



ELEMENTARY

What is a good go-to activity you use if a lesson doesn't fill the time or if you need to pivot?

- I love using folk dancing as a bonus activity to fill in extra time or give as a class reward. My go-to dances are usually short instrumental ones where they can focus on the movement and form, such as Seven Jumps, Chimes of Dunkirk, and Sasha. —*Traci Patterson, Juan Seguin Elementary*
- I do a version of freeze dance—I play the piano, and when I stop, they freeze. I have them suggest songs for me to play, and sometimes I'll play a certain way (e.g., fast/slow, loud/soft) and tell them to match their movements to my playing. I might also give them a specific movement to do instead of dancing. —*Nicole Pagliai, Canyon Creek Elementary*
- If I have extra time or need the kids to burn off some of their energy, out comes the stretchy band! I use it to work on form, steady beat, folk dance basics, and more, while the kids get their wiggles out! I can use most songs or genres, and most activities can be made up on the fly! —*Kelsey Helton, Silbernagel Elementary*
- I often pull an activity from the previous grade level, and I always over-plan for kindergarten, so I usually don't get to everything on the list for them. If we do finish, then I use a previous song or game that they already know. —*David Rowland, Schultz Elementary*
- If I am working on a melodic element, I have a similar song that addresses that element. If I am in a certain melodic sequence, preferably with a game, I may pivot to add a speech/instrument/body percussion then segue back to the melodic focus. If I am working on a game but need to pivot, I may modify or move to a similar body movement. While on an instrument focus, such as recorder, I have different note patterns, warmups, duet/trio work, and song material to address my objective and the individual/small group learning need. —*Stacy Redding, Lowery Road Elementary*
- I give each student an animal sticker and we play a call-and-response circle game:
All: *Walkin' through the jungle, what do we see?*
Solo: *I see a [sticker animal name] looking at me!*
—*Chelsea McDaniel, Pine Forest Elementary*
- If a younger class is ready to go but the teacher hasn't arrived, I end with a fun guessing game based on the folk song "Mary Wore Her Red Dress." In our version, the lyrics are "Who wore their [color] [clothing item] all day long?" Students try to guess who I'm singing about, and once they figure it out, we sing a verse about that student, and then they choose the next color and clothing combo for the class to guess. It's simple and keeps everyone engaged in a musical way! —*Anonymous*
- My go-to activity is "Poison," either with pitch or rhythm. I pick a "poison" pattern and have the class repeat it. It could be *ta-ta-titi-ta* for first grade. I tell them they must repeat the pattern I clap (or sing) *unless* it's the poison pattern. Students are standing and must sit down if they respond after the poison pattern. They love it, get super competitive, and are training their ears. —*Mia Morey, Beasley Elementary*
- I use easy rhythmic and melodic dictation concepts that aid the students' ear training. I call out words with multiple syllables and have students clap the syllables, relating those syllables to rhythms. Then we take those same words, put them into complete sentences, and use them in a melody that I write on the board. —*Anthony McBeth, Varnett Public School-Southwest*
- Each student gets a rhythm card, and they practice their rhythm. Standing in a circle, with the rhythm cards on the floor in front of them, I turn on music of any genre—classical, hip hop, movie soundtracks, pop—anything with a strong beat and a moderate tempo. I count us off, we clap our rhythm once or twice, and then everyone steps to the left. I allow a little practice time for their new rhythm, and we repeat. As we rotate, the practice time shrinks and the sightreading challenge increases. —*Emily Greer, Jackson Elementary*
- I have used pass-the-ball-around-the-room as a quick activity because it keeps kids focused and I can tie it back to working on the steady beat and collaboration. —*Kassidy Montán, Frisco ISD*
- I let the students select a book from the baskets (age-appropriate) to sing or develop a musical concept from. —*Gradi G. Evans, Geneva School of Boerne*
- If young learners need to wiggle, we stop and do an activity with free movement around the room, engaging their brains and bodies. If they need to wind down before going back for a reading lesson, I sing for them while playing my dulcimer, either a lullaby or a call-and-response song. —*Julie Boettiger, Fort Bend ISD*
- I save song games for the end of the lesson. I usually give the students a choice between two—a newer game or a tried-and-true favorite. A few that my students love are "Doggie, Doggie," "The Grizzly Bear Song," and "We Are Dancing in The Forest." —*Anonymous*

