

Meet the clock face: two hands and twelve numbers

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

MEA.TIM.2a understand how time is measured, expressed and represented.

INTERACTIVES [Analog Clock Builder · display, explore](#)

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES

A clock face has twelve numbers from 1 to 12. The short hand is the hour hand: it moves slowly and points to the hour. On every o'clock the long hand rests on 12.

→ When the short hand points straight at the 3, the hour is 3.

→ 12 sits at the top, 6 at the bottom, 3 on the right and 9 on the left.

MODEL THIS ON THE BOARD

READING 3 O'CLOCK ON THE CLASSROOM CLOCK

- 1 Look at the short hand. It points straight at 3.
- 2 Look at the long hand. It rests on 12.
- 3 The time is 3 o'clock.

LESSON ARC

Open by pointing at the real classroom clock and taking three quick notices. On the IWB clock face, walk the numbers 1 to 12 with a finger — 12 at the top, 6 at the bottom, 3 on the right, 9 on the left — then name short hand as hour and long hand as minute, resting on 12 at o'clock. Pupils take turns at the board pointing to numbers and hands while the class agrees out loud. Copybook beat: draw a circle and place 12 and 6. Class Challenge keeps the same prompts brisk.

TEACHING MOVES

1. **Getting Started.** Point to the real classroom wall clock, not an empty board. Take three hands-up answers — numbers, hands, round shape — then link it to home time. Keep the beat to about three minutes.
2. **Watch and Notice.** On the first IWB clock, walk 1 to 12 with your finger and anchor the four compass spots out loud. On 3 o'clock, say the pairing once: short hand, hour hand; long hand, minute hand. On 6 o'clock, keep the focus on where each hand sits — do not set new times.
3. **Try It Together.** Call one prompt at a time: point to 8, point to 4, show the short hand, show the long hand. One pupil works the board; the class agrees or corrects out loud. Rotate four pupils. If hands are swapped, revoice: short hand for the hour, long hand for the minutes.
4. **Start a clock face in your copy.** Pupils draw a circle and write 12 at the top and 6 at the bottom — that is done enough. Walk the room glancing only for those two placements; perfect circles are not required. Pupils who find freehand hard use the Clock faces printable and trace 12 and 6.
5. **Class Challenge.** Keep board turns brisk. One pupil follows each prompt; the class confirms before you move on. Listen for the short/long pairing on every hand prompt and catch swaps with a gentle revoice, not a re-teach.

6. What Did We Notice?. Ask what the short hand does and what the long hand does when it rests on 12. Revoice a clear answer into the short-hour / long-minute rule. If a pupil mixes them, hold both arms up — short arm, long arm — and match them to the classroom clock.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

⚠ Pupils swap the hands: they call the long hand the hour hand because it looks more important. Stop and hold both arms up — one bent short, one stretched long — then match each arm to the clock. Revoice once: short hand for the hour, long hand for the minutes.

⚠ Pupils place 12 at the bottom or scatter 3, 6 and 9 anywhere around the circle. Return to the classroom clock. Trace top-bottom-right-left with a finger while the class chants 12, 6, 3, 9, then have the pupil fix just those four anchors on their copy.

DIFFERENTIATION

EMERGING

- Offer the Clock faces printable so pupils trace 12 at the top and 6 at the bottom instead of freehand drawing.
- On board turns, give only number-pointing prompts first; add hand-naming once the numbers feel secure.

DEVELOPING

- After 12 and 6 are placed, add 3 on the right and 9 on the left on the same copybook circle.
- On a board turn, ask the pupil to point to the hour hand and say the hour it is showing on that face.

PROFICIENT

- Once 12, 3, 6 and 9 are placed, challenge them to seat the remaining numbers around the copybook face without looking at the wall clock, then check against it.
- Ask: 'Why does the long hand sit on 12 at every o'clock we met today?' — one clear sentence in the maths-talk.

✓ **Cross-curricular:** Link each o'clock face to a real school-day moment — start of lessons, lunch, home time — using the classroom wall clock.

ANSWER KEY

Scaffold: visual check on the page

Q1: 11 o'clock

Q2: 12

Q3: on the left

Q4: 6

Q5: short = hour hand; long = minute hand; short hand points to the hour

a) Always : The short hand is the hour hand and shows the hour.

b) Always : On every o'clock face the long hand sits on 12.

c) Never : 6 sits at the bottom; 12 sits at the top.

d) Sometimes : They both point to 12 at 12 o'clock, but not at other hours.

EXTENSION SHEET · STRETCH ANSWERS

S1: half past 8

S2: half past 12

S3: half past 4

S4: half past 11