
**“Finished, teacher!”:
what to do with fast finishers in
the YL classroom**

07/04/2022

Today we will ask ourselves...

- What do we really mean by the term “fast finisher”?
- What is their impact on the YL classroom?
- How can we mitigate any negative impacts?
- What activities are best for fast finishers?

**What do we really
mean by the term
“fast finisher”?**

What do we really mean by the term “fast finisher”?



IMPOSTER ALERT!

learners who haven't actually finished the task

- may not have understood the task
- may not be motivated to do the task
- may think finishing fast is desirable
- may be rushing to get to something 'better'
- are still a classroom issue!

What do we really mean by the term “fast finisher”?

REAL DEAL

learners who have genuinely completed the task



- are not automatically “smarter” or “better”
- may be stronger at *this particular* skill
- may have already studied this language point
- may just be more confident
- deserve to be appropriately challenged and given enough support to keep developing to the full extent of their abilities

What is their impact on the YL classroom?

What is their impact on the YL classroom?

*Finished,
teacher!*

*What's
next?*

*I'm
done.
Now
what?*

*Miss!
Miss!
Miss!*

I'm bored!

What is their impact on the YL classroom?

The Non-FF

- Feels inferior / stupid / ‘not good enough’
- Will lose confidence and motivation as a result
- May not get enough teacher support
- This creates a **negative cycle**

The FF

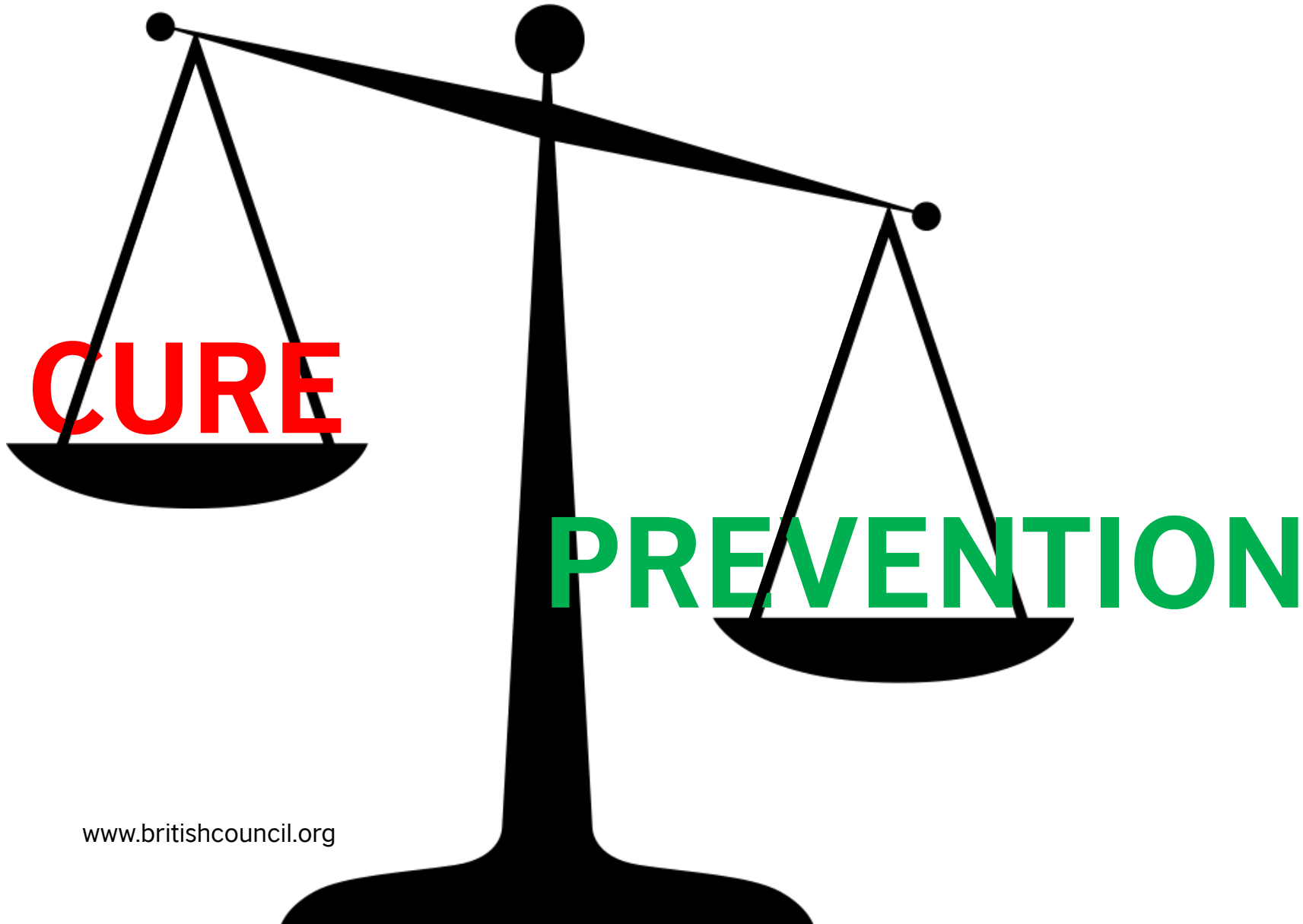
- May rush to get to the “fun stuff” and not check work or complete tasks fully
- May get bored and act out or become a classroom distraction
- This creates a **negative cycle**

