Pair Work: Timed Retell

MATHEMATICS

In this strategy, students practise their listening and speaking skills. Students divide into pairs and take turns speaking, listening, and retelling information in timed steps.

Purpose
Enhance critical thinking skills.
Create an argument and be concise in its delivery.
Develop attentive listening skills while sharing viewpoints on an issue.
Make connections between written and oral skills.

Payoff
Students will:
share ideas.
develop listening skills.
apply skills in different ways – in pairs, small groups, and with the whole class.

Tips and Resources
Timed Retell can be informal or more formal, as described here. In the more formal approach, students require more confidence.
Consider allowing students to make notes during the brief presentations given by their partners.
It is possible to use this activity with more extensive subject matter. In that case students will need time to properly research the topic and devise their arguments.
Additional Information is found in the **Peer Editing** strategy.
Take time to ensure that all students understand the stages of the process and what is expected of them.
Review the skills that student need to participate effectively in this strategy, such as good listening, turn-taking, respectful consideration of different points of view, asking for clarification, and rephrasing ideas.
After students share in pairs, consider switching partners and continuing the exchange of ideas.
A short form of this strategy is "A answer B". In this variation students have pre-assigned partners and each student is either a Partner A or a Partner B. Pose a question that requires a fairly short response then direct Partner A to give an answer to Partner B. After an appropriate length of time ask a Partner B student to volunteer to retell his partner's response to the question. When a question is posed in this way, all students are engaged as either listeners or tellers. Another advantage is that students who normally don't respond individually in front of the whole class will more confidently volunteer to share a response that is not entirely their own.

Further Support
Some students may benefit from a discussion with the teacher to articulate their ideas before moving on to share with a partner.
ESL students may benefit from pairing with a partner who speaks the same first language so that they can clarify the concepts in their first language and build more confidently on their prior knowledge.
As always, consider pairs carefully.

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What teachers do	What students do	**Notes**
Before Choose a relevant question or topic that might invite debate e.g., "Is it true that all squares are rectangles?" or "Is it true that if the length of each side of a rectangle is doubled then the area of the rectangle is doubled?" or "How is mathematics used in hospitals?" Make sure the students have the appropriate background knowledge about the topic. Review active listening skills.	Individually jot down ideas about the topic.	
During Put students in pairs facing each other. Direct all partner A students to tell what they know about the topic for 30 seconds. Direct partner B to retell the talk for about 30 seconds then to respond (e.g., add additional information). Direct partner A to retell what partner B said.	Decide who will be partner A and who will be partner B. Partner A speaks for 30 seconds and tells partner B all they know on the topic while partner B actively listens. Partner B retells partner A's talk then responds to what partner A said and mentions anything of importance that partner A did not mention on the topic. Partner A retells what partner B just said.	
After Invite students to write a summary of the discussion. Share summaries in small groups of four. Organize the class into a circle to share all ideas and concepts.	Write a carefully constructed summary of your discussion. Read the paragraph to the partner to ensure that no important details have been omitted. Share both summaries with two other students. Share ideas in a full class circle setting.	