

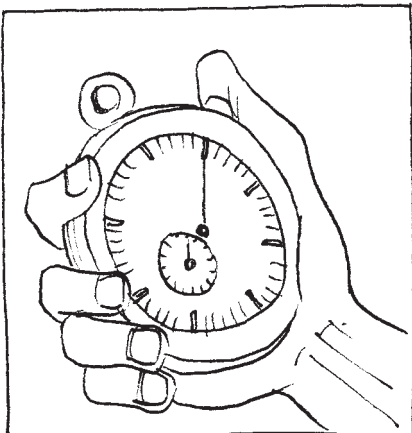
You Can... Develop thinking throughout the year

You Can... Think about time passing

For young children, time is a tricky concept to grasp. It is reasonably easy for them to learn to read the time from a clock. However, the thinking processes that help us understand the notion of time passing are of a higher order altogether.

Thinking points

- Partitioning up and structuring time helps us to create routines. The smooth and effective running of our schools is very much based around time structures.
- Sometimes, excessive structure can mitigate against learning. There needs to be some flexibility with the timing of thinking-based tasks, for example, where an interesting discussion is underway.
- Children generally appreciate time structures and routines. They help them prepare mentally for what is coming next.
- Where timing or routine is thrown, for example, through the absence of a class teacher, children may feel unsettled and confused.
- An understanding of longer periods of time comes slowly. At first children are limited to the short term; in ten minutes, after lunch, next week. Gradually they start to widen their perspective to next month, next year, a century ago.



Tips, ideas and activities

- Use a display to show how we mark time passing in different ways. You could have:
 - the names of the months
 - the names of the seasons
 - the year and a timeline
 - the days of the week
 - a weekly timetable
 - a daily timetable
 - different kinds of clock: digital clock, stopwatch, standard clock face, grandfather clock, candle and water clocks
 - words relating to time, for example, yesterday, today, tomorrow, next week.
- Use your display during the year to help develop thinking.
 - Stick up the children's pictures and birthdays under the names of the months, in the right sequence.
 - Create collages to show what we find in each season.
 - Rewrite the timetable for a day.
 - Use the time words as a framework for speaking or writing in different tenses; 'Yesterday I went to...', 'Tomorrow I am going to...'
- Talk about why we need to measure time.
 - What would happen if all our clocks were taken away?
 - How did people know what time it was before they had clocks?
 - Why do we divide time up into seconds, minutes, hours?
 - What would happen if we didn't have a school timetable?
- Try this fun prediction exercise. It calms down the class and encourages the pupils to concentrate. It also gives the teacher a minute or two of relative peace. Here's how it works:
 - Explain that, when you say 'Go', you are going to time a minute.
 - Ask the pupils to close their eyes.
 - Tell the children to put up a hand when they think a minute has passed.
 - Give a reward to the child who comes closest to the correct time.
 - Afterwards, discuss why the children raised their hands at different times.
 - Try again, this time for two minutes.