

Learning to tell the time: Quarter Past and Quarter To

Key points

- In Year 2, children learn to read analogue clocks (clocks with hands) beyond just o'clock and half past.
- Quarter past means the minute hand has travelled a quarter of the way around the clock and points to 3.
- Quarter to means the minute hand has travelled three quarters of the way and points to 9, showing there is one quarter left until the next hour.
- Children often find 'quarter to' tricky because the hour hand is almost at the next number, but it is not there yet.
- Visualising the clock face as four equal quarters helps children understand why we use these terms.

Things to try at home

- While cooking or tidying, ask your child if the minute hand is in the 'past' half or the 'to' half of the clock.
- Use a plate or a drawing of a circle and split it into four coloured slices to show the four quarters of an hour.
- Play a gentle game of 'What's the time?' using a toy clock to show different quarter-hour positions.
- Spot the minute hand on a wall clock together and see if it is pointing at the 3 or the 9.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher
- The GOV.UK website for National Curriculum guidance
- Your school's maths support resources