



T-Instructions: Teaching students to talk about the time

In ELT textbooks, instruction on talking about the time often assumes that learners are proficient in reading the analogue clock and that they merely need to add English to their existing repertoire (e.g. More!1, Unit 12). However, in our experience, many students are not completely confident in telling time using an analog clock, regardless of the language involved. Therefore, teaching the time in English provides an excellent opportunity to review the foundational skill of telling the time.

Some students may question the relevance of learning analog clock reading in an era dominated by digital devices. It becomes beneficial to encourage students to notice clocks in their surroundings, helping them recognize that mastering analog clock reading adds an additional resource for them. Clock reading is like multilingualism: the more ways you know how to express and understand something, the better, and proficiency increases with exposure to various methods. Activating German and students' other languages when teaching time in English can strengthen their conceptual understanding. Recognizing the parallels and differences between languages in expressing time facilitates a more comprehensive understanding. To aid students in mastering time-telling, ample practice and reflection time should be provided. Teachers should acknowledge the potential challenges students face, such as the German expression "dreiviertel vier." Taking time to discuss these intricacies fosters a deeper understanding and ensures that students can confidently navigate the complexities of expressing time in English, ultimately enriching their language proficiency. Investing additional time in teaching units about time is invaluable for students to consolidate their understanding (see further Erling, Yildiz & Weidl, 2024). <https://online.pubhtml5.com/jsnr/vvkh/index.html>

The following activities could accompany any ELT textbook unit on teaching the time, including More!1 (Gerngross et al., 2017). Teachers could use some or all of these resources for teaching about the time. The particular order for using them is not provided and they can be adapted as needed.

Learning objectives

- Consolidate and reinforce proficiency in telling the time in all of students' languages.
- Express and comprehend time-related concepts in English.
- Ask and respond to Time-Related Questions:
- Describe Daily Routines, incorporating time expressions



	Stage	Instruction	Purpose for T
1	Warm up and review	<p>Talking about clocks: Have you ever been somewhere where there is ONLY an analogue clock to read? Where do you normally see a clock? Wo siehst du normalerweise eine richtige Uhr?</p> <p>For me, there is one in the park on my way to school, so I always know if I am late.</p> <p>Is there one in your house? Is there one on your way to school? Is there one in XXX platz?</p> <p>If we have a blackout and we cannot use our mobile phones or the internet, we'll need to read an analogue clock. (see Worksheet: Clocks in Vienna).</p>	Noticing clocks and generating a sense of purpose for learning the time
2	Warm up and review	<p>Make a clock (in Werken or BE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=6H4TEnuh0k • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRlcbC0cr0U • Kopiervorlage Uhr « Arbeitsblätter « .: Volksschullehrerin.at .: 	<p>Getting a sense of who can read the time in which languages</p> 
3	Warm up and review	Needs analysis and review: Ss fill in a German-English “Time” worksheet (see Worksheet: The time / Die Uhrzeit).	Getting a sense of whether Ss already know which direction is “clockwise” and whether they can read and talk about a digital and analogue clock.
		<p>Elicit what students already know about telling the time. Using the board to draw a clock. Students draw the clock in their notebooks, in which they fill in the numbers. Draw the hour hand in one colour and the minute hand in another. Review halves and quarters.</p>	



