**What to print**

- **Once, for yourself:** run.pdf, 1 page. Hold it while you run the session.
- **One copy per girl:** sheets.pdf, 2 pages. Sheet A and Sheet B. That is 2 pages per girl.
- **You do not need:** pages 6 to 9 of this guide, the key. The session runs without it.

# Guide, My Turn, Your Turn

Group 4 to 24 · Materials: paper, pencil, one found object per circle to pass, too big to swallow, such as a palm-sized stone or a crumpled paper ball · SDG 4, 5 · EN edition · Released · Nameet Potnis, author and English editor

## Before you enter the room

- **Waiting is a skill, not good behaviour. Never praise a girl for waiting well. Nobody is out and nobody wins.**
- A girl who grabs gets a shorter wait, never a longer one, and never loses her turn.
- Pass a crumpled paper ball or a paper strip. Nothing hard across a circle, nothing that fits inside a ring made by your thumb and first finger.
- Up to 24 girls, in circles of four.

Read this once at home. In the room you only need the run sheet. Where this says "you", it means whoever is running the session: a teacher, a volunteer, an older sister.

## Who it is for

- **For ages 4 to 7.** Girls who can hold a small object and count to five with the room helping. No reading and no writing are needed anywhere in this session.
- **Life skills.** Not the same as I Can Ask, which uses the same passing game: there the skill is asking, here it is waiting. If you ran I Can Ask last week, say so and start from the wait.
- **Group size.** 4 to 24 girls. Above twenty-four the circles get long, the waits get long with them, and the session stops being about turns and starts being about queueing.
- **Different levels in one room.** A four-year-old and a seven-year-old sit in the same circle, pass the same thing and do the same two sheets. The stretch is inside the activity, in three places. A girl who is ahead sits further round the circle, so her wait is longer. She takes the turn-caller job in step 5, which means she runs the turns and holds the thing last. And she counts her own fingers down without you counting with her. A four-year-old sits next to the holder, so her wait is one turn long,

and you count her fingers down aloud beside her. Nobody gets a different sheet and nobody gets a different rule.

## What you need

- One learner sheet A and one learner sheet B per girl, so two pages per girl
- One pencil per girl, or one shared between two
- One thing for each circle of four to pass, too big to fit inside a ring of your thumb and first finger: a stone that fills a palm, a folded paper strip, a crumpled paper ball, a leaf, a large bottle cap. It has to be worth holding and worth nothing
- **Free and optional:** nothing
- **Nothing here costs money.**

## Why the session is shaped this way

**Waiting is a skill, and it is the hard half of this pack.** A girl of four who cannot wait is not naughty and she is not being difficult. Her wait feels endless because she cannot see where it ends. Everything in this session exists to give her a wait she can watch shrink. Say that to yourself before you start, because if you hear grabbing as bad behaviour you will start correcting the girl instead of shortening the wait.

**Never praise a girl for waiting well, and never call it being good.** The moment waiting becomes goodness, the girl who finds it hardest becomes the bad one, in front of everybody, and she learns that about herself long before she learns to wait. Praise the thing she did, not the virtue: "you dropped your fingers", "you handed it on at five". If you need a sentence for the room, use "waiting is hard, and we are practising", and use it again every time it comes up.

**The wait is made of counting, out loud, by everybody.** Five counts said by a whole room is a wait with a floor and a ceiling. The holder hears her turn ending, which stops her clinging, and the waiting girls hear the same five numbers and know exactly how long one turn lasts. It also gives a waiting girl something to do with her voice, which is far easier than sitting still with nothing.

**The waiting hand makes an invisible wait visible.** One finger for every turn before hers, one finger down each time the thing moves. She can see her wait getting smaller, on her own hand, with no clock and no chart and nothing to print. Three fingers is a wait she can hold. "Soon" is not.

**Something real has to move.** A turn that exists only in your explaining is not a turn. The stone crosses the circle, and it crosses because the count reached five, not because you decided who deserved it. Keep your hands off it once the circle is running.

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**Nobody is out and nobody wins.** No girl is sent out of the circle, no girl is named the best waiter, and there is no prize at the end. Turn-taking games that send slow players out are exactly the wrong game for the girl this pack is for. If a girl loses her count, the thing still reaches her.

**Nothing on her sheet has to be written.** Most of this group cannot write, and some cannot yet write their own name, so you write the names as you hand the sheets out, before anybody has to ask. Her marks in the waiting box are her record, and your handwriting on her card is her words.

