ESOL – Telling the Time

This companion document covers the same learning as the interactive session, but in a different way so as to be more accessible for learners with sight impairments. Because of this, it does not follow a slide structure.

Welcome

Welcome to this session on telling the time.

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

* Understand the difference between a digital and analogue clock
* Know what the 12-hour and 24-hour clock are
* Tell the time using a digital clock
* Tell the time with an analogue clock

Counting time

There are 24 hours in the day, from midnight on one day to midnight on the next. Each hour is made up of 60 minutes, and each minute is made up of 60 seconds.

We can describe what time it is by saying how many hours, minutes and even seconds since midnight that day. Usually we only say how many hours and minutes have passed, since seconds are so short.

When counting how many minutes have passed in an hour, if the time is between 1 and 30 minutes after the hour, we use **past**. For example, ten past two.

If the time is between 31 and 59 minutes after the hour, we usually say how many minutes are left **to** the next hour. For example, five to six.

The 24 hours of the day can be split into two 12-hour groups. The morning has 12 hours, up to midday, and the afternoon has another 12 hours, which takes us up to midnight.

The 12-hour clock

The hours of the morning are counted from one to twelve. We might say that something will happen at nine o’clock in the morning, or 9am.

The hours of the afternoon can be counted as another one to twelve, such as when we say two o’clock in the afternoon, or 2pm.

When we count this way, it is known as the 12-hour clock. When you are using the 12-hour clock it is important that you say if the time is in the morning or the afternoon. You can do this by using am and pm after the times, such as 10am or 3pm.

The 24-hour clock

We can also count the hours in the day as the number of hours since midnight.

9am is nine hours since midnight. 2pm is fourteen hours since midnight.

When we count in this way it is known as the 24-hour clock. Time told in the 24-hour clock is always written as hours and minutes, such as 09:00 or 14:00. You might hear someone say “fourteen hundred hours” or “fourteen twenty”. You would never hear someone say “fourteen o’clock” or “twenty past fourteen”.

Times written in the 24-hour clock do not need am or pm because there is just one set of 24 hours in a day.

Converting between 12-hour and 24-hour clocks

Although you can read the time from a 24-hour clock as it is written, most people will still use the 12-hour clock when they talk about the time, even if they are reading it from a 24-hour display. This means it is important to be able to convert between the 12-hour clock and 24-hour clock.

Converting a time in the morning is easy, as it will be exactly the same in the 24-hour clock as the 12-hour clock. The only difference is that you will say am after the time. For example, 08:00 becomes 8am.

To convert a time in the afternoon, you will need to subtract the 12 hours of the morning from the number you have on the 24-hour clock, and then say pm after it. For example, 16:00 becomes 4pm as 16 minus 12 equals 4.

Have a go for yourself. Can you convert these times written in the 24-hour clock into 12-hour clock times?

* 07:50
* 11:34
* 15:15
* 19:45
* 23:00

Here are the answers.

* 07:50 is 7.50am
* 11:34 is 11.34am
* 15:15 is 3.15pm
* 19:45 is 7.45pm
* 23:00 is 11.00pm

Types of clock

There are two types of clock that we use to tell the time.

An **analogue clock** has hands that show the hours and minutes. The little hand shows the hours. The big hand shows the minutes. Analogue clocks only count up to 12, so they always use the 12-hour clock.

A **digital clock** uses digits to show the hours and minutes, with a colon or other separator in between. Digital clocks can show time using the 12-hour clock or the 24-hour clock.

On the hour

When the time is on the hour, we use ‘o’clock’ after the number to say what time it is. For example, if it was eight hours after midnight we would say it was 8 o’clock in the morning, or 8am.

On an analogue clock, the hour is shown by the big hand being on the 12 and the little hand pointing to the number showing which hour it is.

Consider these analogue clocks. What times are they showing?

* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the five.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the two.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the four.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the eight.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the ten.

Here are the answers.

* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the five is showing 5 o’clock.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the two is showing 2 o’clock.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the four is showing 4 o’clock.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the eight is showing 8 o’clock.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the twelve and the little hand on the ten is showing 10 o’clock.

On a digital clock, the display always uses two digits for the hours, even for times that are less than ten hours. When this happens, there will be a zero in front of the hour. Digital times that are on the hour show a number for the hour and zero for the minutes.

Consider these digital clocks. What times are they showing?

* A digital clock showing zero four zero zero.
* A digital clock showing zero six zero zero.
* A digital clock showing one zero zero zero.
* A digital clock showing one five zero zero.
* A digital clock showing two two zero zero.

Here are the answers.

* A digital clock showing zero four zero zero is showing 4 o’clock in the morning.
* A digital clock showing zero six zero zero is showing 6 o’clock in the morning.
* A digital clock showing one zero zero zero is showing 10 o’clock in the morning.
* A digital clock showing one five zero zero is showing 3 o’clock in the afternoon.
* A digital clock showing two two zero zero is showing 10 o’clock in the evening.

Half past

When it is thirty minutes past the hour, we can say the time in three different ways.

We can say:

* half past (hour)
* half (hour)
* (hour) thirty

These are all correct.

On an analogue clock, the minute hand points to the six. On a digital clock, the minutes say 30.

For example, consider a digital and analogue clock. They are showing the same time, which is 30 minutes after 4am. We could say this as half past four, half four and four thirty. All are correct.

The digital clock shows zero four three zero. The analogue clock has the big hand pointing at the six and the small hand pointing half way between the three and the four. The hour hand is no longer pointing directly at the four because it continues to move around the clock as time moves on, so by half past the hour it is already half of the way towards the five.

