

Just a minute

Grade: GESE Grade 5+ (CEFR B1 and above)

Time: 20 minutes

Exam Task Focus:

- ▶ To practise fluency
- ▶ To create spoken discourse
- ▶ To understand clear speech on a familiar topic
- ▶ To ask and answer questions
- ▶ To deal with interruptions and requests for clarification



Resources:

- ▶ Buzzers/Squeakers
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrwUAFV706k&list=RDDp5vqxEot1c&index=3>
Video Clip

Just a Minute is a BBC Radio 4 radio comedy and television panel game which has been going since 1967. It was chaired for 52 years by the late Nicholas Parsons. The object of the game is for panellists to talk for sixty seconds on a given subject, 'without hesitation, repetition or deviation'. Throughout its half-century history, the show has, in addition to its popularity in the UK, developed an international following through its broadcast on the BBC World Service and, more recently, on the internet. Used in the classroom, this activity helps students to develop confidence by challenging them to speak in a light-hearted setting, but in front of an 'audience' of their classmates and their teacher.

Procedure

1. Explain that this is a game from the classic BBC radio game in which players have to speak about a topic for one minute without hesitation, deviation or repetition.
2. Divide class into four or five teams.
3. Ask each team to prepare a list of subjects on which their opponents will have to speak for one minute. These should be topics they are familiar with. The best topics are those which challenge the students' vocabulary without being too difficult. Good examples include:
4. Tell students they must speak continuously for one minute. No long pauses are allowed, only those a presenter would normally take. They may not change the subject or repeat information or opinion. The opposing team can raise an objection if they feel this has happened, by ringing a buzzer or raising a hand.
5. Each team nominates a different player to represent the team in each round. The teams can organise themselves, or the teacher can choose the next contestant in whichever way works best. A large wall clock is useful to keep track of time.
6. The nominated player takes a seat at the front and the opposing team announces the topic.
7. The contestant speaks for one minute.
8. Once the contestant has completed their minute, the teacher gives the team a score which will be tallied on the board. Be very generous with this, giving 10/10 to anyone who doesn't break the rules. If there's some pausing, or the student repeats a thought, consider giving them an 8/10 or 9/10. You might give bonus points for especially good choices of vocabulary or particularly effective use of a tricky grammar point.

Playing the game

1. Players have got one minute to speak on a topic of their choice. They can be challenged and if the challenge is correct a point is awarded to the challenging team. If the challenge is incorrect the player scores a point and is allowed to continue talking.
2. Players can challenge the speaker on the grounds of deviation (from the original topic) hesitation, or repetition.
3. To make a challenge the team players must interrupt the speaker using their buzzer and state the grounds of their challenge. The teacher decides (with the help of the audience) if the challenge is valid.