

Selections: The science fair gadget by Ian Thomson

Activities author: Adrian Tennant
Level: Flyers
Recommended age: Grade 5, primary (10+)
Time needed: Indicated for each activity
Type of English: American

Activity 1 (5-10 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 1 and ask the children to look at the picture and the five questions.
2. Put the children in pairs and have them answer the questions together.
3. Pair the pairs, so they are working in groups of four, and ask them to compare their answers.
4. Check the answers as a class.

Suggested answers:

1. *in school / a classroom*
2. *They are sitting behind desks.*
3. *They are throwing a paper ball to each other.*
4. *They are passing a note to each other.*
5. *She has some kind of gadget.*

Activity 2 (5-10 minutes)

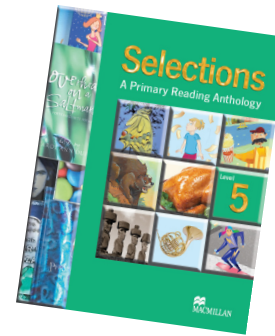
1. Put the children in pairs and ask them to work together matching the words in the pencil to the correct definitions.
2. Monitor and help where necessary.
3. Again, pair the pairs, so they are working in groups of four, and ask them to compare their answers.
4. Check the answers as a class.

Key:

1. *sponge*
2. *gadget*
3. *splutter*
4. *inventor*
5. *giggle*
6. *software*
7. *grab*
8. *squirt*

Activity 3 (10 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 3.
2. Ask the children to read the story and identify the different characters.



3. Put the children in pairs and ask them to check the answers together.
4. Ask them to read the story again, if necessary.
5. Check the answers as a class.

Key:

From left to right: Amy, Miss Jones, Diana, Ben

Activity 4 (15-20 minutes)

1. Ask the children to choose one of the characters from the four listed.
2. Explain that you want them to listen to the story and imagine they were the character they have picked; the children should think about how the characters would feel and react and what they would do.
3. Play the recording twice.
4. Find out who has picked the same character and ask them to sit together and discuss their thoughts/answers.
5. Monitor and help where necessary.
6. Play the recording again, if necessary.
7. Next, ask one child to come to the front and be their character.
8. Ask the other children to ask the person questions about their character, but addressing them as that person; i.e. if the child is Miss Jones one question might be: *How did you feel when you saw Amy with her gadget?*
9. If you have time, get one or two other children to come to the front and repeat the process.

Note: Getting the children to put themselves in the position of one of the characters and use their imagination helps them to develop a much deeper level of understanding.

Activity 5 (10-20 minutes)

1. Put the children in groups of three or four.

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2. Tell them you will play the recording again (or get them to read the story again) and they should think of some questions to test another group about what happened in the story.
3. Play the recording (or ask the children to read the text) and ask the groups to write four questions.
4. Monitor and help, if necessary.
5. Play the recording (or get them to read the text) again, if necessary.
6. Then put the groups together, so that two groups are working together.
7. Ask the groups to exchange questions and see if they can answer them.
8. If necessary, play the recording (or have the children read the text) and answer the other group's questions.
9. Finally, put the groups together and ask them to check each others answers.

Activity 6 (10-20 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 6.
2. Tell the children to try and think of an invention / gadget they would like.
3. Give them a few minutes to think about it and then ask them to design it.
4. Tell them they can draw a picture, name it and write about what the invention does.
5. Monitor and encourage the children. If you think they might work better together put them in pairs or groups.
6. Finally, display the finished drawings / descriptions around the classroom walls.

Note: This could also be set for homework if you'd prefer.

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The Science Fair Gadget

Written by Ian Thomson Illustrated by Jerrod Maruyama

Amy was in school. She had a science class. She loved science and she was very good at it. Famous inventors needed to be good at science, and Amy wanted to be a famous inventor.

Today, however, Amy was feeling impatient. Her usual teacher was out sick so the class was reviewing for a quiz. Every so often, Miss Jones, the strict teacher from Room 5, came in to check on them. Jessica and Diana were passing notes behind Amy and giggling. Dan and Ben were playing basketball with balls of crumpled paper.

Amy got out her latest invention. It was made out of a pocket calculator, some software she'd programmed herself, and a few other bits and pieces. On the front was a big square piece of sponge. Amy wasn't supposed to bring her inventions in to school. The principal had been unhappy when her last experiment, a grasscutting device, had started cutting down all the flowers in the schoolyard. It wasn't supposed to do that, of course, it was supposed to cut grass but something had gone wrong with the software.

This invention was a very smart little gadget. Amy was quite proud of it. She began to press buttons and twist wires around. The little gadget made a purring sound, a little like a happy cat.



Suddenly Amy realized that the class was very quiet. Dan and Ben weren't playing basketball with paper anymore and Jessica and Diana had stopped giggling. Miss Jones was standing in front of Amy, looking very annoyed.

'What is it you're doing that is so much more interesting than reviewing?' she asked in a strict voice.

'Umm, I'm sorry Miss Jones. I was trying to improve my invention. It's for the science fair.' She added the last part hoping that it would help. This was a science class after all.

'I see,' said Miss Jones. Her small brown eyes flashed behind her glasses. 'What does it do?'

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'It cleans the board,' said Amy. 'It was going to be a gift for Mrs Mills. She can never get the board clean enough.'

'I see,' said Miss Jones again. 'Why don't we have a little demonstration?' she said.

'You can clean this board for me.'

'Well, it's never been tested,' said Amy slowly.

'Oh, come on, Amy, don't be shy. I'm sure it will work perfectly,' Miss Jones insisted.

