

# I'm Done... Now What?

★ An Early Finisher Activity Packet ★

★ Creative.

♥ Independent.

★ Meaningful.

Just for you! ♥

Use your  
time  
wisely.  
Make it  
meaningful.  
Have fun!

Ideas

Dream

Discover

Create

Good Tidings

Good  
Tidings

CREATE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

LEARN

HAVE FUN

You've  
got this!

★ Perfect for early finishers, fast workers,  
and curious minds! ★

# What's Inside

Find the activity, classroom tool, or teacher resource you need.

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# Start Here, Teacher

Early finishers do not need more busywork. They need a predictable routine and a small menu of meaningful choices they can begin without interrupting you.

**The goal:** Students finish carefully, check their work, turn it in correctly, then transition to a quiet activity that keeps their brains engaged without creating more work for you.

## A Simple Launch Plan

- 1 Teach the routine before you need it.** Model what "finished" actually means and practice the transition.
- 2 Start with 4-6 choices.** Too many options can create wandering. Add new activities once the routine is working.
- 3 Keep materials reachable.** A basket, file box, magazine holder, clipboard station, or a few labeled folders are enough.
- 4 Make quiet part of the activity.** Students should be able to choose, begin, clean up, and return materials independently.
- 5 Rotate, don't reinvent.** Swap a few pages or challenge cards every week or two. Familiar formats make independence easier.



# The Finish-First Check

Before you choose an early-finisher activity...

## 1 FINISH

Did I answer every part?



## 2 CHECK

Did I reread, recalculate, or look it over?



## 3 FIX

Is there anything I can improve?



## 4 NAME

Is my name on it?



## 5 TURN IN

Is it in the correct place?



## 6 CHOOSE

Pick one quiet activity and begin.



### OUR FINISH-FIRST REMINDER

**Done doesn't mean rushed.**

Done means finished, checked, and ready.



# I'm Done...Now What? Choice Board

Finish carefully. Then choose one quiet activity and get started independently.

## 1 READ IT

Read a book, poem, magazine, or classroom text.



## 2 WRITE IT

Choose a prompt, list, letter, poem, or tiny story.



## 3 CREATE IT

Draw, design, invent, map, or make a comic.



## 4 THINK IT

Try a brain teaser, logic challenge, sorting task, or word puzzle.



## 5 WONDER IT

Investigate a question, observe closely, predict, or make a wonder list.



## 6 FINISH IT

Return to unfinished work, organize your folder, or complete a classroom job.



## 7 PRACTICE IT

Review spelling, math facts, handwriting, vocabulary, or another approved skill.



## 8 SURPRISE ME

Pick a quiet challenge card from the class basket.



Choose quietly • Work independently • Leave the room ready for others

# Setting Up Your Early-Finisher Spot

You do not need a Pinterest-perfect station. One shelf, crate, drawer, or corner of a counter can work.

## KEEP

Pencils, colored pencils, clipboards, scrap paper, current challenge sheets, a few books, puzzle pages, and index cards.

## SKIP

Supplies that require teacher help, complicated craft materials, activities with tiny loose pieces, or anything noisy.

## TRY

Put each category in a labeled folder. Students return reusable pages to the front and completed pages to a turn-in tray or take-home folder.

## LOW-COPY IDEA

Place favorite activity sheets in dry-erase sleeves. Students can use fine-tip dry-erase markers and wipe them clean.

## ROTATION IDEA

Keep the same categories all year and rotate only the prompts. Students get novelty without relearning the system.

# I Wonder...

Turn your curiosity into questions. There are no wrong things to wonder about!

## Wonder starters:

Why does...? What if...? How could...? I wonder what would happen if...?

### 1 I wonder...

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### 2 Another thing I wonder...

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### 3 My biggest wonder today...

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# If This Object Could Talk...

Choose an ordinary object. Imagine it has a voice, opinions, and a story to tell.

**My object:** \_\_\_\_\_

Try: pencil, backpack, shoe, desk, lunchbox, book, eraser - or choose your own.

## 1 What would the object say?

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## 2 What has it seen or experienced?

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## 3 What does it wish people knew?