The Teacher

- Under pressure to manage competing student needs and demands for attention
- May spend too much time planning “just in case” - leading to stress and burn-out
- This creates a **negative cycle**

**How can we mitigate
any negative impacts?**

How can we mitigate any negative impacts?



- Think about pairings and groupings
- Set clear expectations for what 'finished' actually means
- Use time-bound activities
- Differentiate by output

How can we mitigate any negative impacts?



Eliminate “shouting out”, frantic waving, and other things learners do to get the teacher’s attention.

They want you to check their work

Set up discreet visual signals instead

They want to know what to do next

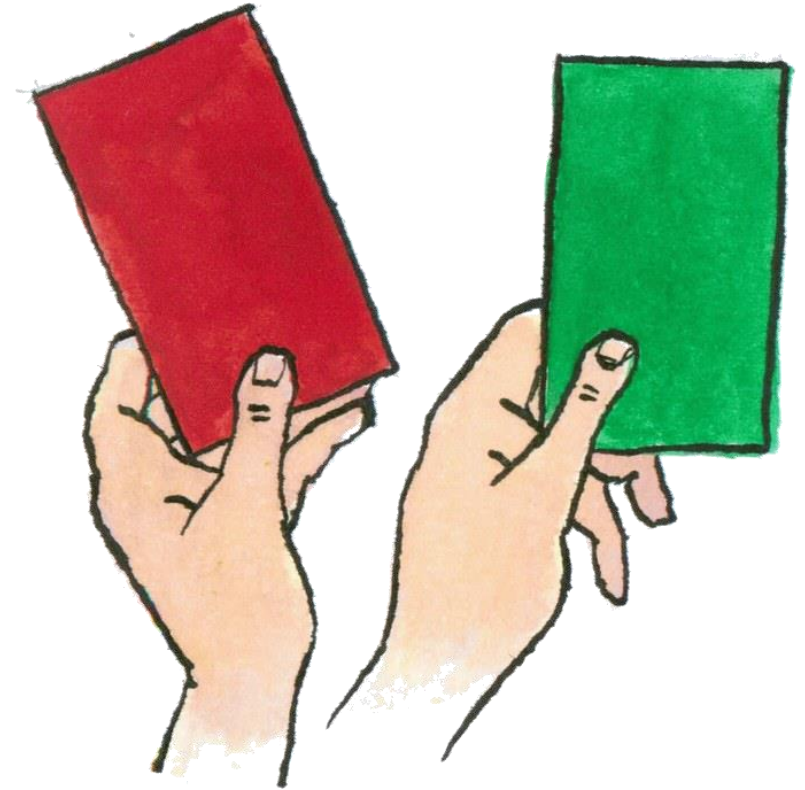
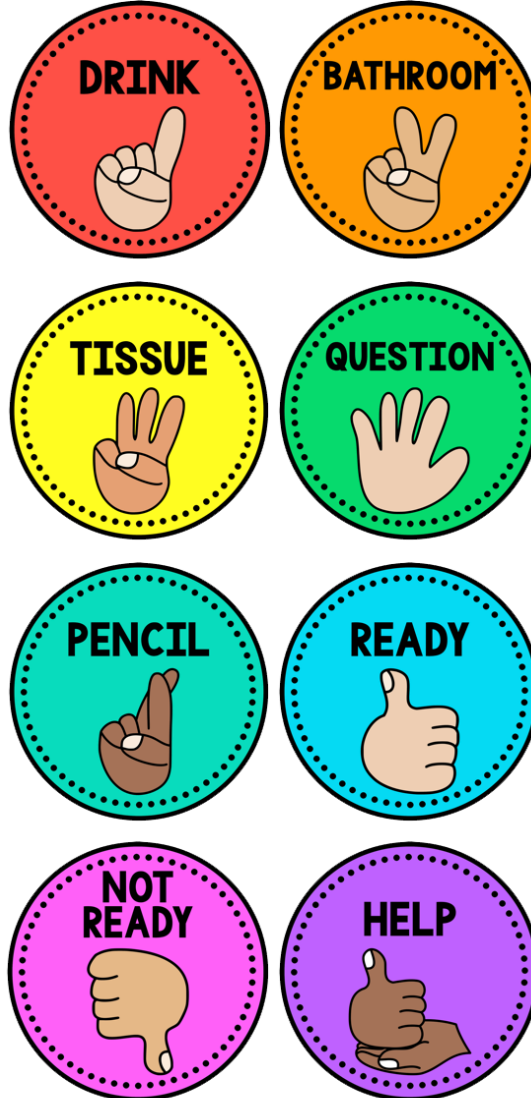
Turn being a FF into a routine learners can do independently



