



# Straightforward

## Second edition

### Just a minute

by Jim Scrivener

This popular game helps students become more confident at speaking. The basic task is that students need to try and talk about a topic for a minute. The rules are that:

- Speakers must try and talk about a topic for a minute.
  - Speakers should not hesitate (i.e. have long pauses, ers or other hesitations).
  - Speakers must not repeat any words (except for those in the topic title they were given).
  - Speakers must not deviate too far from the topic.
1. Organize small groups (at least four people). Students appoint a speaker and a timer/judge - who will need to be able to time (e.g. using a digital watch).
  2. The judge sets the topic and asks the speaker to start. The speaker begins talking and the judge starts the 60 second countdown. The other players listen and try to spot one of the problems (hesitation, repetition or deviation). If they hear one, they call out 'challenge'. The speaker stops talking, the judge stops timing and the challenger says their challenge. If the judge agrees, then the challenger wins one point and takes over speaking about the topic - but only has to talk for the remaining time on the timer, e.g. 29 seconds. If the challenge is wrong, the original speaker gets one point, takes up the topic again and tries to finish their minute. Speaking and challenging continue until someone finishes the 60 seconds.
  3. The rules given here may be too demanding for many classes. Feel free to vary them as appropriate, e.g. repetition, allowing preparation time, shortening the time you have to speak, etc.

#### N.B

You can often listen to recordings of the actual radio show Just a minute on [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) - select radio and the station BBC7 then find the listen again menu.