

Grab that Spoon!
A “Take Five!” game from: *The Ten-Minute Trainer*.

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Want a five-minute game that takes no preparation beforehand? Want a game that engages learners in a fun yet memorable way, without a lot of time wasted in setting it up? Want a game that helps learners review information they heard, that increases retention, and that can be played a number of different ways?

Enter “Grab That Spoon!” It’s a quick, five-minute game with a dash of friendly competition. It’s a game in which everyone participates regardless of the size of the group (5 or 500 – it still works!). It’s a game that allows the learners to generate the review information, to participate in it, and to discuss their own understanding of the material learned. In other words, it’s a game in which the participants learn a lot in a little time!



Here are the instructions for the game followed by a number of variations. Feel free to experiment with the game until it works easily for you and your learners.

Materials Needed: 3x5 index cards (one per person), pens or pencils (one per person), plastic spoons (one for each group of 4 – 6 people).

Room Set-Up: Learners sit in groups of 4 – 6 people, either at

tables or clustered together in chairs.

Game Instructions:

1. Each learner writes a review question and answer on a 3x5 index card. S/he also writes a point value for the question on the card (points between 1 – 10; 1 = easy question; 10 = difficult question).
2. One spoon is placed where each learner in the group can reach it (in the middle of the table, in the middle of the group on someone’s knee, binder, or on the floor, etc.)
3. One person volunteers to be the first reader. The reader may NOT grab the spoon.
4. The reader reads aloud his/her question. The first group member to grab the spoon answers the question. If correct, the answerer gets those points. If incorrect, the answerer loses those points or stays at zero points.
5. Group members take turns being the reader and reading their question cards.
6. All groups play the game for five minutes (longer, if time permits). At the end of the time-limit, each person adds up his/her points. The person with the most

points wins applause and high-fives from the group. Or there can be small token prizes too.



Game Variations:

1. Play the game using an object related to the training – something easy to grab that also has to do with the training topic or theme. Examples: “Grab That Mouse” for a computer class, “Grab That Ear” with plastic ears for a communication course; “Grab That Key” for keys to customer service; “Grab That Number” with dice for financial training; “Grab That Whistle” for safety training, etc. You can use items found in your home or office. You can also purchase small, inexpensive, training-related items from Kipp Brothers at www.kippbro.com or Oriental Trading Company at www.orientaltrading.com. Get their free catalogs and spend a few minutes looking for possible game items and token prizes.

2. Give each learner from 2 to 4 index cards. At different times during the training, have them write on each card a new question/answer pertaining to what they just learned. Then, as an overall review, allow about 10 minutes near the end of the training to play the game.

3. Play one round (one question asked/answered) at a time and spaced throughout the training to make the game a short, high-energy, ongoing “break” from the lecture.

4. Instead of points, learners can play for chips or other small tokens. Each group gets a small pile of chips or tokens to use for the game. Or they can play for a card from a card deck and the person with the best poker hand at the end of the game wins.

5. If you, as the trainer, want to do the work, you can make up the questions and print them out, one set per group. Then each group plays the game with your questions/answers.

6. If you have time and choose to debrief the game afterwards, you can ask open-ended questions like:

What was the most important thing you learned from the game?

What was a question that your group discussed or debated the answer to?

Was there a question with more than one right answer?

What is a question you still have after playing the game?

Final Thoughts: A game is only as useful as its purpose and its content. As an activity that reviews crucial information in a quick, relevant, high-energy way that involves ALL learners, “Grab that Spoon!” fits the bowl, uh, bill! Use it and enjoy watching your learners take an active part in their own learning.

“Grab that Spoon!” is an excerpt from Sharon Bowman’s newest book *The Ten-Minute Trainer! 129 Ways to Teach it Quick and Make It Stick*, to be published by Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer in 2005, and printed with permission. Please cite the source when downloading this material. You can contact www.Bowperson.com for more information about *The Ten-Minute Trainer*. Read on for a brief description:

Got a minute? Choose from over dozens of **60-second activities** to help your learners review, repeat, and remember. Or select a number of high-energy, **5 - 10 minute activities** to move information into long-term memory. Use the **Power Hour** templates with your own training topics. And best of all, discover the most useful training tool around to speed up both design and delivery –

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The Training Compass. The bottom line?

**Create a lot of learning
in a little time!**

The Ten-Minute Trainer is a “grab-it-and-go” book – with loads of back-pocket ideas you can use immediately with little or no preparation. To be notified when the book is published, send your contact information to: Sharon@Bowperson.com. Be sure to log onto www.Bowperson.com for selected excerpts of *The Ten-Minute Trainer*.

Sharon is a member of the National Speakers Association and the director of The Lake Tahoe Trainers Group. She is also the “Trainer’s Coach,” helping individual teachers and trainers polish existing lessons and training programs, and creating new ones that reach all learners.

For more information about Sharon Bowman and her books and training, log onto www.Bowperson.com, or email her at SBowperson@aol.com.

For book orders, go to www.trainerswarehouse.com, www.amazon.com, or call *Bowperson Publishing* at 775-749-5247.



Author and traveling teacher Sharon Bowman helps educators and business people “teach it quick and make it stick,” - fine-tuning their information-delivery skills and turning their passive listeners into active learners.

Over 40,000 copies of Sharon’s 6 popular teaching, training, and motivation books are now in print. Titles include: “*Preventing Death by Lecture*,” “*Presenting with Pizzazz*,” “*How To Give It So They Get It*,” and “*Shake, Rattle, and Roll*.”