Consider these clocks. What times are they showing?

* An analogue clock with the big hand on the six and the little hand half-way between the five and the six.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the six and the little hand half-way between the ten and the eleven.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the six and the little hand half-way between the two and the three.
* A digital clock showing zero nine three zero.
* A digital clock showing zero seven three zero.
* A digital clock showing two zero three zero.

Here are the answers.

* An analogue clock with the big hand on the six and the little hand half-way between the five and the six is showing five-thirty.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the six and the little hand half-way between the ten and the eleven is showing ten-thirty.
* An analogue clock with the big hand on the six and the little hand half-way between the two and the three is showing two-thirty.
* A digital clock showing zero nine three zero is showing nine-thirty.
* A digital clock showing zero seven three zero is showing seven-thirty.
* A digital clock showing two zero three zero is showing eight-thirty.

Quarter past

A quarter of an hour is fifteen minutes.

You will hear people talk about quarter past the hour. For example, a quarter past three means fifteen minutes after 3 o’clock. We can say this is a quarter past (hour), or (hour) fifteen.

On an analogue clock, the minute hand points to 3 on the clock. On a digital clock, the minutes say 15.

For example, consider a digital and analogue clock. They are showing the same time, which is 15 minutes after 5pm. The analogue clock has the big hand pointing at the three and the little hand pointing just after the five. The digital clock is showing zero five one five. We could say this as a quarter past five, or five fifteen. Both are correct.

Consider these clocks. What times are they showing?

* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the three and the little hand just past the one.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the three and the little hand just past the ten.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the three and the little hand just past the five.
* A digital clock showing zero eight one five.
* A digital clock showing zero three one five.
* A digital clock showing two one one five.

Here are the answers.

* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the three and the little hand just past the one is showing quarter past one.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the three and the little hand just past the ten is showing quarter past ten.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the three and the little hand just past the five is showing quarter past five.
* A digital clock showing zero eight one five is showing quarter past eight in the morning.
* A digital clock showing zero three one five is showing quarter past three in the morning.
* A digital clock showing two one one five is showing quarter past nine in the evening.

Quarter to

We can also talk about a quarter to the hour. For example, a quarter to three means fifteen minutes before 3 o’clock.

We can say this is a quarter to (next hour), or (previous hour) forty-five.

On an analogue clock, the minute hand points to nine on the clock. On a digital clock, the minutes say 45.

For example, consider a digital and analogue clock. They are showing the same time, which is 45 minutes after 11am. On the analogue clock, the big hand is pointing at the nine and the little hand is pointing just before the twelve. The digital clock is showing one one four five. We could say this as a quarter to twelve or eleven forty-five. Both are correct.

On the analogue clock, the little hand is now closer to the twelve than to the eleven. This is because it is nearly twelve o’clock.

Consider these clocks. What times are they showing?

* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the nine and the little hand just before the three.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the nine and the little hand just before the five.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the nine and the little hand just before the ten.
* A digital clock showing one four four five.
* A digital clock showing zero eight four five.
* A digital clock showing one six four five.

Here are the answers.

* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the nine and the little hand just before the three is showing two forty-five or quarter to three.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the nine and the little hand just before the five is showing four forty-five or quarter to five.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the nine and the little hand just before the ten is showing nine forty-five or quarter to ten.
* A digital clock showing one four four five is showing two forty-five in the afternoon or quarter to three in the afternoon.
* A digital clock showing zero eight four five is showing right forty-five in the morning, or quarter to nine in the morning.
* A digital clock showing one six four five is showing four forty-five in the afternoon or quarter to five in the afternoon.

Other times

O’clock, half past, quarter to and quarter past are just four times that occur within an hour. To describe the other times, we use the number of minutes that have past in that hour, or are still yet to pass.

We can say the time using minutes in two ways:

* Hour minutes, for example 8.40 could be “eight forty”
* Minutes past or to the hour , for example 6.20 could be “twenty past six”

Although you can describe any number of minutes, it is common to refer to the time using the nearest five or ten minute groups, such as “three forty” when the time is 3.38pm.

Consider these clocks. What times are they showing?

* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the ten and the little hand just before the six.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing at the five and the little hand just after the four.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing at the four and the little hand between the seven and the eight.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing at the seven and the little hand between the nine and the ten.
* A digital clock showing zero eight two zero.
* A digital clock showing one one zero five.
* A digital clock showing zero nine five five.
* A digital clock showing one eight four zero.

Here are the answers.

* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing to the ten and the little hand just before the six is showing ten to six, or five forty.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing at the five and the little hand just after the four is showing five past four.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing at the four and the little hand between the seven and the eight is showing twenty past seven.
* An analogue clock with the big hand pointing at the seven and the little hand between the nine and the ten is showing twenty-five to ten, or nine thirty-five.
* A digital clock showing zero eight two zero is showing eight twenty, or twenty past eight.
* A digital clock showing one one zero five is showing five past eleven.
* A digital clock showing zero nine five five is showing five to ten, or nine fifty-five.
* A digital clock showing one eight four zero is showing eight forty, or twenty to nine.

Summary

Well done. You have completed this session on telling the time.

You should now be able to:

* Understand the difference between a digital and analogue clock
* Know the what the 12-hour and 24-hour clock are
* Tell the time using a digital clock
* Tell the time with an analogue clock

If you have any questions about anything covered in this session, please speak to your tutor for more help.