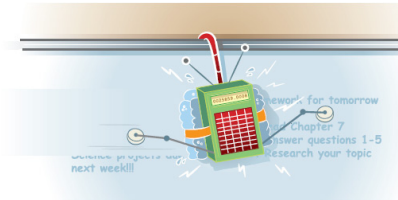
Some of Amy's friends were looking excited at this interruption. Some of them were looking nervous. They'd seen a few of Amy's inventions before.

'OK,' said Amy. She might as well test it here, she thought. And it was certainly more interesting than reviewing for the quiz.

She went to the board carrying her little gadget. She placed it at the top of the board in the left corner. It hung from a small hook. Amy entered the measurements of the board into the machine. She turned to look at the class and at Miss Jones. 'Are you sure about this?' she asked.

'Yes, quite sure,' Miss Jones said. Some of Amy's classmates were hiding under their desks.

Amy turned back to the board and pressed another button. Her little gadget started to purr as it wriggled its way along the top of the board. Behind it a neat line of clean board appeared as the sponge wiped it. A small bottle sprayed the board and a duster polished it. When it reached the end of the board the gadget moved down and started back in the other direction.



'It works!' said Dan in surprise.

'Oh, they all work to begin with,' Jessica said from under her desk.

Suddenly the purring noise of the little gadget became a rumble and it began to shake and jump on the board.

'What's happening to it?' Miss Jones asked anxiously.

Before Amy could grab it and turn it off, her gadget leaped off the board and began to clean its way around the classroom floor.

'Oh, no!' Amy cried as she tried to catch it. The little gadget was too quick for her. There were shrieks of laughter from her friends as they watched her crawling around on her hands and knees after the tiny machine.

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'Amy, stop that machine right now!' Miss Jones said.

'I'm trying to, Miss Jones,' cried Amy. 'I have to catch it. I don't know what it might do!'



At that moment the little gadget decided that Amy's classmates needed to be cleaned.

It jumped on to Ben's desk and began to wipe his favorite t-shirt. Soon the t-shirt was covered with marker from the board. Then it made its way over to Diana and began to polish her cheeks with its duster. Spluttering and laughing, Diana got up and ran to the other side of the classroom. Then, disaster! The gadget turned on Miss Jones.

It moved towards her very quickly and jumped on her, just like a cat springing into a tree. It wiped her glasses with its little sponge square, leaving them covered in marker. It gave her glasses a quick squirt of liquid from the little bottle. Then it just stopped.

Just then there was a sound of a door opening and the class turned to see the principal standing there.

'What's going on in here?' he said. He looked at Miss Jones, who was cleaning her glasses. He saw the gadget lying on the floor and he looked at Amy.

'Amy, is this one of your inventions?' he asked.

Before Amy could answer, Miss Jones suddenly spoke.

'I'm afraid this is my fault, Mr Bond. We were testing a class project and it got out of control. I think we need to do some more work on it before the science fair.'

Mr Bond looked suspicious but he couldn't do anything except tell the class to keep the noise down. He closed the door behind him as he left.

'Thank you, Miss Jones,' said Amy.

Miss Jones finished cleaning her glasses and put them back on. She looked at Amy and said, 'I couldn't let you take the blame when I was the one who asked you to test that little monster. But please, don't bring any more of your inventions to class until you know they work.'

'Yes, Miss Jones,' said Amy. She went back to her desk and put her little gadget in her bag. She picked up her pencil and started reviewing for the quiz. Quizzes might not be as interesting as her inventions but they certainly were safer!

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YOUNG LEARNERS WORKSHEET

Before listening / reading

Activity 1

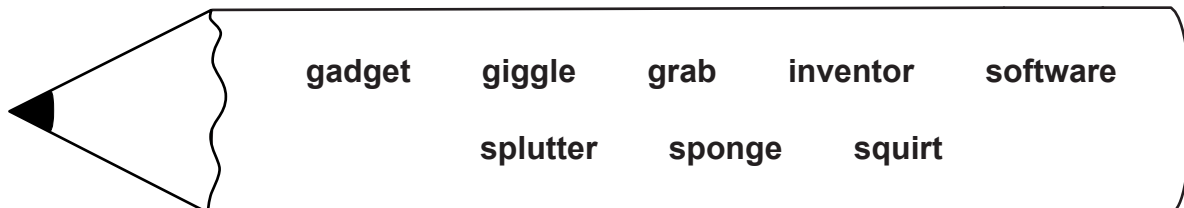
Look at the picture and answer these questions.



1. Where are the kids? _____
2. How do you know? _____
3. What are the boys doing? _____
4. What are the two girls on the left doing? _____
5. What does the girl at the front have? _____

Activity 2

Match the words in the pencil to the definitions (1-8).



1. a piece of soft substance that takes in water easily and is used for washing or wiping things _____
2. a small tool or piece of equipment that does something that is useful _____
3. to make a noise with your mouth because you can hardly breathe or swallow, maybe because you are laughing a lot _____
4. someone who comes up with ideas for new things _____
5. to laugh in a nervous, excited or silly way _____
6. the programs used by computers for doing particular jobs _____
7. to get hold of something quickly with your hand _____
8. an act of pressing something so that liquid comes out with a lot of force _____

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Listen or read

Activity 3

Look at the picture below, then read the story. Who is who?

Amy Ben Diana Miss Jones



Activity 4

Now, pick one of these characters:

Amy Ben Diana Miss Jones

Listen to (or read) the whole story twice. While you are listening (or reading), pretend that you are the character that you picked. Make notes about what is happening, what you are doing and how you are feeling.

Activity 5

Work in groups. Listen to (or read) the story again and write four questions to test another group on what happened.


1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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After you listen or read

Activity 6

Design your own invention and draw a picture of it in the box. Think of a name for your invention and write some information about what it does.



Name: _____

What it does: _____