## Including everyone

**A girl who cannot yet read.** She reads nothing in this session. Every rule is spoken, shown with the thing in your hand, and repeated by the room. The few words on the sheets you read aloud once, pointing at each box as you say it, and she marks and draws. On Sheet B she tells you what to write on her card and you write it. She ends holding the same two sheets as everybody else.

**A girl who joins late.** Sit her in the circle next to whoever is holding the thing, so her first wait is one turn long and her turn comes almost at once. Give her one sentence at the door: "When it comes to you, tap it twice while we count, then pass it on." She picks the rest up by watching two turns go past. Never ask her in front of the group where she was, and do not make her wait a full round to earn her first turn.

**Boys in the room.** Boys sit in the same circles, pass the same thing and do the same sheets. Two things keep the session centred on the girls, and neither excludes anybody. The turn-caller job in step 5 goes to girls first, and to more girls than boys across the session, because running the turns is the part that carries authority. And watch for the boy who reaches across to move the thing along for a girl, which is kindly meant and takes her turn away: put your hand up gently and say, "Thank you. It is her turn to pass it."

**A girl who cannot sit still today.** Give her the turn-caller job, or let her stand up to take her turn, or let her walk the thing across the circle to the next girl. Moving is not the opposite of waiting. Record nothing about it.

## If it goes wrong

**One girl grabs, every single round, and the circle starts complaining about her.** This will happen, usually to the same girl. Do not correct her in front of the others and do not let the circle correct her either: say once, to the whole circle, "waiting is hard, we are all practising." Then shorten her wait instead of lengthening it. Move her seat next to the holder so she waits one turn, not three. Give her the turn-caller job, because a girl with a job is not waiting empty-handed. Count her fingers down beside her, aloud, so she can hear the end coming. If she still cannot hold the wait, give her her own thing to hold while she waits, and pass it back and forth with her alone. Never name her as the one who cannot wait, and never take her turn away as a consequence.

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**A holder will not let go, and the circle is stuck.** Somebody reaches five and keeps holding. Do not pull it out of her hand and do not restart the count as a punishment. Put your open hand flat beside hers, say "five, and now your turn is finished", and wait three seconds. If she still holds on, ask the circle to count to five once more, out loud, and take it on that five. Then make sure she is the first to get it back on the next round, so letting go did not cost her anything. If one girl cannot give up one object at all, give her her own and let the circle pass a second.

## Adapting it

- Use the words the girls really use for "my turn" and "your turn", in the language they speak at home. Two short words beat a correct sentence.
- Swap the thing to pass for whatever is already in your room, as long as everybody would want a hold of it and nobody would mind losing it.
- Count in whatever language the room counts in, and count to three instead of five with the youngest girls. Then move to five when the circles are running.
- The turn does not have to be tapping. Say your name, clap twice, hop once, name an animal. Pick one job and keep it the same all session, because changing the job mid-round turns the wait into a new thing to learn.
- If the room is too full for circles, make one line instead of a circle and let the girls see how many are in front of them. A line a girl can count is as good as a hand she can count.

## Running it shorter or longer

**30 minutes.** 0 to 10 one thing, one turn, and the room counts to five, 10 to 18 circles of four and fingers down, 18 to 24 the longer wait and the turn-caller, 24 to 30 sheets and close. This is the real version of this pack for a new group. What it gives up: only two or three girls get the turn-caller job, the circle of eight in step 5 may not happen at all, and the cards on Sheet B get drawn but probably not cut out, so put them aside and cut them at the end of the day. Sheets come last in this clock and may be unfinished: marks and a drawing are a finished sheet.

**45 minutes.** 0 to 14 one thing, one turn, and the room counts to five, 14 to 25 circles of four and fingers down, 25 to 35 the longer wait and the turn-caller, 35 to 45 sheets and close. The extra time buys a second round in the circle of eight and a turn-caller job for most of the girls rather than a few.

**60 minutes.** 0 to 18 one thing, one turn, and the room counts to five, 18 to 32 circles of four and fingers down, 32 to 46 the longer wait and the turn-caller, 46 to 60 sheets and close. Use this length only with a settled group that already sits for half an hour. The extra time adds turns, a turn-caller job for every girl who wants one, time to cut the card out, and a slow closing round where the thing goes right round one

big circle. It adds no new rule and no new sheet, because a longer session at this age means more practice, not more content.

