

Telling the time

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Background

This extract demonstrates a range of devices used to organise information in non-fiction texts, such as headings, bold print and a variety of fonts. It also demonstrates how text can be supported with images. The extract also contains specialised language, which will require the children to develop their skills in using and making dictionaries and glossaries. The informal tone and style of the italicised introductory paragraph stands in marked contrast to the rest of the piece.

Shared reading and discussing the text

- Ask the children which section of the library they think this book comes from (for example, the science section). Remind the children of the Wes Magee extract and ask them whether they think 'Telling the time' is fiction or non-fiction. What reasons can they give?
- Read the three sections separately and discuss the gist of each to demonstrate that the information has been organised into clear areas. The first section introduces the topic, the second section looks at the reason for the development of units of time and the third looks at the development of clocks. Can the children spot the lead sentence for each?
- Ask the children to identify unfamiliar words and explain that this non-fiction text contains language that is special to the subject, for example *clepsydra*. Explain that the word *sundial* is presented in bold print because the word appears in the book's glossary.
- Ask the children why the image of the sundial is there (to make the text clearer and add a visual dimension to the page). What do they notice about the caption for the image? Why has the publisher used different fonts, bold print and enlarged headings? Ask the children to start a collection of different fonts and headings from newspapers and magazines.

Activities

- As shared writing, make a list with the children of all the different presentational devices they discussed above. Write a code by each one:

– main heading	MH
– sub-heading	SH
– font size	FS
– font type	FT

and so on. Working in groups with their own copies of the text, the children can then go on to label all these features.

- Ask the children which of the two main sections they found most interesting and then put the children into pairs who have chosen the same section. Explain that they and their partners should write down the most important facts in their chosen section. Then ask the children to add any more information they may already know.
- Ask the children to record all the occasions when they need to know the time accurately during their week, for example for the start of school, television programmes and football matches, to catch buses, trains, and so on. Provide them with the title 'Why time is important to me' and ask them to write a general introductory statement, followed by a bulleted list.
- Tell the children to build up a word bank of any new vocabulary from the text, for example *sundial*, *clepsydra*. They could add other words from other books they have read about time, to build up a glossary.

Extension/further reading

There are several good books about time, including *What's the Big Idea? Time and the Universe* by John Gribbin (Hodder Children's Books) and *Nuffield Science and Literacy Big Book 2: Time and Space* by Derek Bell (Collins Educational).