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# Tali and the Messy Room

Ages 6-9  
A story and 9 activities

## Tali and the Messy Room

Tali's room looks like a tornado visited and decided to stay.

There are clothes on the floor, books on the bed, and a tower of crayons on the dresser. A half-built puzzle covers the carpet. A sock is hanging from the lampshade.

"Tali," says Mommy from the doorway. "Please clean your room before supper."

Tali sighs. She stares at the mess. It stretches everywhere, in every direction. She doesn't know where to start.

She picks up a book. She puts it down. She picks up a sweater, then drops it on the chair. She stands in the middle of the room, hands on her hips, and feels her chest get tight.

It's too much, she thinks. I'll never finish.

She flops onto the bed and pulls a pillow over her face.

After a few minutes, Mommy comes in again. She sits on the edge of the bed. "I see you got stuck."

"It's too big," says Tali, from under the pillow.

"What if we make it smaller?"

Tali peeks out. "How?"

"Let's set a timer for five minutes. You pick one thing to do. Just one."

"Like what?"

"Like picking up all the clothes."

Tali sits up. "Just clothes?"

"Just clothes. Then stop."

She sets the timer on the kitchen clock for five minutes. Mommy sits on the bed and cheers her on.

Tali gathers the clothes, one shirt at a time. The dirty ones go in the hamper. The clean ones go on the bed to fold. She races the timer. When it rings, she is done. The floor looks a lot better.

"Look at that!" says Mommy.

"That wasn't so bad," says Tali.

"Another five minutes? Books this time."

The timer starts. Tali puts the books on the shelf, spines out. She finds one she's lost under the bed and gives a little cheer.

When the timer rings, she has finished again.

"Now?" asks Mommy.

"Crayons," says Tali. She lines them up in the tin box by color, red, orange, yellow, green. It is almost fun.

The fourth five minutes are for the puzzle. Tali puts the pieces back in the box. The fifth is for the little things: the sock from the lampshade, the stuffed bear on the shelf, the cup on the windowsill.

When the last timer rings, Tali stands in the doorway and looks at her room. The floor is clear. The bed is made. The shelves are neat.

"Twenty-five minutes," says Mommy. "That's all it took."

"I thought it would take hours," says Tali.

"Big jobs feel big until you break them up."

Tali jumps onto the freshly made bed. It feels crisp and clean, and the room smells like the lemon spray they've used on the dresser.

At supper, she tells Totty. "I cleaned my room in five five-minute pieces."

"Impressive," says Totty. "What else could you do that way?"

Tali thinks. "My homework. I always put it off because it seems so long."

"Great idea."

That night, she sets the timer for five minutes and does the first page of her math. When it rings, she keeps going, because she's gotten into it.

She sticks a note on her mirror: Big jobs, little pieces. Five minutes, go.



## Activity 1 of 9

### Remember the story

1. What is hanging from the lampshade?

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2. How long is each timer round?

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3. How many minutes does the whole clean-up take?

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4. What does Tali try this method on next?

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## Activity 2 of 9

### Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. The crayons are lined up by color. Fact / Guess
2. Tali does it all in one big rush. Fact / Guess
3. Mommy cheers Tali on. Fact / Guess
4. Tali puts a note on her mirror. Fact / Guess



## Activity 3 of 9

### Think and write

1. What is a big job you've been putting off?

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2. How does the timer help Tali?

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3. What could you do in five minutes right now?

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## Activity 4 of 9

### Word search (find all 6)

Words: TIMER, CLEAN, ROOM, BOOKS, CRAYONS, SMALL

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



## Activity 5 of 9

### Scrambled words (from the story)

1. EIMRT = \_\_\_\_\_

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2. ANRCSYO = \_\_\_\_\_

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3. LZEUZP = \_\_\_\_\_

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4. SAAPLDMEH = \_\_\_\_\_

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5. MHERPA = \_\_\_\_\_

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## Activity 6 of 9

### Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'll do five minutes."

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"One thing at a time."

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"I did it!"

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Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Five Minute Chart

| #     | Job | Time used | Done? |
|-------|-----|-----------|-------|
| Job 1 |     |           |       |
| Job 2 |     |           |       |
| Job 3 |     |           |       |



## Activity 8 of 9

### Draw it

Draw Tali's tidy room with the made bed, neat shelves and the crayon tin.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to draw Tali's tidy room.



## Activity 9 of 9

### Answers

Remember the story:

1. A sock
2. Five minutes
3. Twenty-five
4. Her homework

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

Scrambled words: TIMER, CRAYONS, PUZZLE, LAMPSHADE, HAMPER

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