

What to print

- **Once, for yourself:** run.pdf, 1 page. Hold it while you run the session.
- **One copy per girl:** sheets.pdf, 2 pages. Sheet A and Sheet B. That is 2 pages per girl.
- **You do not need:** pages 5 to 6 of this guide, the key. The session runs without it.

Guide, My Name, My Voice

Group 4 to 30 · Materials: paper, pencil · SDG 4, 5 · EN edition · Released · Nameet Potnis, author and English editor

Before you enter the room

- **Say each name back the way she said it. Never correct a girl's pronunciation of her own name.**
- Tear one A4 sheet in two per girl for the name cards before anybody arrives.
- Above about 20 girls, run the 60 minute version in pairs: the session turns on you reaching every girl once while she writes.
- Spelling is not today's job. Take it the way she hears it.
- You do the cutting, or she tears along the line. Child scissors only with you beside her.

Read this once at home. In the room you only need the run sheet. Where this says "you", it means whoever is running the session: a teacher, a volunteer, an older sister.

Who it is for

- **For ages 4 to 7.** Most will not read yet, and that is expected.
- **Reading and writing.**
- **Group size.** 4 to 30 girls. Above about 20, run the 60 minute version and seat the girls in pairs, because the whole session turns on you reaching every girl once while she writes.
- **Different levels in one room.** The same activity holds the whole range. A girl who cannot form letters yet traces her name over your model, or builds it from torn paper letters and then traces. A girl who already writes her name easily writes it once, then writes her full name, then adds a second sentence about herself. Nobody gets a different sheet.

What you need

- One sheet of paper per girl for the learner sheets
- One half sheet per girl for her name card, made by tearing an A4 sheet in two

- One pencil per girl, or one shared between two
- **Free and optional:** a ball of crumpled paper to pass round the opening circle, and a length of string or a spare wall to hang the name cards on
- **Nothing here costs money.**

Why the session is shaped this way

The circle comes before the pencil. A girl who has already said her name out loud in front of the group has less to lose when she writes it. The second round, one word for how she feels, is short on purpose: it asks for one word, which almost nobody refuses.

Say each name back the way she said it. This is the single most important move in the session. If you mishear, ask her once, quietly, and move on. Never correct a girl's pronunciation of her own name.

You fill the sentence starters in first, twice. A girl copies the shape of what she just heard. Use ordinary true things about yourself, not famous people, or you will get famous people back. Then praise the girl who tried, not the sentence that came out best.

You reach every girl once while she writes. That one pass round the room is where you catch the girl who has not started, and it is why the 45 minute version exists. In the 30 minute version you will not manage it in a group over about twelve.

Spelling is not today's job. Take spelling the way she hears it, without comment. Correct a spelling only if she asks you to. A reversed letter at this age is ordinary. Note it, mention it next session, carry on today.

Everyone leaves holding something. The name card is the point. Every girl leaves with a card carrying her own name, made with her own hand, and you say so out loud.

"We hear you." The group says it together after each share, so no girl is judged on what she read out. Reading it, holding it up, or letting you read it all count equally as sharing.

Including everyone

A girl who cannot yet read. Nothing in this session requires her to read. Every starter is said aloud before it is written, and she can complete each part orally, by drawing, or by tracing. Write her name lightly on her card for her to trace, or tear paper letters for her to arrange in order and then copy. She finishes with the same card as everyone else, and you say so out loud.

A girl who joins late. Greet her by name if you know it, seat her, and start her at the writing step with a name card, whatever step the room has reached. Do not rewind the group, and do not ask her why she is

late. Catch her up in one sentence while the others are writing: "We are writing our names, then one true thing about ourselves." If she arrives during the share, she still makes a card, and she shares next time.

Boys in the room. They do the same activities and the same sheets. Do not run a separate track and do not send anyone out. What you watch is the share circle, because boys and confident girls will fill it first if you let them. Use one rule, said once at the start of the share and applied to everyone: nobody speaks twice until everyone who wants to has spoken once.

