

The Story That Gets to Finish

Facilitator note: The skill is the pause as mechanics, not personality change - count to three, one question before one answer, and an honest account of what the pause costs. Keep the frame on the wrong-version discovery: the price of finishing people's sentences is not rudeness in the abstract but walking around with a wrong version of a person in your head. Sura and Miryam are never shamed for going quiet, and Toiba's speed is treated as a real gift with a cost, not a flaw to be scolded - the family table is warm throughout, and nobody gives a speech. Do not let this become "fast talkers are bad friends" (Toiba's endings are often RIGHT in chapter one - the problem is what happens when they aren't, and what never gets said at all) or "never answer anyone's question" (the rule is one question before one answer, not silence). The sister's missed tryout is told, not dwelt on, and no student is asked to disclose real fears; Activity 7 is a fictional case.

Teacher answer key

1. The first cost is to Sura: her stories stop belonging to her - "You tell it better anyway" is stated as a fact of the house, and she has started stopping. The second cost is to Toiba: by finishing stories wrong, she carries false versions of the people she loves and loses the real news - "the fast one hears everything last." The story treats the second as worse: it is the one that finally reaches Toiba, and the one she can fix.
2. Four finishes of other people's sentences; one question answered for Sura ("their mother asked SURA how the test went") - separate from the finishes: she did not finish Sura's sentence, she took the whole question; two stories started and stopped, both Sura's, both with Toiba's mouth already open. The unanswerable question: "When did anybody last tell me something I didn't already know?"
3. c, a, d, e, b. The audit (c) comes first - no fix without the count; the rules (a) get their first rep at the lowest-stakes table; Miryam (d) teaches the wrong-version cost; the catch (e) proves the habit is still a habit even after the cost is learned - knowing why is not the same as stopping; and Sura's story (b) is the payoff that only a practiced space could hold.
4. (a) First supper: 9 finishes / 30 minutes = 3 per 10 minutes. Second: 3 / 30 = 1 per 10 minutes. (b) Questions rise from 2/30 = 0.67 to 7/30 = 2.33 per 10 minutes. (c) No - the rate fell by two-thirds while questions more than tripled; the trend is the fix, not the zero. The numbers do not measure whether people are bringing her their stories again (trust), or what the questions uncovered. Steps shown.
5. Some true things - a shame, a fear, a want - have no fast version; they only form at walking speed, in a space that holds still for them. Toiba's old speed meant every slow thing got finished into a fast thing, which is to say, into a wrong thing: "It doesn't come out fast" is the exact description of everything her speed was keeping out.

6. The card should show the two rules - count to three; one question before one answer - plus one firing: the brackets at the Shabbos meal, the caught "person from the -" on Wednesday, or the held three on the walk with Miryam. Strong captions quote "The shelf is not the story. The brackets are the story" or "Tell me about him first." Any honest rendering counts.

7. Sample: Meeting one - "Pearly reads her three questions aloud, and for the first time all year the group argues about an ending she did not predict." Meeting two - "A quiet girl named Gutta answers the second question, and Pearly writes her answer down instead of topping it." Top of the column - "Pearly writes: 'If I know the answer, it doesn't belong in this column.'" All three parts, with names; wording may vary. (Case names Pearly and Gutta are fictional.)

8. LISTEN row 1 columns 1-6; PAUSE row 2 columns 1-5; STORY row 3 columns 1-5; SISTER row 4 columns 1-6; FINISH row 5 columns 1-6; QUIET row 6 columns 1-5; QUESTION row 7 columns 1-8; TABLE row 8 columns 1-5. What Toiba learns to do first is LISTEN (accept LISTEN; PAUSE with reasoning); what Sura's story finally gets to do is FINISH.