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# The 5-Minute Story

Choose one story starter. Keep writing until your time is up.

**The classroom door opened and there was...**

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**Nobody knew the pencil could talk until...**

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**At recess, I found a tiny map under...**

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# Six-Word Story Challenge

Tell a whole story in exactly six words.

**Example: Lost mitten. Tiny mouse found home.**

**My six-word story #1:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

1

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5

6

Optional: illustrate your six-word story below.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**My six-word story #2:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

1

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6

Optional: illustrate your six-word story below.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**My six-word story #3:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

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6

Optional: illustrate your six-word story below.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

# Invent Something

Invent something that solves an ordinary problem.

**My invention is called...**

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**The problem it solves...**

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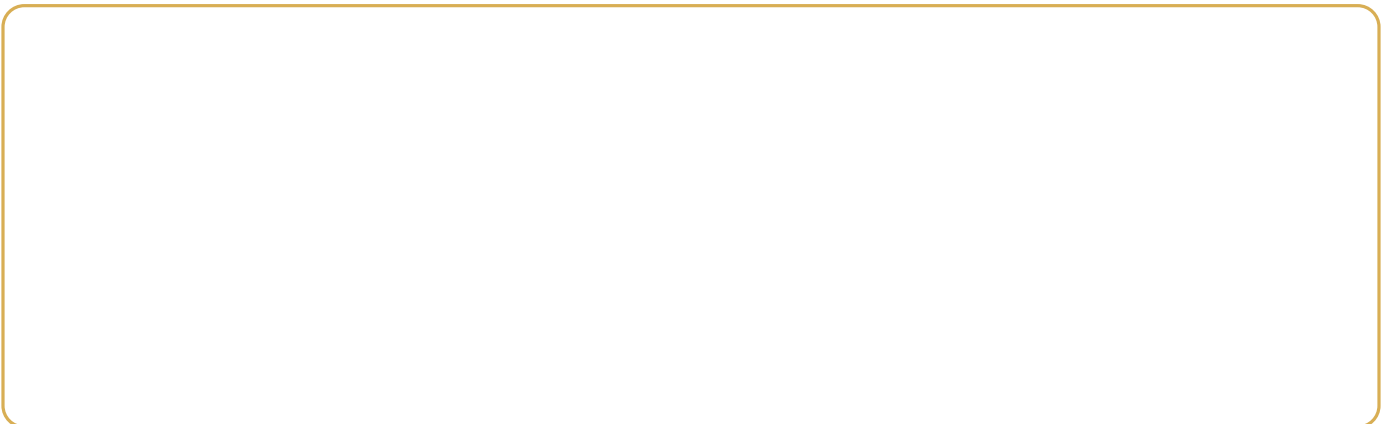
**How it works...**

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**One surprising feature...**

---

**Draw and label your invention:**



# One Thing, Ten Uses

Choose one ordinary object. Then imagine ten different ways it could be used.

**OBJECT:** \_\_\_\_\_

Pick something simple: a paper clip, sock, spoon, box, pencil, cup, or your own idea.

1

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9

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# Design a Secret Hideout

Plan a hideout for a character. Make it clever, cozy, strange—or all three.

