

Helping Your Child Learn to Tell the Time

Key points

- Children in Year 1 (the first year of primary school after Reception) start learning to tell the time using analogue clocks, which are the ones with faces and hands.
- It helps to learn 'o'clock' fully before moving on to 'half past' to avoid confusion.
- Children often find it tricky to tell the difference between the long minute hand and the short hour hand.
- Some children may read the number the hour hand is closest to rather than the one it is pointing to.
- Learning to tell the time involves two different skills: understanding where the hands point and knowing the sequence of numbers.

Things to try at home

- Play a guessing game with a toy clock, asking 'What time is it?' during your normal daily routine.
- Point out the clock on the wall and gently notice when the big hand reaches the top for 'o'clock'.
- Use a real clock to show how the hands move slowly together while you wait for a favourite activity.
- Keep it light and playful, focusing on the joy of discovery rather than getting the answer right every time.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher, who can share how time is being taught in school.
- The GOV.UK website for information on the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2).
- Your school's parent handbook or newsletter for specific maths support resources.