**Just a Minute**
*(Adapted for the classroom from the BBC. Radio 4 panel game of the same name.)*

*Outcomes:* Just a Minute promotes vocabulary and encourages listening and speaking skills.

*Requirements:* A stopwatch and at least one strategically placed lookout to spot the fastest hands in the class.

*How to play:* A volunteer attempts to talk on a given subject for 60 seconds without repeating strong words, over-using fragile words (see *When Writing a Paragraph*), getting tongue-tied, or simply drying. Every second the pupil keeps the subject gains one point.

If the pupil fails, a challenger raises his/her hand, the time is stopped and the reason for the interruption given.

The successful challenger then takes the points/seconds and continues with the subject for the remaining time, or until challenged.

As referee, the class teacher’s word is final.

If, for some reason, a successful challenger doesn’t wish to talk, another can be nominated. The teacher’s discretion determines how often this is permitted.

The pupil talking at the end of sixty seconds wins the game with sixty points. (Note. An unbroken 48 seconds is the longest I’ve seen any pupil manage. It is also extremely common for the game to be won by a pupil uttering just one word on the final second. Inevitably, this causes delight and dismay throughout the class.)

In the event of an incorrect challenge, the ‘talker’ keeps the subject and gains an extra point. Unlike normal points, these are noted and kept for the duration of the match. After several games, there will be a number of winners. The overall champion is the player who received the greatest number of incorrect challenges.

A player incorrectly challenged, or who has regained the subject, must continue without repeating any strong words used before the interruption.

Whenever a pupil begins talking; continues after an incorrect challenge, or takes the subject back, he/she is permitted to repeat the title. However, strong words contained within the title must not be repeated thereafter.
It must be remembered that if the rules of *Just a Minute* are applied to creative writing this has weaknesses. For example, in *Just a Minute*, to avoid repeating the word *bucket*, it would be both clever and acceptable to describe it as *a container for holding liquid*. However, this would not be good practice in creative writing.

Get the children to think up titles for themselves (discourage lists and special-interest subjects, such as football or food).

To help get you going, here are a few suggestions: *My superpower would be… If I ruled the world…. My favourite holiday…My favourite present… Things that make me sick…*

A final point: To keep the game vibrant, encourage invention. Someone’s favourite holiday might have been when he or she visited the Jurassic era. Or, perhaps a favourite present was a penguin. This has the added advantage of keeping things egalitarian.