**1 Who uses it?**

---

**2 Where is it hidden?**

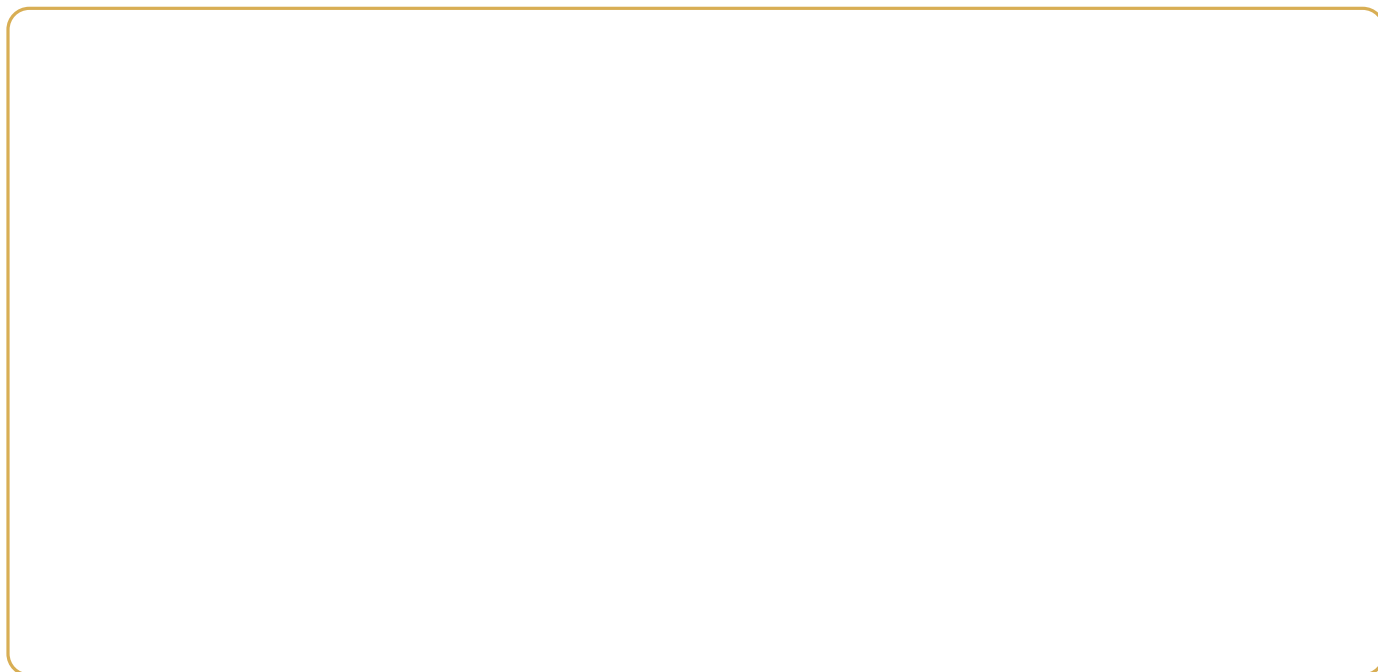
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**3 Three must-have features:**

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**Draw & label your secret hideout:**



# Create a New Holiday

Invent a holiday people would actually want to celebrate.

**1 Holiday name:**

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**2 What are we celebrating?**

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**3 Traditions:**

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---

**4 Special food, clothing, or activity:**

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# The Great Debate

Choose a silly question. Pick a side and convince your reader!

**Choose one:**

- Should homework be illegal on birthdays?
- Is cereal a soup?
- Should every classroom have a pet?
- Which is better: recess before lunch or after?

**My debate question:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My side:**

## Make your case:

Give reasons, examples, or details that might persuade someone to agree with you.

# Tiny Poetry

Write a tiny poem about something ordinary.

**Choose a subject:**

shoe • lunchbox • rain • eraser • recess • sock • your own

## Poetry challenge:

Include a sound, a strong image, or one surprising comparison.

### My tiny poem:

# Character Mash-Up

Build a character from two unexpected traits.

## Pick two traits:

brave • forgetful • dramatic • shy • curious • grumpy  
generous • sneaky

### 1 Name:

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### 2 Biggest strength:

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### 3 Biggest problem:

