**Three great no-prep 'filler' ideas**

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Three, no prep ideas for filling in those last few minutes usefully – or for starting off a class in an upbeat way.

One of the things that novice teachers struggle with is timing. Teachers often ask ‘How do you make your lessons finish exactly on time?’. The key, of course, is not in knowing exactly how long everything will take when you are planning – no one can know this – but in keeping an eye on the time as you go along and having a couple of activities up your sleeve to usefully fill up a few spare minutes at the end of class…and I DON’T mean playing Hangman!

If you have a mobile phone, you have a camera, and adult learners in many contexts will have easy access to pictures that they’ve taken, so these three activities utilise that:

1. What’s going on here?

Let’s start with the simplest thing. Ask your learners to choose a picture without any people in it, that they are happy to share and talk about with a partner. They have to say:

* Where the picture was taken
* Why they were there
* What they were doing

 If you are doing this in a classroom, it’s easy for them to show the picture to each other on their phone. If you are online, put them in breakout rooms in pairs and they can show each other their pictures in the room.  You might want to give them a time limit and you could specify that they partner had to ask a question after they listen.

2. Guess my picture.

This is a bit like 20 questions. Again, ask your learners to choose a picture that they are happy to share, but tell them NOT to show it yet.  This time, the partner has to try to guess what’s in the picture by asking yes/ no questions. You could do an example with them, or give them some starter ideas:

* Is it in your house? Is it inside another building?
* Is it in a town or city? Is it in the countryside?
* Are there people in the picture? One? More? Your friends? Your family?
* Was it a special occasion? Were you on holiday?

After the partner has asked a certain number of questions (you choose), they can say what they think is in the picture and then be shown the actual picture.

3. An important person.

This time, ask the learners to choose a picture of someone. Ask them also to think of how they can describe this person. It could be:

* Their relationship to this person
* The person’s job or occupation
* Three adjectives that describe that person

Show someone that’s important to you and give them a brief model, and then put them in pairs and give them a time limit again to tell their partner about the person in the picture.

With all of these activities, you could repeat them with another partner. This gives the speaker a chance to polish what they said and focus on getting their language more fluent and accurate, and it’s not boring for the listener because they have new pictures to look at. I hope that you have fun with these activities and that your learners enjoy them.