



Tamar Takes Her Time

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities



Tamar Takes Her Time

Tamar is always the first one done.

When Morah hands out worksheets, Tamar's pencil flies across the page. When it is time to clean up, she tosses the blocks into the bin in one big swoop. When the class lines up, she races to the front.

"Done!" she calls out.

But there is a problem. Her worksheets come back with red circles around her mistakes. She writes 7 when she means 17. She skips a whole line. Her blocks sit in a heap, and half of them fall out again.

One Tuesday, Morah Shoshana puts a hand on her shoulder. "Tamar, would you stay for a minute?"

Tamar's heart drops. She stays in her seat while the others leave for recess.

"You're a very smart girl," says Morah. "You finish before everyone. But I think you rush."

"I like being fast," says Tamar.

"Fast is good. But what if I gave you a challenge? What if you tried to do one page as slowly as a turtle?"

Tamar wrinkles her nose. "That sounds boring."

"Maybe. Try it once. Just one page."

On Wednesday, Tamar gets a math sheet. She reads the first problem carefully. Then she writes the answer slowly, making each number neat. She checks it. Then she moves to the next one.

At first, it feels strange. Her pencil wants to speed up. But she holds it back, like a horse on a leash. She counts in her head, one, two, three. By the fifth

problem, she notices something interesting. She is actually enjoying it. The numbers look like little soldiers, all lined up.

When she finishes, she takes out her eraser, but she doesn't need it. Every answer is right.

"Look," says Morah, holding up the page. "All correct. And so tidy."

Tamar feels a flutter of pride. It is different from the quick, rushing feeling. This is quieter, but it lasts longer.

The next day, she tries it with cleaning up. Instead of tossing the blocks, she stacks them in rows, big ones on the bottom, little ones on top. When she is done, the bin looks like a puzzle that fits together.

"Wow," says her friend Dina. "It's so neat."

"It took a little longer," says Tamar. "But look. Nothing falls out."

On Friday, she makes a card for Mommy with colored pencils. Normally she scribbles a quick drawing. This time, she draws a flower slowly, petal by petal, with a green stem and a tiny ladybug. She spends twenty minutes on it. When she holds it up, she can't believe it is hers.

Mommy gasps. "Tamar, this is beautiful."

"I took my time."

"I can tell. It shows."

That night, Tamar thinks about it. Being first is exciting. But doing it well makes her feel good for a long time afterward. She decides that from now on, she will choose, sometimes fast and sometimes slow, depending on what the job needs.

Next to her bed, she keeps the card's twin, a second flower she's drawn just for herself, also slow and also lovely.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. What is Tamar always the first to do?

2. What does Morah ask her to try?

3. What does she draw for Mommy?

4. How does she clean up the blocks?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Tamar's worksheet has all correct answers. Fact / Guess
2. Tamar never rushes again, ever. Fact / Guess
3. Morah calls her a smart girl. Fact / Guess
4. Dina says the bin looks neat. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. Why do Tamar's papers have mistakes?

2. How does going slowly feel?

3. When is it better to take your time?

Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: SLOW, CAREFUL, TURTLE, FLOWER, NEAT, BLOCKS

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



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. WSLO = _____

2. ULTTER = _____

3. LORWEF = _____

4. BLUDAYG = _____

5. LEPCNI = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'll take my time."

"I'll check it once."

"Done and done well."



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Take-Your-Time Chart

Day / moment	What I did slowly	How it looked	How I felt
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw a flower with a green stem and a tiny ladybug.





Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Finish
2. One page as slow as a turtle
3. A flower with a ladybug
4. Stacks in rows, big ones on the bottom

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

Scrambled words: SLOW, TURTLE, FLOWER, LADYBUG, PENCIL

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