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# Ari's Very Long Wait

Ages 6-9  
A story and 9 activities



## Ari's Very Long Wait

The waiting room smells like hand soap and old magazines.

Ari sits on a green plastic chair with his feet swinging. He's been there for what feels like three hundred years. Really it has been eleven minutes, but eleven minutes at the dentist is longer than a month at home.

"How much longer?" he asks.

"Soon," says Totty, without looking up from his book.

"How soon?"

"Soon-ish."

Ari groans and slumps in his chair. He counts the ceiling tiles. There are forty-eight. He counts the chairs. Nine. He counts the fish in the fish tank. Four, and one that looks like a rock.

He tries to read a magazine, but it is about gardening, and it has no pictures of anything exciting.

His legs are jiggly. His fingers drum on the armrest. He can feel a big wave of crankiness building up in his chest.

"Totty, I can't wait anymore."

Totty finally closes his book. "You know, waiting is a skill. It's like a muscle. The more you practice, the stronger it gets."

"I don't like this muscle."

"Tell you what. Let's play a game. It's called Spy the Colors."

"How do you play?"

"We pick a color, and we look around the room. We see how many things we can find in that color. Whoever has the most wins."

Ari sits up. "Okay. Blue."

They look. "A blue chair," says Ari. "Blue poster on the wall. Blue marker in the bin."

"Blue sweater on the lady with the baby," whispers Totty. "And a blue fish."

"Where?"

"In the tank. The little one by the plant."

Ari presses his nose to the tank. A tiny blue fish is darting around the green weeds. It looks like a piece of sky.

"That's amazing," says Ari.

They play for a few minutes. Then they switch to red, then yellow. Ari finds a yellow rubber duck on a shelf. Totty finds a yellow pencil behind a magazine. Ari wins by one.

"Another game," says Totty. "Count slow breaths. Breathe in while you count to four, and out while you count to four. Ten times."

Ari closes his eyes. He breathes in for four. He breathes out for four. By the sixth breath, his legs aren't jiggling. By the tenth, the crankiness has melted.

"Better?" says Totty.

"Better," says Ari. He opens his eyes.

"Ari Abramowitz?" calls the dental assistant.

Ari looks at the clock. They have been waiting twenty-two minutes. It has felt like five.

"Let's go," says Totty.

Ari hops up. At the door, he turns around and waves to the blue fish.

In the chair, the dentist checks his teeth. She says, "No cavities. Great job brushing."

"Thanks," says Ari. "I practiced a lot."

On the way home, he says, "Waiting is so much better when you do something."

"That's the secret," says Totty. "You can't make time go faster, but you can make it more fun."

The next week, at the bank, when Mommy has to wait in line, Ari says, "Want to play Spy the Colors?"

"What's the color?" she asks.

"Green. Go."



## Activity 1 of 9

### Remember the story

1. Where is Ari waiting?

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2. What game does Totty teach him?

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3. What does Ari find that is yellow?

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4. What does Ari say about waiting at the end?

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## Activity 2 of 9

### Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. There are forty-eight ceiling tiles. Fact / Guess
2. The dentist finds cavities. Fact / Guess
3. Ari counts ten slow breaths. Fact / Guess
4. Ari teaches the game to Mommy. Fact / Guess



## Activity 3 of 9

### Think and write

1. What do you do when you have to wait?

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2. Why does the game make time pass faster?

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3. What game could you play while you wait?

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## Activity 4 of 9

### Word search (find all 6)

Words: WAITING, DENTIST, FISH, COLORS, BREATHE, PATIENT

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | O | V | L | F | L | L | G | W | I | Y |
| W | V | C | U | C | O | L | O | R | S | V |
| F | S | H | D | E | N | T | I | S | T | F |
| O | M | I | V | Y | S | H | W | K | B | H |
| W | B | K | M | I | C | G | T | Y | K | G |
| A | V | P | P | A | T | I | E | N | T | M |
| I | F | I | S | H | V | O | E | I | E | H |
| T | S | S | I | T | N | T | M | L | H | E |
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| N | B | D | E | V | F | W | N | U | C | M |
| G | M | U | O | R | I | S | A | W | D | W |



## Activity 5 of 9

### Scrambled words (from the story)

1. TGAIINW = \_\_\_\_\_

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2. DTENTIS = \_\_\_\_\_

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3. RSOCLO = \_\_\_\_\_

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4. HIFS = \_\_\_\_\_

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5. NGICELI = \_\_\_\_\_

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## Activity 6 of 9

### Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'm waiting, and I'll play a game."

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"Let's spy the colors."

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"I can wait a little longer."

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Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Waiting Chart

| #      | Where I waited | What I did | How it felt |
|--------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Time 1 |                |            |             |
| Time 2 |                |            |             |
| Time 3 |                |            |             |



## Activity 8 of 9

### Draw it

Draw the little blue fish in the tank in the waiting room.





## Activity 9 of 9

### Answers

Remember the story:

1. At the dentist's waiting room
2. Spy the Colors
3. A rubber duck
4. It's better when you do something

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: WAITING, DENTIST, COLORS, FISH, CEILING

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.