Set up discreet
visuals signals
instead



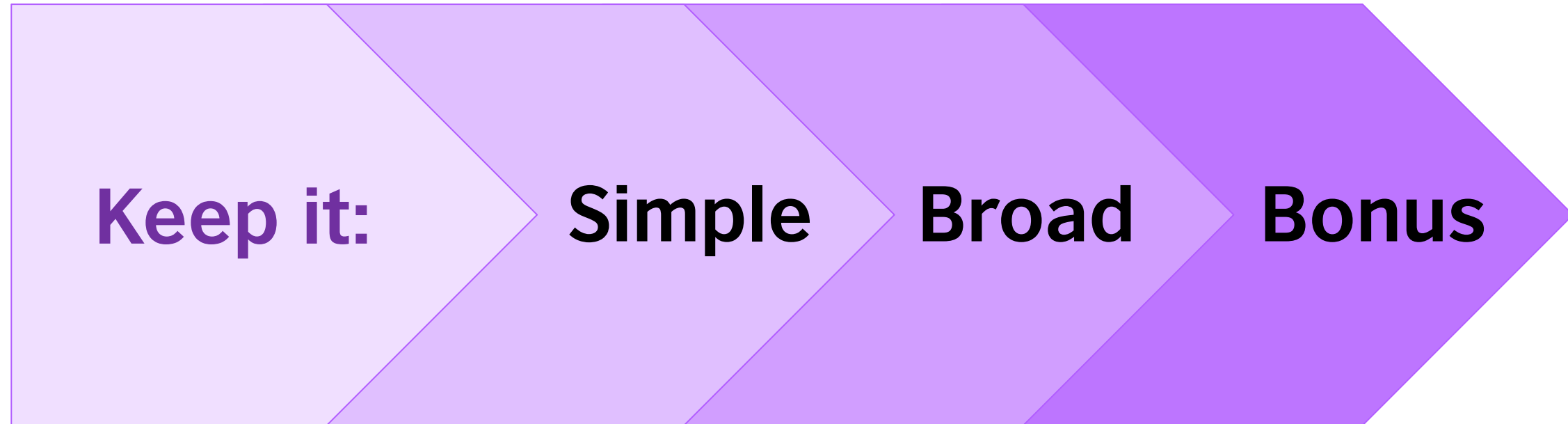
EDITABLE HAND SIGNALS



Turn being a FF into a routine learners can do independently

As children become increasingly familiar with routines and what is expected of them at different stages of learning, they act with greater autonomy. This also helps you to manage your classes positively. It also helps save your energy and voice (highly important if you are teaching full-time) as, in some areas at least, once routines are established, children will only need a prompt to know what to do.

Turn being a FF into a routine learners can do independently



And remember - routines take time to set up and automatize!

**What activities are
best for fast finishers?**



USE WITH CAUTION



Help your classmate...



Wordsearch on the wall

- ✓ Cooperative *or* competitive
- ✓ Connected to current topic/theme
- ✓ Offers chance to review or extend
- ✓ Easy exit points
- ✓ Can last several lessons
- ✓ Reasonably prep and materials light
- ✓ Easy to give feedback on
- ✓ Silent! (or whispers, maybe)
- ✓ Learners already know what to do!