Two more things that come up. If a girl writes the name she is called at home rather than the name on a register, that is her name for today; offer to add the other one later only if she wants it. If the group's home language is not English, run the circle and the spoken starters in the home language, then bridge the same starters into English when you write.

If it goes wrong

Nobody will speak first in the circle. Do not wait it out, because silence hardens. Answer your own starter a second time with something ordinary and slightly funny, then turn to the girl beside you and ask her the starter directly instead of asking the room. Take two more girls in order round the circle, then reopen it to volunteers. Direction beats invitation when a room is cold.

Half the group finishes in two minutes and the rest have not started. This is the normal shape of an early years group with different levels in one room, not a fault in the session. Give the fast finishers the next thing before they ask for it: write the name again from memory on the back of the card, then the full name, then a second true sentence. Then use them. A girl who is done can read a starter aloud to a girl who is still working. That buys you the minutes you need to reach the girls who have not started.

Adapting it

Change the names, the foods and the places for ones the girls in your room would recognise. That is what the licence is for.

- A name in an example: use a name a girl in your room would know.
- A place, such as the market: use the nearest equivalent.
- Home language: run the spoken parts in it, then bridge into English on paper.

Running it shorter or longer

30 minutes. 0 to 4 name circle, 4 to 10 saying it out loud, 10 to 20 writing my name, 20 to 27 my sentence, 27 to 30 share and close. At 10 minutes for the writing step, most girls get one careful pass at their name instead of three, and in a group over about twelve you will not reach every girl individually. Run 45 if you can.

45 minutes. The clock on the run sheet.

60 minutes. 0 to 6 name circle, 6 to 18 saying it out loud, 18 to 36 writing my name, 36 to 50 my sentence, 50 to 60 share and close. In the sentence step girls work in pairs, and each writes one line about her partner as well as about herself. The closing share is long enough for every girl who wants to speak.

Keeping it safe

A card gets cut out in this session. With four and five-year-olds you do the cutting, or she tears along the dashed line, which works just as well. Child scissors only with you beside her, and they go back in your hand the moment she is done.

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Key and facilitation cues

Answers and what to say, My Name, My Voice

Answers

There is no single correct answer in this pack. Accept any name the girl gives as her own, and any sentence that is true for her.

Two things are worth knowing before you look at a sheet:

- A reversed letter at this age is ordinary, not an error to stop for. Note it, mention it to her next session, and carry on today.
- Spelling the way she hears it is a girl writing, not a girl failing. Leave it alone unless she asks you to correct it.

What you might see

What is on the page	What to offer next
A name only, or a name and a drawing	Say the name back to her, then read the starter "I like _____" aloud and ask her to answer it out loud. Write her answer under her name if she wants, then she traces it.
A name and one short sentence, such as "I like cricket"	Ask one question about it: "What else?" Then point at the blank line for one more true thing.
A name, two or more sentences, spelling mostly there	Ask her to write her full name, then to write one line about the girl sitting next to her.

Sticky points

What happens	What to say or do
"I do not know what to say"	Offer four out loud and let her pick: help, play, run, sing. Then say her choice back to her as a full sentence so she can hear it before she writes it.
She will not share in the circle	Let her hold the paper up without speaking, or read it for her if she says yes. Both count as sharing. Never call on a girl who has not put her hand up.
She writes in a script other than Latin letters	That is her name written correctly. Praise it, keep the card, and write the Latin form beside it only if she asks. Other script editions are planned; this one is the English edition.
She says her name is wrong, or the register name is not the name she uses	Use the name she uses today. Offer to add the other one to the card later, and only if she wants it.
She finishes everything in three minutes	Full name from memory, then one line about her partner. Then she reads a starter aloud to a girl who is still working.

After the session

Keep the name cards, in a folder or on a wall. The next reading and writing session can open with "read your name card to the person next to you", which takes one minute and gives every girl a win before anything else starts.

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