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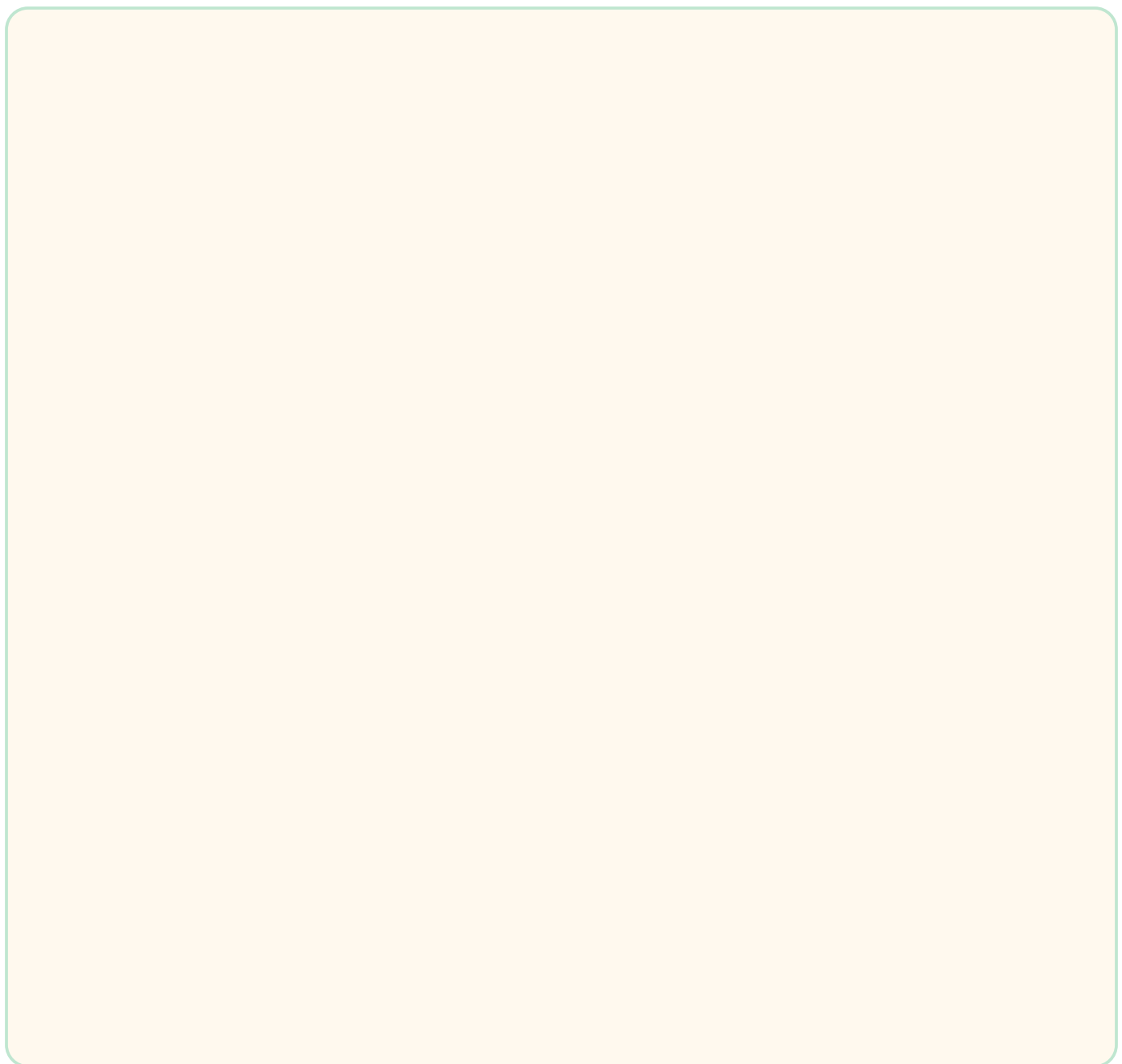
# Draw It From Another Point of View

Draw a familiar place from an unusual viewpoint.

## Try one of these:

- the classroom from under a desk
- a backpack from inside the pocket
- the playground from a bird's-eye view
- or invent your own viewpoint

## Draw your scene here:



# The Quiet Detective

Look closely without leaving your seat. What can you discover?

**1 Find 3 things you never noticed before.**

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**2 Find 2 patterns.**

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**3 Find 1 thing that makes you curious.**

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# Make a List of 10

Choose one idea below—or make up your own. Then see if you can reach ten!

## Try one of these:

- Things that are round
- Things smaller than my hand
- Words that sound funny
- Things I'd put in a time capsule
- Things a dragon might collect

## My list is about: \_\_\_\_\_

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

# Book Taste Test

Sample a book without committing to it. Notice what pulls you in—or doesn't.

**1 Title:**

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**2 I read/looked for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.**

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**3 Something I noticed:**

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**4 Would I keep reading? Why or why not?**

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# Continue the Story

Choose one story starter and keep the story going. What happens next?

