



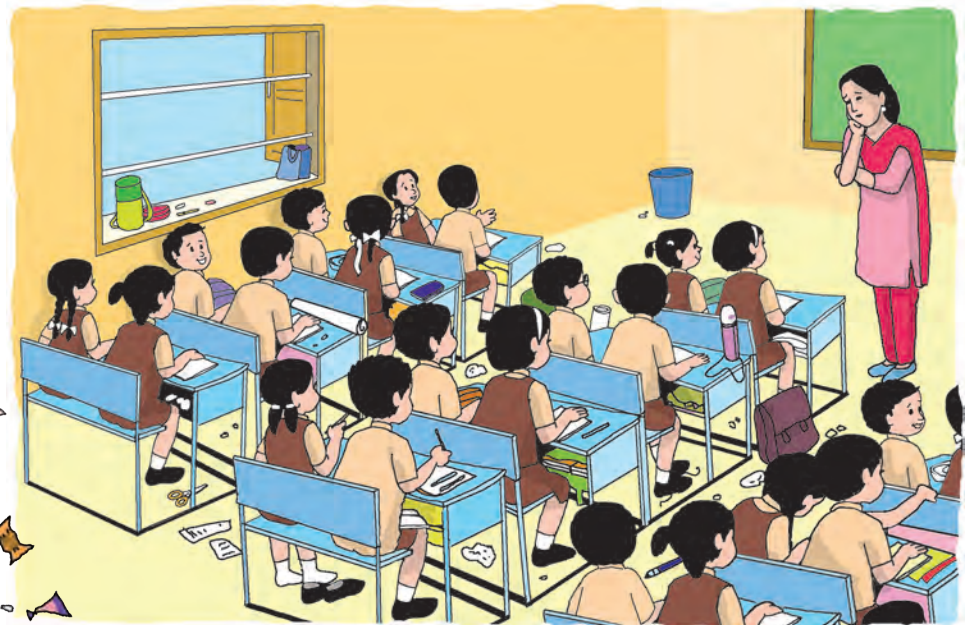
10. Pretty as a Picture

Right on the first day of school, our new class teacher Miss Nina told us that the last period on every Friday would be story-time. We all decided immediately she must be the best teacher in the world. We hoped she knew enough stories for all the Fridays of the year.

So, Friday came and we got more and more excited till at last the bell rang for the last period. We reminded her right away about her promise.

“Yes, of course,” she said happily. But as she looked around the class, we could see her face changing. “Oh, dear, I was going to tell you such a lovely story. But, it looks as if that will have to wait.”

“No-o-o,” said everyone. “That’s not fair !”



“Look at the classroom,” Miss Nina said. “How can we enjoy a story with all this rubbish all over the floor ?”

So, everyone went scurrying around picking up paper, and pencil stubs and putting them in the waste-paper basket. What a confusion there was ! But Miss Nina was not satisfied.

“The desks and benches are all crooked,” she said.

So, up popped everyone once again straightened out the rows quickly and put them all in perfect order.

“That’s much better,” she said. “But look at yourselves. Ribbons undone, shirts hanging out, shoelaces open, belts askew.”

Anything for the story, we thought. And as quickly as possible, we tidied ourselves up. We kept asking the kids around us to tell us if we were looking tidy enough. No mirrors in the classroom, you know ! But this silly Shirin’s plait was all undone. Sonia had to do it all over again for her and tie the bow too.

“One last thing,” Miss Nina said. “You’ll be in a hurry when the story is over. So how about putting away all your things into your bags right now ? All the books, all notebooks. Don’t forget the compass box. Have you put away your pencil ? Your rubber ? Your ruler ? The pack of colour pencils ? Good. Now your tiffin and water bottle. There’s a place for everything, so put everything in its right place.”

Well, we were all done except Rahul and Anwar. They couldn’t find their diaries. And Sheela who couldn’t find the cap of her pen ! And Bina who had lost the cup from her water-bottle. And..... . And everyone was making such a noise trying to help, I thought we would never finish and Miss Nina would be too angry to tell us a story.

But at last it was all done and Miss Nina finally smiled broadly. “Now, that’s my favourite class ! All spick and span and as clean as a whistle. But is there time for a story ? Oh, yes, there is ! Just a short little one.”

Short or long, Miss Nina told us a really funny story about a king and his clown. Only, it ended too soon. And we were still laughing when the bell rang. So, we just thanked Miss Nina and left.



By the way, Miss Nina's idea about packing the bag early was really good. My mother said she'd never found my bag so neat before. And I hadn't left anything behind in school either.



Now, on Monday when the week began, our class monitor said he had a good idea and he wanted us to listen. He said that we must practise straightening up the classroom and ourselves quickly. Just within five minutes ! That way, we would have time for long stories on Fridays.

So, we drew up a 5-minute drill.

Here it is :

First minute : Start from the last kid in every line, collect and pass on all paper and rubbish to the kid in front. They go and put it in the waste-paper basket.



Second minute : Come out of your place and straighten your desk. Look at the lines on the floor to help you keep it just right. Kids on the ends tell you if your desk is out of line.



Third minute : Tie shoelaces and ribbons. Tuck in blouses and shirts. Straighten dresses and belts. Face your partners to make sure that everything is all right.

Fourth minute : Pack your bags. Check all books, notebooks, compass boxes, colour pencils, tiffins, water bottles. Have I written my homework? Have I forgotten anything?



Fifth minute : Sit down quietly and try to guess the story Miss Nina's going to tell !

Meena, the other monitor, suggested that we do this without saying a single word. Great idea ! That saves us all the confusion. Miss Nina was so-o-o pleased with the 5-minute drill. She said she would also help. She said she would keep looking at her watch and tell us after every minute to hurry up.

We practised, starting on Monday itself. It was crazy at first. There were kids giggling and making funny faces and we all felt awkward. But, we had to do it for the sake of that STORY.

And do you know what Miss Nina said at the end of the 5-minute drill ? She said our class looked as pretty as a picture !

We got a full 25-minute story this Friday !

Things to do :

- With the help of a calendar –
 - Find out how many Fridays there are in this year.
 - How many of these Fridays you will spend in school.
- Mention the things that make –
 - a class untidy
 - a person untidy.
- Write any five things you do to tidy up your house.
- How much time do you need to get ready for school ? Write in the following table :



Task	Time Taken

- Use the following phrases in your own sentences :
 - * pretty as a picture * spick and span * as clean as a whistle.
- When do we say the following ? Describe one situation when you will say –
 - * That's not fair ! * That's much better !
- Write where you will put the following : * pencil * cup * banana peel * doll.
Mention two other things that are kept in each of these places.
- List five of your favourite stories.