

Helping Your Child with Time and Duration

Measurement · Prep to Year 6 · Australian Curriculum Mathematics

Understanding **time** and **duration** is one of the most useful maths skills in everyday life. Your child begins by comparing which events take longer, then learns to read clocks, use calendars, calculate time between events, and read timetables. Every time you check the clock, plan a trip, or ask "How long until we get there?" you are doing time maths together.

Year level	What your child learns	What this looks like
Prep	Longer, shorter, and the days of the week Your child learns to compare duration — which event takes more time and which takes less. duration — how long something takes They also learn the days of the week and times of day: morning • lunchtime • afternoon • night Monday • Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday • Friday • Saturday • Sunday	Put on shoes vs put on a hat. "Which took longer?" "What do we do in the morning?" "What day is it today? What day was yesterday?"
Year 1	Hours, days, weeks, months and years Your child learns the units of time and roughly how long each one is. second — very short (a quick clap) minute — about as long as brushing your teeth hour — a TV show or a car trip day — from waking up to going to sleep week — 7 days month — about 30 days year — 12 months, 365 days	Talk about how long things take. "Does a bath take minutes or hours?" "Does a holiday take days or weeks?" Look at a monthly calendar together.
Year 2	Reading a clock — hours and half-hours Your child reads time on an analog clock — the clock with hands. hour hand — the short hand. Points to the hour. minute hand — the long hand. Goes all the way around. o'clock — minute hand points straight up (12) half past — minute hand points straight down (6) quarter past — minute hand at the 3 quarter to — minute hand at the 9 They also use a calendar to find dates and count days.	Point to a clock at home. "What time does the short hand point to?" "Where is the long hand — is it half past?" Look at a calendar — count days together.
Year 3	Minutes, seconds and reading to the minute Your child reads the clock to the nearest minute on both analog and digital clocks. The minute hand travels all the way around in 60 minutes = 1 hour . Each small mark on a clock face = 1 minute . Each number = 5 minutes (count in 5s: 5, 10, 15... 60). digital clock — shows time as numbers: 3:47 = 3 hours and 47 minutes	Read the clock together several times a day. "How many minutes past the hour is it?" Set a 3-minute timer — guess when it ends. "How many minutes until dinner?"
Year 4	am, pm and calculating duration Your child learns that a day has 24 hours split into two 12-hour halves. am — morning (midnight to midday): 7:30 am = breakfast time pm — afternoon/evening (midday to midnight): 3:15 pm = after school They calculate duration — how long something takes: A movie starts at 1:30 pm, ends at 3:15 pm. Duration = 1 hour and 45 minutes.	Check TV guides or bus timetables together. "Does this show start am or pm?" "We leave at 9:15 am, arrive at 11:00 am. How long is the trip?" Answer: 1 hour 45 minutes
Year 5	12-hour and 24-hour time Your child learns that clocks and timetables sometimes use 24-hour time — counting hours from 0 to 23. 0:00 = midnight 12:00 = midday To convert pm to 24-hour time: add 12 to the hour. 3:00 pm → 3 + 12 = 15:00 8:45 pm → 8 + 12 = 20:45 To convert back: subtract 12 from any hour over 12.	Find 24-hour time on a microwave or oven. "What is 14:30 in 12-hour time?" Answer: 2:30 pm "What is 7:15 am in 24-hour time?" Answer: 07:15

Year 6	Timetables and planning journeys Your child reads and uses timetables — tables that show times for transport, events or activities. timetable — a table of times for when things depart, arrive or happen itinerary — a plan showing what happens at each time during a trip or event They calculate the duration of each leg of a journey and plan connections. They use both 12-hour and 24-hour formats and check: am I reading the right column?	Look at a bus or train timetable together. "Which bus gets us there before 9:00 am?" "How long does each trip take?" Plan a family outing using real timetables.
---------------	--	---

★ Time at a glance — reading the clock and converting units

Reading an analog clock

Time in words	Long hand at	Digital
three o'clock	12 (straight up)	3:00
quarter past three	3	3:15
half past three	6 (straight down)	3:30
quarter to four	9	3:45

Short hand = hours. Long hand = minutes. Count by 5s from 12.