**1 The note on my desk had only three words...**

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**2 I knew the field trip was going to be strange when...**

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**3 There was one rule nobody was supposed to break...**

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# Create-a-Comic

Draw the story in order. Add dialogue, thoughts, sound effects, labels, or captions.

**BIG DRAWING SPACES • 4 SCENES • WRITE RIGHT IN THE BUBBLES**

## SCENE 1

Set it up



Optional caption

## SCENE 2

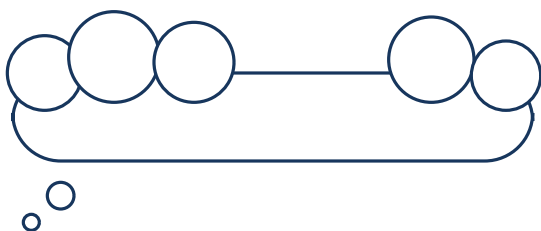
Something happens



Optional caption

## SCENE 3

Make it worse or funnier



Optional caption

## SCENE 4

End it



Optional caption

# Teach Me Something

You are the expert! Teach someone how to do something you know well.

**I can teach someone how to:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **1 STEP 1**

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## **2 STEP 2**

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## **3 STEP 3**

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## **HELPFUL TIP**

What should your learner remember, watch out for, or try?