## Keeping it safe

**One thing gets passed hand to hand all session, and it will get thrown at least once.** Nothing goes in the mouth. Before you hand anything out, check it cannot fit inside a child's mouth: if it fits inside a ring made by your thumb and first finger it is too small for this room. Seeds, beads, coins and small bottle caps are out. Count what you handed out back in at the end. A crumpled paper ball or a folded paper strip is safer than a stone and works just as well. Nothing hard is thrown across a circle.

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**Key and facilitation cues**

# Answers and what to say, My Turn, Your Turn

## Answers

There is no single correct answer in this pack, and nothing in it is marked. A turn counts however small it is, and a wait counts however it was got through.

What counts as taking a turn:

| What she does | Counts as a turn |
|---|---|
| Taps the thing twice while the circle counts to five | Yes |
| Holds it, does nothing, hands it on at five | Yes |
| Taps once, or ten times, then hands it on | Yes |
| Takes her turn standing up, or walks it to the next girl | Yes |
| Takes her turn at the same time as the girl beside her | Yes, and give her a turn alone later in the session |
| Will not take it at all today | Yes to passing it straight on. Offer it again next round, and do not ask her why |

What counts as waiting:

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| What she does | Counts as waiting |
|---|---|
| Drops a finger each time the thing moves | Yes |
| Counts aloud with the room, loudly, the whole time | Yes |
| Holds her waiting card, or holds something of her own | Yes |
| Wriggles, stands up, walks round the circle and comes back | Yes. Moving is not the opposite of waiting |
| Reaches for it early, then pulls her hand back | Yes, and say so: "you put your hand back" |

Words to use and words to drop. Say "you handed it on at five", never "good girl". Say "waiting is hard, we are all practising", never "wait nicely" or "be patient". Say "it is her turn to pass it", never "you are being greedy". Never hold one girl up as the best waiter in the circle: the girls who most need this pack are the ones who would hear that as a ranking of themselves.

**Things you supply for a turn, all small, all inside this room.** Tap the stone twice. Say your own name. Clap twice. Hop once. Name an animal. Hold it up high, then put it down. Pick one and keep it the same all session.

## What you might see

| What is on the page | What to offer next |
|---|---|
| The turn box drawn, the waiting box empty | Count her waits back with her aloud, one mark per wait, using her fingers. Then put her next to the holder for the next round so her wait is one turn long |
| Both boxes marked, nobody drawn on Sheet B | Ask her who she gave it to and point at that girl. Let her draw a head and two lines. A shape is a person on this sheet |
| Both boxes marked, a person drawn, the card made | Give her the longer wait: a seat further round the circle, then the turn-caller job. Let her count her own fingers down without you |
| Marks all over the waiting box, far more than her waits | Leave them. She is counting something. Say the number with her and move on |
| Nothing on either sheet | Sit beside her and be her circle for three turns, you and her, passing it back and forth. One turn taken is a finished session |

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## Sticky points

| What happens | What to say or do |
|---|---|
| She takes it before her fingers are down | Put it back in your hand. Count her fingers down with her, aloud. Let the circle pass it to her when they are gone |
| She reaches five and will not let go | Open hand flat beside hers. "Five, and now your turn is finished." Wait three seconds, then count five once more with the circle and take it. Give it to her first next round |
| The circle starts complaining about the same girl | To the whole circle, not to her: "Waiting is hard, we are all practising." Then shorten her wait, do not lengthen it |
| She loses count of her fingers | Start her again at the number of girls between her and the thing. The thing still reaches her. Losing count costs nothing |
| She cries because the wait is too long | Move her next to the holder, count aloud with her, and let her turn come next. Do not explain to the group and do not ask her to say what is wrong in front of them |
| Two girls hold on to one thing | Take it into your own hand. "It moves when the count reaches five." Then give each of them her own thing to pass |
| She asks how many turns are left, over and over | Answer every time, with the number. She is using the only measure she has. Then give her the turn-caller job |
| She wants to be the turn-caller every round | Two rounds each, and say the rule out loud so it is the rule and not your choice. Offer her the longer seat instead, which is the harder job |
| She cannot write her name | You write it as you hand the sheet out, before she has to ask |
| She does not want to keep her card | Keep it somewhere she can ask for it. Do not ask why |

## After the session

Keep the waiting hand. It works in a queue, at a tap, at a door, and it costs nothing, so use it the same way for the rest of the week: hold up the number of turns, count them down aloud, let her see it shrink.

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The next life skills session can open with "how long was your longest wait?" Nothing in this pack is graded, counted or reported, and no girl's waiting is written down anywhere.

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