



The Clock Rap



What's this one all about?

Some children find it really difficult to learn to tell the time. This activity, combined with its partner activity, Past or To?, will sort it out once and for all.

The Clock Rap is based on the idea that if children can learn to speak times in sequence, and understand that times follow one another in a logical order, then all begins to make sense.

It is also built on the principle of building up learning step by step.

You can play it first as a whole class and then work with a group and get children tutoring each other in pairs. It really works a treat, and it is really good fun!

The teacher bits...

Learning Intentions:

I can count in hours, I can count in half hours, I can count in quarter hours, I can count in 5 minute intervals.

Age: 6-8

What you need: A geared teaching clock and small geared clocks for pupils.

The activity

How to Play

Gather the children together. They can be seated or standing.

Set the clock to 12 o'clock and establish what time it says. Turn it to 1 o'clock and ask the time again. Do the same for two o'clock etc.

Tell the children they are going to learn a clock rap. Sit (or stand) with your hands on your knees facing your pupils. Slap your thighs, Clap your hands, Snap the fingers on one hand, Snap the fingers on the other hand. Ask the pupils to join in.

Get a nice steady rhythm going:

Thigh, clap, snap, snap, thigh, clap, snap, snap, thigh, clap, snap, snap ...

[If your pupils cannot manage the snapping they can use different actions, just as long as there are four].

Once you have a rhythm then, along with the actions, begin to chant like this.

Thigh	clap	snap	snap
12	o'	clock	
1	o'	clock	
2	o'	clock	
3	o'	clock	
Etc			

Once you have the pupils doing the actions comfortably without you, then let them do the actions while you turn the clock to each time as they chant it. Point out to them that in each hour the minute hand goes the whole way round the clock. The hour hand moves forwards by one hour.

Development

Point out that the game is too easy. Make it a little harder.

Starting at the hour you have reached, turn the time to the next half hour and ask what time it is. Discuss the reason for half past 3 being called half past 3 – the minute hand has gone half way round the clock, it is half way from one hour to the next hour etc.

Continue the rap and get the children to join in.

Thigh	clap	snap	snap
3	o'	clock	
Half	past	3	
4	o'	clock	
Half	past	4	
etc			

Again, point out that the game is too easy. Make it a little harder. Turn the time forwards a quarter of an hour from the last hour and ask what the time is. Discuss the reason for quarter past 6 being called quarter past 6 – the minute hand has gone a quarter of the way round the clock, it is a quarter of the way from one hour to the next hour, etc. Turn to half past 6 and ask for the time. Then turn to quarter to 7. Discuss the fact that the time after half past 6 is quarter to 7, because we are now going ~~to~~ the next hour. We have a quarter of an hour left until we reach 7 o'clock, etc.

Continue the rap, putting in the quarter hours.

Thigh	clap	snap	snap
6	o'	clock	
Quarter		past	6
Half	past	6	
Quarter		to	7
7	o'	clock	
Etc			

Stop and discuss what the hour hand is doing as the minute hand moves. At half past it is exactly half way between one number and the next. At quarter past, it is just past the number. At quarter to it is nearly at the next number.

Adding Some Fun

Start the rap at a time in the morning round about when the children get up (eg 6 o'clock.) Discuss the time of an event in the school day (eg lunch time). Agree with the children that when the rap gets to the time of this event (eg quarter past 12), they have to jump up out of their seats and shout eg 'lunch time'. Repeat, starting at different times of day and jumping up with different events.

Digital Time

Once the children are confident with the analogue time, you can use the same technique for digital time. Use the analogue clock face as before, but get the children chanting the digital time.

Thigh	clap	snap	snap
2	zero	zero	
2	fif-	teen	
2	thir-	ty	
2	forty	five	
3	zero	zero	
etc			

If they get good at this, then split the class down the middle and have half of the class doing the digital and half doing the analogue *at the same time*. Catch them just after quarter to and ask each half of the class what they have just said. (eg quarter to **11**, and **10.45**). Discuss the fact that the digital time sticks with the same hour right up until eg 10.55, whereas the analogue time switches over after the half hour.

Following this, then get everyone doing **one hour (in quarters) analogue followed by the next hour (in quarters) digital**, followed by the next hour analogue, etc.

You can then have some useful discussions about the fact that in digital time you say 2.45 because it is 45 minutes after two o'clock, but in analogue time you say 'quarter to three' because it is only quarter of an hour until three o'clock.

Finally, get the children to go round the clock saying **each time twice, first in digital, then in analogue.**

Thigh	clap	snap	snap
2	zero	zero	
2	o'	clock	
2	fif-	teen	
quarter		past	two
2	thir-	ty	
half	past	two	
2	forty	five	
quarter		to	three
3	zero	zero	
etc			

Support for Learning

In a typical class, there will inevitably be children who *don't get it*.

The best way forwards is to do some intensive work with them in a small group and then use peer tutoring as follows:

- Find the level in the above progression that you want to work at with them.
- Practise as a small group until one child sounds completely confident. Then ask this child to be silent and continue with the others until another is confident.
- Send these two children off to work in a pair with another clock, one being teacher and one pupil and then swapping over.
- You continue with the others and repeat the process, either sending the next confident child to join the first two to make a three, or waiting until you have another two ready to pair up.

Using this approach means that your attention is on those who most need it, and everyone gets lots of practice.

Once you have everyone confident, gather the group together and begin the process over again, on the next level of the game.

Note:

If they are really having difficulty sorting out their 'past' from their 'to', an even simpler version of the game is to start (eg) at 3 o'clock and turn the hands slowly clockwise as you chant 'past 3, past 3, past 3, past 3'.

When you pass 3.30 then switch to chanting 'to 4, to 4, to 4, to 4'.

When you pass 4 o'clock, then switch to chanting 'past 4, past 4, past 4, past 4' etc.

Stop every so often to discuss.

If you continue like this for a while, all chanting together, they should soon understand clearly how 'past' and 'to' work.

Further Development

Once the pupils are secure with the quarter hours you can introduce 5 minute intervals. Refresh the pupils' memories about the number of minutes in an hour, a half hour, a quarter of an hour. Establish that when the minute hand moves from the hour to five past then five minutes have passed, ditto for ten past. Discuss the fact that quarter past is 15 minutes past. Then comes 20 past, then 25 past. Then after half past we count down to the next hour. 25 to, 20 to, quarter to, 10 to, 5 to. Point out the symmetry of the times – 20 to is opposite 20 past etc.

Continue the rap, putting in the five minute intervals hours.

Thigh	clap	snap	snap
9	o'	clock	
Five	past	9	
Ten	past	9	
Quarter	past	9	
Twenty	past	9	<i>Twenty</i>
<i>Five</i>	past	9	
Half	past	9	<i>Twenty</i>
<i>Five</i>	to	10	Etc

Point out that you speak the 'twenty' part of twenty-five a little earlier to fit with the rhythm.

Catch the pupils at the change from one hour to the next (going from half past to twenty-five to). Again discuss why the number changes at this point (we are now going to the next hour, etc.) Practise until the pupils are confident with this change.

Digital Time

Repeat, introducing digital time, first on its own and then in tandem with the analogue as outlined above.

Once the children have 'got it', keep practising regularly throughout the year.

Have fun!