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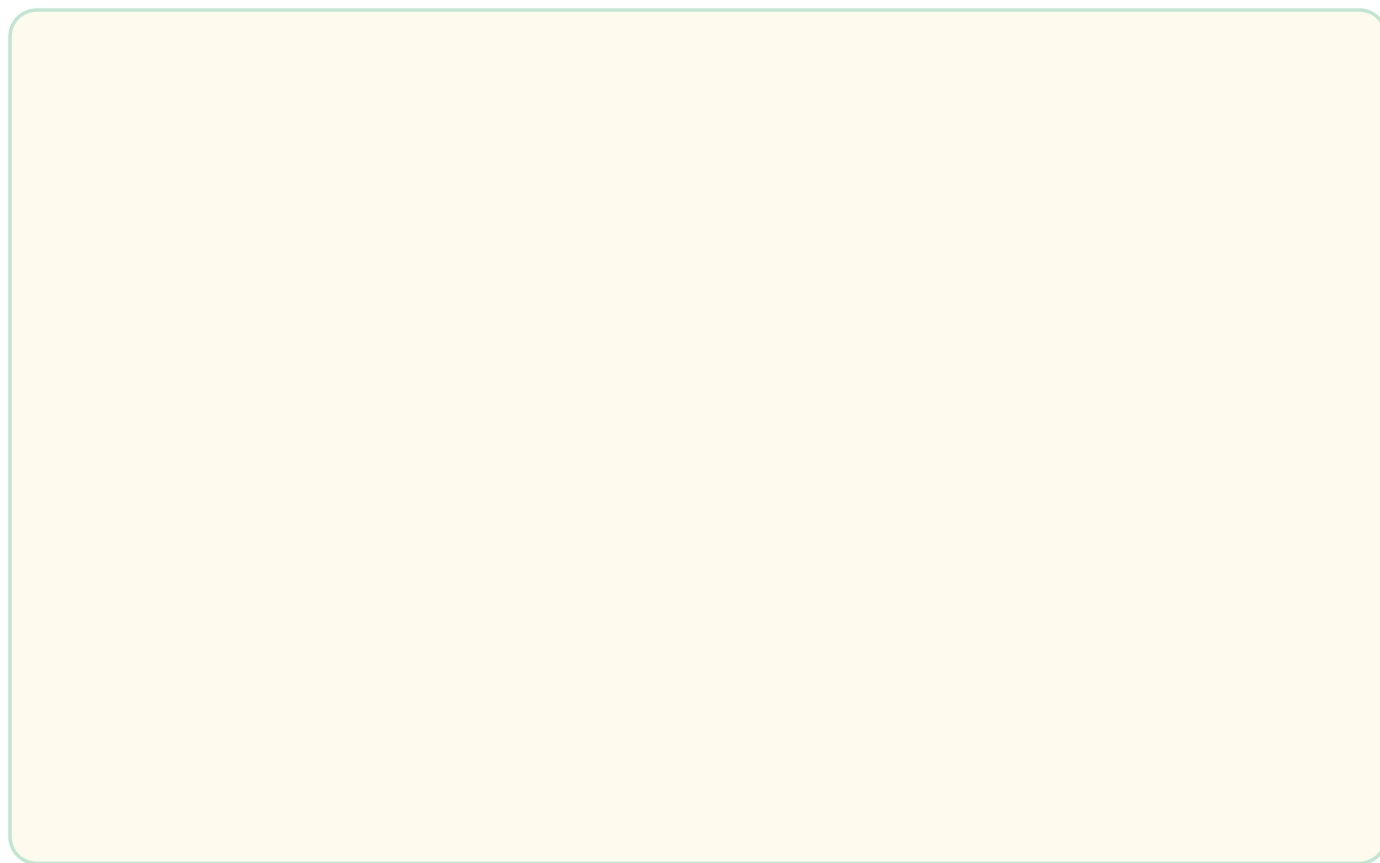
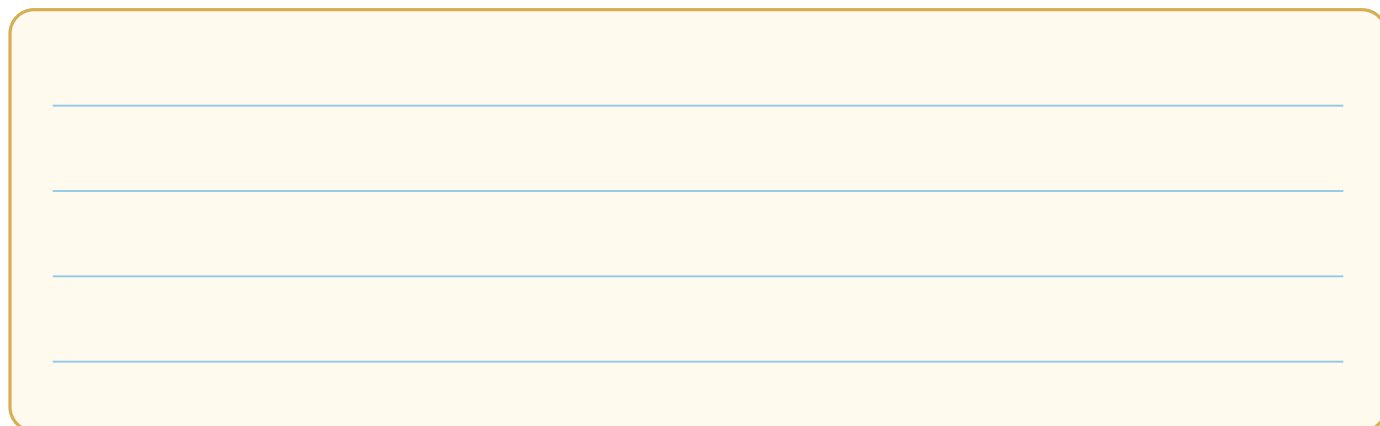
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# Make Your Own Puzzle

Create a puzzle for someone else to solve.

**Puzzle ideas:**

word scramble • coded message • maze • riddle • pattern • number challenge

**Create or draw your puzzle here:****Answer Key**

# Ordinary to Extraordinary

Choose something ordinary and give it one impossible, amazing upgrade.

## 1 Ordinary object:

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## 2 New extraordinary feature:

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---

## 3 What happens when someone uses it?

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# Letter to Future Me

Write a note to the future you. What would you like yourself to remember?

**1** Right now I am...

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---

---

---

**2** Something I am getting better at...

---

---

---

---

**3** Something I hope I remember...

---

---

---

---

# Question of the Day

Choose one question. Answer with reasons and details—not just one word.

**1 What would make the world's best classroom?**

---

---

---

---

**2 What is something kids understand better than adults?**

---

---

---

---

**3 Would you rather explore the ocean or space? Why?**

---

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# Free Choice Creation

Use this page for an idea that doesn't fit anywhere else.