Units of time

Conversion	Real-life feel
60 seconds = 1 minute	<i>Brushing your teeth</i>
60 minutes = 1 hour	<i>A TV show or movie</i>
24 hours = 1 day	<i>From sunrise to sunrise</i>
7 days = 1 week	<i>Monday to next Monday</i>
~4 weeks = 1 month	<i>One school month</i>
12 months = 1 year	<i>One birthday to the next</i>
365 days = 1 year	<i>(366 in a leap year)</i>

Helping at Home — Time and Duration

Worked examples and questions to ask · Prep to Year 6

How it works — worked examples

Year 2 — Reading a clock

The clock shows: short hand between 7 and 8, long hand on 6

Short hand	Between 7 and 8 → it is 7 something
Long hand	On the 6 → half past (30 minutes past)
The time is	half past 7 = 7:30

Tip: always read the **short hand first** — it tells you the hour.

Year 4 — How long did it take?

A movie starts at 1:30 pm and ends at 3:15 pm. How long is the movie?

Step 1	1:30 pm to 2:00 pm = 30 minutes
Step 2	2:00 pm to 3:15 pm = 1 hour 15 minutes
Total duration	30 min + 1 hr 15 min = 1 hour 45 minutes

Tip: jump to the next whole hour first, then count on the remaining minutes.

Year 5 — Converting to 24-hour time

Afternoon and evening times: add 12 to the hour

12-hour time	Rule	24-hour time
7:00 am	morning → keep	07:00
12:00 pm	midday → keep	12:00
3:30 pm	3 + 12 = 15	15:30
8:45 pm	8 + 12 = 20	20:45

Morning (am) times stay the same — just write 0 before single-digit hours: 7:00 am = 07:00

Year 6 — Reading a timetable

Bus timetable — Town Centre to Airport

Stop	Bus A	Bus B	Bus C
Town Centre	07:15	09:30	13:45
City Station	07:28	09:43	13:58
Airport	08:00	10:15	14:30

"How long does Bus B take from Town Centre to Airport?"

09:30 to 10:15 = 45 minutes

"Which bus arrives at the Airport before 8:30 am?" → Bus A (arrives 08:00)

Questions to ask your child

You do not need to know the answer. Ask and let your child do the explaining!

P Prep

- Which takes longer — getting dressed or washing hands?
- What do we do in the morning? What happens at night?
- What day is it today? What day comes after?

1 Year 1

- How long does it take to walk to school — minutes or hours?
- Does a holiday take days, weeks or months?
- How many days in a week? How many months in a year?

2 Year 2

- What time does the clock say? (point to a clock)
- Is the long hand past the 6 or before it?
- How many days until the weekend? Use the calendar.

3 Year 3

- How many minutes in an hour?
- The minute hand is on the 7 — how many minutes past the hour?
- Set a 5-minute timer. Was your guess close?

4 Year 4

- Is 7:30 in the morning am or pm?
- We leave at 10:15 am, arrive at 12:00 pm. How long is the trip?
- How many minutes is 2 and a half hours?

5 Year 5

- What is 6:45 pm in 24-hour time?
- A flight departs at 14:20 and lands at 17:05. How long is the flight?
- What is 22:30 in 12-hour time?

6 Year 6

- Look at this bus timetable — which service is fastest?
- If we need to arrive by 9:00 am, which bus should we catch?
- Plan our trip: write out an itinerary with times for each stop.

Things to try at home

Any age: Ask the time several times a day. Look at analog and digital clocks. Compare what they both show.	Year 1–2: Use a paper calendar. Circle birthdays and holidays. Count how many days away they are.
Year 2–3: Play 'What time is it?' — cover the digital display and read only the analog clock hands.	Year 4: Use real TV guides or bus timetables. Find start and end times. Calculate how long each show or trip takes.
Year 5: Find 24-hour times on a microwave, oven or phone. Convert them to 12-hour time together.	Year 6: Plan a real outing using public transport. Look up timetables online. Write an itinerary with arrival and departure times.

Key words to learn together

duration: how long something takes	analog clock: a clock with hands — a short hand and a long hand
digital clock: a clock that shows time as numbers, e.g. 3:47	hour hand: the short hand — points to the hour
minute hand: the long hand — goes all the way around in 60 minutes	o'clock: the minute hand is at 12 — a whole hour
half past: 30 minutes past the hour — long hand points to 6	quarter past: 15 minutes past the hour — long hand points to 3
quarter to: 15 minutes before the next hour — long hand points to 9	am: morning time — from midnight (0:00) to midday (12:00)
pm: afternoon and evening — from midday (12:00) to midnight	24-hour time: counts hours from 0 to 23 — used in timetables and transport
timetable: a table showing the times when things depart or happen	itinerary: a planned list of times and activities for a trip or event