		Elicit the words for “past” and “to” in several languages – writing them on the board or inviting students to write them. (see Worksheet: Empty Clock)	
4	Talking about the time	<p>Speaking & listening practice: “I have ... Who has ... ?” Vocabulary game with the time, e.g.: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/I-Have-Who-Has-Game-Telling-Time-to-the-Hour-301105?st=3c520a7edeb7832476f40ab72bfddef5</p> <p>Pass around cards [you keep the first two]. Someone will ask, “I have the first card, so I say “I have 12 o’clock.” Who has three-fifteen?” You all have to listen. Who has it? [Get two Ss to the front of the room. Ask them to read their cards. Ss should understand once they see it modeled once or twice.]</p>	<p>T walks around and supports.</p> <p>Go over any difficult times together.</p> <p>Use timer to see how long it takes. Repeat again the next day to see if they get faster.</p>
5	Talking about the time	<p>When asking about the time in different places (as in More! Student book, pg. 76-77), to adapt the materials to include places where students have been or have family members. For example, we added Istanbul, Damascus and Mumbai.</p> <p>T: Now I want you all to Practice the time in pairs. [Model the activity. Ask a S to come to the front to do the activity with you.]</p> <p>T: What time is it? S: It is 1 o’clock</p> <p>Now, you ask me.</p> <p>Now you ask each other. Use More! Pg. 76-77 (or they use their self-made clocks, set a time and ask each other) [if you have some Ss who are strong and some who are weak, you might want to pair them so that the stronger ones can help]</p> <p><i>It is one hour earlier in Lagos, Nigeria. What time is it there now?</i></p>	<p>T walks around and listens to the individual pairs.</p> <p>Gives feedback and support where needed.</p> <p>If there are any difficult ones, practice them all as a group.</p>



		<p><i>It is one hour later in Mogadishu, Sudan. What time is it there now?</i></p> <p><i>What time is it in Aleppo (+1)? What time is it in Ankara (+1)? What time is it in Kabul (+3)? What time is it in New York (6 hours earlier)? Los Angeles (-9)? London (-1)? Sydney (+10)?</i></p> <p>Ss then asked each other: “What’s the time in [chosen city]?” and then they answered with the time in those places.</p>	
6.	Talking about the time	<p>Game: Draw a clock on the board with the time 4.45</p> <p>T: How many ways can you say this? Use any language that you know. You have 90 seconds/3 minutes (?) to think. Note down your answers on a paper.</p> <p>When 90 seconds have passed, ask: Raise your hand if you can say this in 2 ways. Raise your hand if you can say this in 3 ways.... Continue until only one S has their hand up. This student gives their answers. Then see in how many ways you can say the time as a class.</p> <p>Ask students to all report how they say this in their languages. Write them down if they can. If they do not know, they can ask each other. As homework, they can look online or ask their parents about how to say “Half past” and “quarter to” in all of their languages.</p> <p>Do another round with 6.30</p>	<p>Purpose: Listening to the time in as many languages as possible Making connections across languages Solidifying understanding of telling time</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four forty-five • Quarter to five • Sixteen forty-five • Vier Uhr fünfundvierzig • Sechszehn Uhr fünfundvierzig • Drei viertel fünf • Viertel vor fünf • dört kırk beş • šesnaest četrdeset pet • petnest do pet <p>Language pairs can help each other</p>
7	Talking and writing about the time	<p>Oral activity: Zeyneb’s timetable, pair activity, Information gap</p> <p>One will be Student A; One will be Student B. Don’t show your paper to the other student. You have to find out which lessons are missing from the timetable. Ask questions.</p> <p>Writing activity: When does Zeynab have English? When does she have music? When does she have chemistry? Write 3 sentences.</p>	<p>Also can review vocabulary for school subjects</p> <p>It’s like the Battleship game</p>



		(see Worksheet: Zeynab's Timetable)	
		Writing activity ideas – write a text about a day in your life. Write one sentence that is not true. Your partner has to find the sentence that is not true. Give time in class to write	
11	Consolidation and extension	Digital resources (see Worksheet: Digital Resources for Learning about the Time)	
	Consolidation and extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the math teacher to repeat telling time, halves, quarter • Build a paper clock or watch in Werken or BE. Or make the clock flower in your classroom. https://www.weareteachers.com/5-hands-on-ways-to-teach-telling-time/ • • Consistently ask students every day what time it is -- what time they start something, what time they stop it. 	

References

Erling, E.J., Yildiz, G. & Weidl, M. (2023) Teaching the Time Using Translanguaging Pedagogies in Austrian ELT: A Transformational Action Research Collaboration. In Müzeyyen Nazlı Güngör (Ed.), *Action Research in English Language Teaching: Voices from Diverse Contexts* (Word of ELT). Black Swan Publishing. <https://online.pubhtml5.com/jsnr/vvkh/index.html>

Gerngross, G., Puchta, H., Holzmann, C., Lewis-Jones, P., & Stranks, J. (2017). *More! 1: Student's Book*. Helbling.