**I am making...**

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---

---

**My plan:**

---

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---

Drawing space: Use the open area below for sketches, labels, diagrams, or your finished design.

# Pick-a-Card: Quiet Challenge Cards

Cut apart, laminate, and keep in a basket. Large-format cards • Set 1 of 2

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Write 5 words that rhyme.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Draw an animal using only shapes.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**List 8 things that are blue.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Write a riddle with an answer.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Invent a flavor of ice cream.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Make a 4-line silly poem.**

GOOD TIDINGS

# Pick-a-Card: Quiet Challenge Cards

Cut apart, laminate, and keep in a basket. Large-format cards • Set 2 of 2

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Draw a map to an imaginary place.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**List 10 tiny things.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Create a secret code and write one sentence.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Write 3 questions for a book character.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Design a bookmark.**

GOOD TIDINGS

 **QUIET CHALLENGE**

**Think of 5 uses for a paper clip.**

GOOD TIDINGS

# Basket & Bin Labels

Cut out, laminate, and display on baskets, bins, folders, drawers, or activity stations.

**READ IT**

GOOD TIDINGS

**WRITE IT**

GOOD TIDINGS

**CREATE IT**

GOOD TIDINGS

**THINK IT**

GOOD TIDINGS



# Please Don't Ask Me What to Do Next



## FINISHED?



CHECK IT • TURN IT IN • CHOOSE QUIETLY

1

### LOOK IT OVER

Did I complete every part and do my best work?

2

### NAME IT

Make sure my name is on it.

3

### TURN IT IN

Put it exactly where it belongs.

4

### CHOOSE

Pick one activity from the class menu.

5

### BEGIN QUIETLY

Start without interrupting anyone still working.

**Quiet choices. Curious minds. No waiting around.**

# Differentiating Without Making Three Packets

## FOR K-2

Let students draw first and add labels, words, or one sentence. Read prompts aloud when needed. Keep a smaller menu with picture cues. Use reusable pages and oral sharing later.

## FOR 3-5

Ask for explanations, evidence, multiple solutions, stronger vocabulary, captions, or a second version. An early-finisher notebook can keep paper from piling up.

## NEED MORE STRUCTURE?

Offer two teacher-selected choices instead of the full menu. Use a visual timer or a simple "first/then" direction.

## NEED MORE CHALLENGE?

Add constraints: exactly 50 words, three different solutions, include five vocabulary words, create an answer key, or make something another student can solve.

## RELUCTANT WRITERS

Allow diagrams, comics, labeled drawings, lists, speech bubbles, and short-form writing. The goal is productive independence, not filling every line.

# Keep It Manageable: Teacher Notes

**You do not have to grade these.** Early-finisher work can be for practice, creativity, enjoyment, or sharing. If every page becomes another item in your grading pile, the system stops helping you.

## TRY A FRIDAY SHARE

Invite a few students to share something they created during early-finisher time.

## CREATE A "WORTH KEEPING" POCKET

Students choose only their favorite creation from the week to save.

## USE UNFINISHED WORK FIRST

When appropriate, the choice board is not a way to avoid missing assignments.

## WATCH FOR RUSHING

If a student sacrifices quality to reach choice activities, temporarily make the first choice "check with teacher."

## LET QUIET READING STAY SIMPLE

Reading does not always need a response sheet.

# My Classroom Plan

Use this page to decide how your early-finisher routine will work.

**1 Where will materials live?**

---

---

**2 Which 4-6 choices will I introduce first?**

---

---

**3 What does "finished" mean in my classroom?**

---

---

**4 Where will completed optional work go?**

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---

**5 What materials can students use independently?**

---

---

**6 How often will I rotate choices?**

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# Terms of Use

## Good Tidings Classroom Resource

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### A little Good Tidings reminder:

The best early-finisher activity is not necessarily the fanciest one. It is the one a child can begin independently, enjoy quietly, and leave feeling like those extra minutes mattered.

## GOOD TIDINGS

where reading, wondering & creating feel like fun