

Time Preference

Students explore the concept of time preference through a familiar story, *The Three Little Pigs*. By listening to the story, discussing character choices, and comparing building materials, learners reflect on short-term convenience versus long-term strength. The activity helps children understand that effort and patience can lead to better outcomes later.

ACTIVITY TYPE Story time · Discussion · Sorting / classification	DURATION 20 min	PARTICIPATION Whole class
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OBJECTIVES

By the end of this activity, learners will:

- Recognize that choices made quickly can have consequences later
- Understand that effort and patience can lead to stronger outcomes
- Begin to grasp the idea of time preference in simple terms
- Practice comparing options and explaining their reasoning

MATERIALS

- Storybook or printed visual version of *The Three Little Pigs*
- Visual aids showing houses made of straw, sticks, and bricks (See Appendix A)
- Crayons or markers
- Puppets or character cut-outs (*nice to have*)
- Whiteboard or poster board for group discussion notes
- Markers
- Projector or screen for displaying images (*nice to have*)

PROCEDURE

OPENING

1. Prepare the storybook and visual aids so they are easy to show while reading.
2. Set up the board or poster space for writing student ideas.
3. Place handouts and crayons where they can be distributed quickly.

PRE-ACTIVITY

3 minutes

1. Ask: “Who knows the story of *The Three Little Pigs*?”
2. Ask: “What do you remember about the houses they built?”
3. Explain that the class will listen to a story and think about the choices each pig made.

Objective In Student’s Words

- “Listen to the story and decide which choices were smart and why.”

ACTIVITY

15 minutes

Setup

1. Explain that students will listen to a story, look at pictures, and talk about what was smart or not-so-smart.
2. Remind students to listen respectfully and take turns speaking.

Model

1. Before reading, give a simple example: “Sometimes the easy way feels good now, but the strong way helps later.”
2. Explain that the story will help them see the difference.

Carry Out

1. Read the Story
 1. Read *The Three Little Pigs* aloud using expressive voices.
 2. Show visuals for each house as it appears.
 3. Pause occasionally to ask: “What do you think will happen next?”
 4. Emphasize how quickly each house is built and how it stands up to the wolf.
2. Group Discussion
 1. Ask: “Which house was the strongest?”
 2. Ask: “Which house was built the fastest?”
 3. Ask: “Which pig spent the most time building?”
 4. Ask: “What happened when the wolf came?”
 5. Introduce choices and consequences by asking: “Was it a good idea to take the easy way?” and “Why did the brick house last?”
 6. Introduce the term **time preference** in simple language: “Time preference means choosing something easy now or something better later.”
3. Comparison Activity
 1. Give each student a comparison handout or display the chart on the board (*See Appendix A*).
 2. Review each material together: straw, sticks, bricks.
 3. Ask students to check the boxes they think fit each material.
 4. Ask: “Which house would you build?” and “Why?”

Reflection

- Ask students to explain which material lasts the longest.
- Ask students to explain which material is quickest to build.
- Listen for reasoning that connects effort to outcome.
- Ask: “Can you think of a time when waiting helped you?”

FOLLOW-UP

3-5 minutes

- Review the main idea: short-term choices can cause long-term problems.
- Apply time preference to everyday decisions such as saving treats or finishing work before playing.
- Reinforce that patience and effort can lead to better results.

CLOSE

2 minutes

1. Collect handouts and markers.
2. Clear the discussion space.
3. Thank students for participating.
4. Final message: “Working harder now can make life safer and easier later.”

NOTES

If teachers prefer, other stories can be selected for reading. The focus of this activity is to discuss the importance of how time preference can affect outcomes.

Classroom management

- Keep storytelling interactive with predictions and gestures
- Use pauses to manage attention and engagement
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Extensions & Sponge Activities

- Use pauses to manage attention and engagement
- Discuss materials used today such as plastic, wood, leather, or stone

Differentiation

- Younger students: pointing, visuals, yes/no questions
- ELL/Accessibility: repetition, images, simplified language
- Safety: seated activity, minimal movement

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [The Three Little Pigs \(traditional folktale\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Little_Pigs)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Little_Pigs
- **B** • [House comparison chart](https://cdn.sanity.io/files/vje9ehw2/staging/06c44501b9b5f96de3b55f92fa888f672d8dfc9b.pdf)
<https://cdn.sanity.io/files/vje9ehw2/staging/06c44501b9b5f96de3b55f92fa888f672d8dfc9b.pdf>