for buses.

Good luck!

The Importance of Literacy

Kate Ilardo

Team Leader- Mt. Morris Schools

In order to determine the importance of literacy in school today, I talked with the reading specialist at Mt. Morris Elementary School. She determined that while literacy is often incorporated into classrooms and schools a lot more today than in the past, it will continue to become a higher priority. Through the literacy classes at Geneseo, I have learned how important it is to use literacy on a variety of levels, take the students' interests into account when choosing books and activities, have the students choose their own reading material and projects to work on, integrate reading and writing with other subjects, find ways to motivate students to read and enjoy reading, assess the students on a continuous level, and encourage community and family involvement in reading.

One of the major things that I like about the reading teacher was how she really focused on the excitement she was able to generate for her students. She often instituted many great activities and games that related to the reading. Her students did a lot of discovery- based, hands-on learning, and they seemed to really enjoy reading and learning about new things. She would choose material that challenged and motivated the students at the same time.

I also liked how she tried to incorporate reading as much as possible throughout the school day. For example, she would use historical literacy novels to help give students a more personalized view of the event. It is always easier for students to relate to a character in a story than it is for them to understand a textbook or a lecture. By integrating literacy into different subjects, students understand the material in different contexts.

Finally, I thought it was really good how assessment was continuously incorporated throughout the school year. She often asked questions to make sure they understood the lessons. Also she relied heavily on portfolio assessment, which is a great way to see the students' improvement throughout the school year. With the portfolios, the students were able to reflect on their work and present it for the parent-teacher conference. By actively being involved in their assessment, students will feel like an important aspect in the learning process. Seeing themselves improve throughout the year can be one of the best forms of intrinsic motivation.

It is important to constantly motivate your students to become interested in reading, and make learning enjoyable and challenging. You can show students how reading is important to their every day lives and how it can be incorporated into different contexts outside of school. You should help students relate to characters and settings, and allow students to learn how to visit new places every time they pick up a book.

Five for Families

Jamie Mullaney

Team Leader- Geneseo Schools

Researchers have identified five areas where the home and family can influence reading development in children:

- **Value Placed on Literacy:** Parents show their own interest in reading by reading in front of their children and encouraging them to read too.
- **Press for Achievement:** Parents let children know that they are expected to achieve and help them develop reading skills.
- **Availability and Use of Reading Material:** Homes with reading and writing materials for children—such as books, newspapers, writing paper, pencils, and crayons—create more opportunities to develop literacy.
- **Reading with Children:** Parents should read to children because if a child is able to listen to others read aloud, it helps them to become readers.
- **Opportunities for Verbal Interaction:** The quantity and content of conversation between parents and children influence language and vocabulary development, both building blocks for later reading success.

Feed me a story: What difference can reading aloud to a child for 30 minutes per day make?

- If daily reading begins in infancy, by the time the child is 5 years old, he or she has been fed roughly 900 hours of brain food!
- Reduce that experience to just 30 minutes a week and the child's hungry mind loses 770 hours of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and stories.
- A kindergarten student who has not been read to could enter school with less than 60 hours of literacy nutrition. No teacher, no matter how talented, can make up for those lost hours of mental nourishment.

Hours of reading books by age 5

If you read 30 minutes daily.....the child has 900 Hours

If you read 30 minutes weekly...the child has 130 Hours

If you read less than 30 minutes weekly....the child has 60 Hours

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Maintaining Communication With Your Teacher

Laura Perry

Team Leader- Dansville Schools

To keep your group or individual on track with the goals of the teacher, you will need to communicate regularly. Since teachers are always short on time, you can set up an easy system by which you can let the teacher know the progress you are making with your student. Here are a few ideas from the America Learns website:

- Hang a clipboard with paper and pencil in a visible spot in the classroom. Ask the teacher to suggest and jot activities on the clipboard.
- Pass a folder back and forth so the teacher can read and respond to your observations and lesson plans.
- Schedule a 10-15 minute weekly check-in (before or after school or tutoring time).
- Initiate e-mail correspondence. Figure out the teacher's best times for answering e-mail.
- Ask the teacher or teaching assistant to observe your group and provide constructive feedback.
- Ask the teacher if you can observe a group that he or she is leading to get ideas for management and instruction.
- Provide feedback on your students in the form of an individualized chart that tells the teacher how well the students did working on the task or in a group.
- Ask your teacher what will work best for him or her.



Saying Goodbye to Your Students

Many students and tutors will be moving on next year out of the America Reads and America Counts programs. Just as it is important to set up a regular schedule so that students can depend on you coming, it is important to bring closure to the tutoring sessions. Make sure that the student(s) know how much you appreciated working with them. Here are a few suggestions for your final tutoring time:

- Exchange addresses so that you can correspond with them over the summer.
- Review the student work from prior tutoring sessions. The student can see the progress that he or she made, and the tutor can see all of the great work he or she has done.
- Talk about plans for the summer and next year. Get excited about the student's plans so that they are motivated to move on.
- Provide the teacher or parent with ideas for student work that model what you have been doing.
- Write or draw about your favorite time(s) together. Exchange your work so that the student has something to remember you by, and vice versa.

Five for Families, continued from p. 3

Raising Readers

Start Early: The First Three Years

Just as a child develops language skills long before being able to speak, the child also develops literacy skills long before being able to read. What parents do, or don't do, has a lasting impact on their child's reading skill and literacy.

- Play is the work of young children. From the first lullaby to dramatization of a favorite story, music and other creative arts can stimulate language and literacy development. Despite the evidence of a relationship between reading regularly to a child and that child's later reading development, six in ten babies and five in ten toddlers are not read to regularly by parents or family members.

Nurture Your Budding Reader: The Preschooler

Preschoolers with large vocabularies tend to become proficient readers. Parents who talk and read with their children can greatly enhance their vocabularies. The vocabulary of the average children's book is greater than that found on prime-time television. Yet more than four in ten preschoolers are not read to regularly.

Ready to Read: Heading for the Classroom

Parents are truly their children's first and most important teachers. It is clear that parents should not leave to schools alone the important tasks of language and literacy development.

Source: Hess Holloway, 1984. Family and School as Educational Institutions

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Thank you, teachers!



Please do not forget to complete the program evaluations at the end of the semester!