

Fun, Low-Prep 5-Minute Starters for All Language Classrooms

5-MINUTE VOCABULARY STARTERS



activity takes far too long!

Trouvez l'intrus...

Il fait beau	Il pleut	Il fait du soleil	Il fait chaud
Il neige	Il pleuvait	Il a fait froid	Il faisait du vent
Le troisième jour de mes vacances	Un jour	hier	Tous les jours
Il fait de l'orage.	Il a fait du brouillard.	Il faisait du soleil.	Il y avait des averses.
dix jours.	Le 15 octobre.	Une semaine	Deux mois.

they must compete against their peers to think of a word, related to a given topic, which will give them the most points. The winner will be the person who writes the topic-related word with most points overall. Share ideas after 2-3 minutes with the whole class.

4. **3 x 3 Words (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – Have a grid with 9 squares on the board or screen with 8 letters pre-assigned. Allow one student to choose the middle letter and add it in. For 3 minutes, students must work individually to



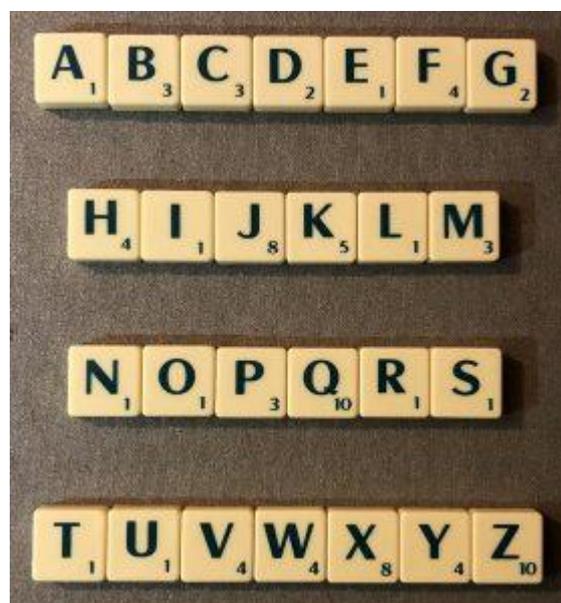
find target language words (on a given topic), ensuring the letter in the middle is used in every word. Set rules: i.e. no plurals, minimum 3 letters, only use each letter once, no proper nouns, etc. The students with a) the most words and b) the longest word win.

5. **Hangman (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – A very simple 5-minute starter for any language lesson! Start with one round of hangman by writing the clue, i.e. _____ on the board. This could be the title of the lesson, or a key word that they should

1. **'Name 3' (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – I came across this vocabulary activity online recently and I loved it as soon as I saw it. Provide students with a PowerPoint slide or an A5 worksheet with a number of 'Name 3 _____' type tasks. They could be something as simple as: 'name 3 yellow things' / 'name 3 things you do in the morning' / 'name 3 oceans' etc. I recommend a maximum of 9, as this includes time to think, write, pair and share as a group too. If you have too many, this 5-minute starter

2. **'Odd One Out' (Vocabulary or Grammar Starter Activity)** – Have a list of words / phrases in rows, each with at least one 'odd one out'. It is usually possible to have more than one odd one out, but providing the students can identify the problem and justify it, there is no 'right' answer!

3. **Scrabble Words (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – Have an image of scrabble pieces with the letters in the language that you teach (including point values for each). Advise students



know from the previous lesson. Pick students at random to choose a letter, in target language. The winner is the student who knows the word or phrase and can spell it out in target language.

6. **A-Z Vocab Challenge (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – Give students a topic and within 5 minutes, they must write down a word starting with each letter of your target language's alphabet. To speed things up, split your classes up and give one half of the class the first half of the alphabet and the other half of the group the second half of the alphabet. If you have time, share ideas. Alternatively, pick on any letters which haven't been completed by a few students and get these added into their lists.
7. **One, Two, Three....Spell! (Spelling Starter Activity)** – Have a list of words ready and start spelling each word out slowly, letter by letter. Students must write down what they hear. Repeat the word once or twice more, level dependent. Project the correct answers on the board and get students to peer correct. Go through translations of any tricky words.
8. **The Highlight of My Day (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – As students enter, give them each a different letter and advise they must remember it. Provide them with a title-less text and ask them to highlight every single word in the text containing that letter. Instruct that they must read and try to understand each word containing that given letter because they will have to do something with them after the allotted time. Once sufficient time has been given for highlighting, ask students to a) tell their neighbour as many words as they can remember which contained their letter b) tell their neighbour one sentence to say what they think the text was about, i.e. it was about school / media.
9. **Key Terms (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – Write down a key term on the board, students have the challenge of writing as many related words as they can within 2-4 minutes. Share ideas and add to list. Correct common spelling errors as a group.
10. **Categorising (Vocabulary / Sentence Starter Activity)** – Provide a list of 10-30 words (or sentences too!), depending on the topic or level. Get students to categorise them. The catch is, that they have to choose the headings. A very good 5-minute starter that gets all students involved with their heads down immediately!
11. **Acrostic (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – write a word / phrase in target language DOWN the board, i.e. SPORT and students must write related words which start with each letter of the word or phrase, i.e (Schwitzen / Probieren / Olympiade / Ringen / Treiben
12. **Alphabetise Words (Vocabulary Starter Activity)** – Provide students with words or sentences, related to the topic you are working on. Advise that they must alphabetise all the words (i.e. put the words in the mixed order on the sheet from A-Z in their books). Their homework could be to translate OR add the translations in during the proceeding lessons.
13. **Categorise Verbs / Nouns / Adjectives (5-Minute Language Vocabulary Starter)** – Give students a text and get them to pick out and categorise all of the verbs, nouns and adjectives in columns.

ERROR CORRECTION 5-MINUTE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM STARTERS

1. **'Spot The Errors' (Error Correction Starter Activity)** – Provide students with a text containing 5-10 errors. These could be the same type of error throughout, or a variety of different errors. This includes: grammatical errors, spelling errors, wrong vocab choice, punctuation mistakes etc. Why not use it to re-cap topic material covered the previous lesson?
2. **Is It Right? (Error Correction Starter Activity)** – Provide students with 6, 9, 12, 15 words or sentences, depending on the level, all of which contain one spelling error. Students must underline the error and correct it. Go through answers together and take in marks.

SENTENCE LEVEL 5-MINUTE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM STARTERS

English letters, numbers or Greek letters, so you won't be able to use accents for languages such as French, German or Spanish.

3. **Draw It! (Comprehension Starter Activity)** Give students a few sentences or a chunky paragraph (written or spoken) with vivid, descriptive vocabulary and get them to draw what they have read or what they hear.