

Back to Back Times

Overview

This pair activity is designed to encourage reading, speaking and listening for telling analogue time in English from realistic clock diagrams.

As a pair activity it is:

- A non-threatening way to encourage students to read times aloud
- A means of fostering interaction between students
- A useful activity to add variety to a long session
- An activity which can be revisited at regular intervals
- Especially useful if English is not the students' first language

A suggested extension to this activity utilises the clock diagrams and a 'lucky dip' as an enjoyable way to practise calculating time intervals.

Skills and Knowledge

- Speaking and listening with time
- Interpreting analogue time

Preparation and Materials

- Photocopy Activity Sheets 1 - 4 onto card or coloured paper (1 of each per pair of students).
- Cut out the cards, arrange them in sets (using a paper clip) and sort into labelled envelopes.

Note:

- Each set can be left on a single strip, rather than separate cards, if you think your students will not be daunted by seeing the whole set at once.
- The sets of times increase in difficulty from Set 1 to 8. So perhaps not all of them will be needed the first time you use the activity with your group.

- Photocopy Activity Sheet 5: *The Blank Clocks Template* (4 per per pair of students) Cut into strips.
- Activity Sheet 6: *The Clock Templates* may be used to create sets of clocks for students in early analogue time practice is needed.

Photocopy onto card, cut out the clocks and hands and attach with a split pin in the centre so that the hands are moveable. These can be reused with future classes.



Suggested Procedure

The activity is best explained to students by physically demonstrating as you explain the procedure.

- Ask for a volunteer to act out the role with you to make it clear.
- Draw a time such as 'half past two' on a blank clock face in order to demonstrate.
- Your volunteer will need a pen and one of the blank sets of clock faces (cut from Activity Sheet 6) to draw on.

Introducing the activity

Explain:

- *This activity is to give you practice reading times on older style clocks: what we call 'analogue time'.*
- *You will practise reading times and saying them aloud.*
- *Also you will practise drawing the clock hands in the right place when you hear the time.*
- *I will give each of you a set of times.*
- *You will take it in turns so you both have a turn at reading as well as listening and drawing.*

Demonstrate with a volunteer, move your chairs back to back.

Explain:

- *You will sit back to back – so that you cannot see your partner's times.*
- *Pretend you are on the phone speaking – so you have to **listen** not look at the times.*
- *You have to read them clearly so that the other person can understand them.*
- *For example [show your time to the group but not your volunteer partner] my time is 'half past two'.*
- *My partner will draw the time she/he hears me say.*
- *At the end we will compare what my partner drew with the time I started with.*

Carefully go through the procedure of speaking the time, getting the student to draw it and checking it together.

Explain:

- *When you go together in pairs you will read a set of 5 different times before you check the next.*

Modelling the language of time

If necessary, model language such as '... to ...' and '... past ...' with the whole class by using one of the clock templates (activity Sheet 6) prepared with hands that can be moved into position (an enlarged version may be useful for this stage).

Move the hands around to times such as:

- Three o'clock
- Quarter to two



- Quarter past four
- Ten past six

As you move the hands model the language you want students to use. If this language is really new for the students, spend some time moving the hands and encouraging the class to read the times aloud before proceeding.

Note: Ensure that students understand the connection between 'quarter' of an hour on the clock and the fraction concept of 'a quarter' ($\frac{1}{4}$).

Conducting the activity

Arrange the students in pairs (2 students of roughly equivalent language ability is helpful for this activity).

Distribute Set 1 to one student and Set 2 to their partner.

These two fairly straightforward sets should build student confidence and allow them to get used to the activity.

Explain:

- *You should take it in turns to read and draw a set of times.*
- *When you have finished compare your clocks.*
- *Make sure you find out the cause of any mistakes – they could be reading or drawing mistakes.*
- *Both practise saying that 'mistake' time aloud.*
- *If you don't agree then call me for help.*
- *When you are happy that you can do these sets correctly let me know and I will give you another two sets.*

Circulate and listen to the students, ensuring they are using the English language of time correctly.

If they do not find the first sets easy, then you can backtrack and use sets of clocks created from Activity Sheet 6 to provide whole class practice at moving the hands to indicate simple whole and half hour times.

If students cope easily with the first sets, then distribute more difficult sets as they are ready.

Extensions

You can create more of your own sets for students to practice at an appropriate level, either now or later, using Activity Sheet 5.

You could also vary the activity by:

- Asking students to translate from the analogue time shown on the clock faces they are given so that their partner then writes the time in digital form.



- Writing sets of digital times and requiring students to mark the times they hear on the clocks.
- Creating sets of 24-hour times and asking students to mark them on the clocks.

Calculating time intervals

You could use the sets of clocks provided in this activity as a basis for calculating time intervals, using the following procedure.

Cut one copy of the sets of times into separate pieces (or cards) and place in a 'hat' or container.

- Students take turns in taking 2 cards from the hat and reading them to the group.
- Students then calculate the time interval between the two cards, using the method of 'counting on' and compare their results.
- The level of difficulty may be increased gradually by beginning with Sets 1 & 2 combined, then gradually adding Sets 3 & 4, and 5 & 6.
- Students could work individually or in pairs.

The 'Counting on' method is described fully in the activity 'Subtraction using Counting on' in the 'In the Head Calculations' section of this resource.

As a competition:

- Two teams could be formed to compete against each other, one pick from the 'hat' approach, introducing an element of luck to the competition.













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Activity Sheet 1

An activity for pairs

✂ Copy and cut.

Set 1 time 1 	Set 2 time 1 
Set 1 time 2 	Set 2 time 2 
Set 1 time 3 	Set 2 time 3 
Set 2 time 4 	Set 2 time 4 
Set 1 time 5 	Set 2 time 5 













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Activity Sheet 2

An activity for pairs

✂ Copy and cut.

Set 3 time 1 	Set 4 time 1 
Set 3 time 2 	Set 4 time 2 
Set 3 time 3 	Set 4 time 3 
Set 3 time 4 	Set 4 time 4 
Set 3 time 5 	Set 4 time 5 













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Activity Sheet 3

An activity for pairs

✂ Copy and cut.

Set 5 time 1 	Set 6 time 1 
Set 5 time 2 	Set 6 time 2 
Set 5 time 3 	Set 6 time 3 
Set 5 time 4 	Set 6 time 4 
Set 5 time 5 	Set 6 time 5 













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Activity Sheet 4

An activity for pairs

✂ Copy and cut.

Set 7 time 1 	Set 8 time 1 
Set 7 time 2 	Set 8 time 2 
Set 7 time 3 	Set 8 time 3 
Set 7 time 4 	Set 8 time 4 
Set 7 time 5 	Set 8 time 5 












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Activity Sheet 5

An activity for pairs

✂ Copy and cut.

Set time 1 	Set time 1 
Set time 2 	Set time 2 
Set time 3 	Set time 3 
Set time 4 	Set time 4 
Set time 5 	Set time 5 