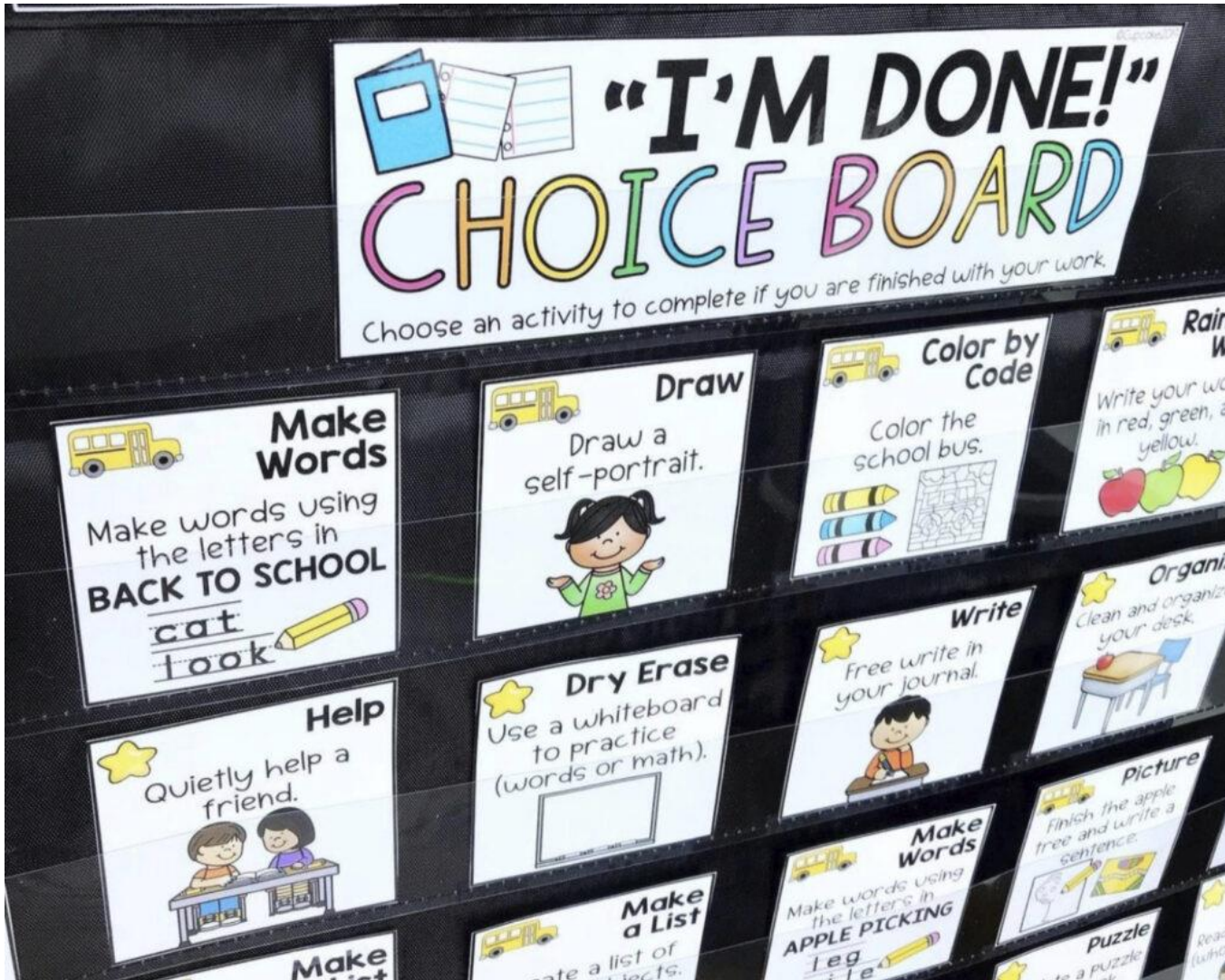


Independent Reading



- ✓ Learners can self-differentiate for level and interest
- ✓ Reading is one of the best ways to develop in a language
- ✓ Doesn't interfere with curriculum progress
- ✓ Silent
- ✓ No instructions needed
- ✓ No teacher prep or marking!
- ✗ Can be resource intensive
- ✗ Not always ideal for very short periods of time

Choice Board



- ✓ Offers chances to review or extend
- ✓ Really promotes learner choice and voice
- ✓ Can be adapted for level or age
- ✓ Last for several lessons or a full topic
- ✓ Can focus on specific skills if required
- ✗ Can take some time to prepare and make
- ✗ Learners may need support for some options

Quiz Creation



- ✓ Fabulous for reviewing material
- ✓ Offers diagnostic opportunities
- ✓ Easy exit points
- ✓ No teacher prep (actually creates materials for you to use later!)
- ✓ Has a sense of purpose for the learner
- ✓ Materials light
- ✓ Practices question form!
- ✗ Requires a certain language level

Fast finisher folder

- ✓ Allows students to exercise right to choose
- ✓ Can last forever (might need topping up)
- ✓ Offers chance to review or extend
- ✗ Can be labour intensive to create
- ✗ Learners may need support for some options



Any questions?

