



To make it more challenging for older children, you could reduce the time or say that you only get points for getting a word that no one else has got. Or play it as per the TV show and the longest word wins.

COUNTDOWN



Just this word makes me think of the ticking clock track on the TV show! When I was a teenager and at secondary school, at the end of every day I would walk home, have a hot chocolate, and me and my mum would watch *Countdown* together. Recently it was on when Ewan was home and he started trying to spot words in the letters on the screen, so I said, 'Shall we make our own version?' And we did!

GRAB:

- any letters (at least 20) – they could be magnetic letters, letters on bits of paper or Scrabble tiles
- 2 bags of any kind
- a pen
- paper
- a timer of any sort (you can use the *Countdown* clock on YouTube if you like!)

TO SET UP ...

1. Separate the letters into vowels and consonants.
2. Place the vowels in one bag, and consonants in the other.
3. Set the timer for one minute for little ones, or thirty seconds for older kids.

TO PLAY ...

1. Take it in turns to pick nine letters from the bags, making sure you have a mix of vowels and consonants.
2. Lay the letters out in a line, then start the timer.
3. See how many words you can make out of the nine letters and write them down. (This is where it differs from the TV show. On *Countdown* the game is to make the longest word, but I find that it's more encouraging to make as many words as possible.)
4. Compare your words at the end and count each time a letter is used to see who got the most points. So if you wrote down *an*, *it*, *son*, *nit* and *tan* you'd get thirteen points.