HOW LONG IS A MINUTE?

Mastering time

OK, a day lasts 24 hours, and there are 60 minutes in an hour.
This helps us to get organized when we have tasks to do.
But are you sure you're estimating the right amount of time for a task?

Often, we may underestimate or overestimate how long a task will take, leading to stress, delays, or wasted time. Accurately understanding and estimating time for each task can improve our productivity, help us meet deadlines, and reduce last-minute rushes.

Overview "*How long is a minute?*"

How long is a minute?

Context
Work-related
Everyday life

Cognitive processes
Managing situations
Problem solving
Critical thinking

Target group (incl. necessary prior skills and competences)

All trainees, no maths prerequisites

Content
Quantity and number
Durations

Dispositions
Positive (self-)beliefs

Outcomes and results

Better understanding of durations

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Main information

Content	Estimating, comparing, calculating duration
Target group	All trainees
Learning intention	Numeracy for professional and everyday life issues
Duration	2 lessons, with personal work in between
Material and resources	Chronometers (or smartphone's app) List of daily life situations (or pictures)
Group size	Range from 6 to 12 learners
Problem statement	We constantly have to manage our time: do I have time to do this or that, how much time do I need to do this or that, which task should I give priority to...? And sometimes we find ourselves in difficulty because we've misjudged how much time we really need. How can we better estimate the time needed to get organized?
Working questions	- Do I have a good idea of how long it will take to perform everyday tasks?
Learning outcomes and results	- Realize that my estimates are not the same as those of my training colleague - Accuracy of my estimates - Take into account the time really needed - Better organization
Reference to National Qualification Frame	Optional (country's decision)

Working plan

Time (lessons)	Description of content/activities	Material	Methodical and didactic information[1]
1	Introduction to the topic The trainer asks the participants the questions: - How long is a day? - And an hour? - And a minute? So you seem to be familiar with time measurement units, but are you sure what they really represent?		Brainstorming Questioning
	The trainer suggests a game: he will start a stopwatch, and each of the participants will have to raise their hand when they estimate that 30 seconds have elapsed. The experiment will be repeated several times, with the same or different durations: longer (1 minute) or shorter (20 seconds, 10 seconds).	One chronometer for the trainer	Experiment Critical thinking Self-reflexion
	So we have a different perception of time. Now, do we estimate the time needed in the same way? The teacher provides a list of everyday situations, asking each learner to estimate the time needed to complete these activities. The proposals are then compared and discussed. Some situations are difficult to compare, because we don't have the same practices: we don't eat the same thing for breakfast, for example. But there are also more surprising gaps: the time it takes to smoke a cigarette or drink a coffee, or to come	Appendix 1	Experiment Collaborative learning Critical thinking Self-reflexing

[1] for description and explanation of kinds of tasks, HITS and other background information please consult the teacher's/user's guide

	from the bus station to the training centre. How do we agree? We need to time it. Learners then time simple activities in and around the training centre, and compare the results with their previous estimates. Discussion of the results: are they surprised? Do they tend to overestimate or underestimate the time required? For the next session, the teacher asks them to time the other activities at home.	Chronometers or smartphone's app	
2	The teacher reviews the experiments carried out during the first session. He asks the learners if they were able to measure the time needed for the other activities, and what the results were. Now that everyone has a better idea of how much time they need, the trainer suggests some exercises along the lines of: I've got a set amount of time, what can I really do?	Appendix 2	Questioning
	Transfer At the end of the 2 sessions, there will be time to reflect on what each person has learned about themselves, and how they can use it in the future. This can be extended with the session "Don't be late at your date!"		Self-reflexion

Suggestions for the teacher/user

The example presented here should be considered as exemplary and inspirational material presenting a guideline with a high range of possibilities of adapting those suggestions to a specific group of learners or an individual learner with his or her very personal requirements.

In concrete terms, this example could be adapted these ways:

- Duration: depending on the level of autonomy of the people, it is possible to spend less time on step 1 (identify the units of measurement)
- Level of difficulty: this example is also a good introduction to decimal numbers. If relevant for your trainees, it may be interesting to reinforce this dimension

It is particularly interesting to note that a trainee who has difficulty with "formal" measurement may have a very good ability to estimate, and vice versa. This activity can thus be very interesting to develop self-confidence and self-esteem

Our educational activities aim at numeracy skills being not only memorized, but first of all being practiced and functionally used by the learners in daily life or/and vocational situations. It is therefore recommended to implement the idea of HITS[2] (higher impacts of teaching skills) as far and often as possible: ...

- ... work with concrete and authentic material that learners will recognize from everyday life situations.
- ... ask the learners questions and let them raise questions themselves. It can be crucial to discuss numeracy themes, contexts and numbers.
- ... think of possible ways of transfer: identify all measurement situations related to their specific professional environment, rely on internship periods in companies if they exist in the training program...

[2] For general information and explanation on HITS please see the teacher's/user's guide

Appendix 1

How long does it take to...?

Activity	Estimated time	Measured time
Waking up		
Getting from the metro station to the training centre		
Smoking a cigarette		
Vacuuming your home		
Check your email		
Drink a coffee		
Go from the training room to the reception desk		
Go from the training centre to the bakery		
Getting dressed		
Packing up at the end of the training day		
Having breakfast		
Taking a shower		
Lunch at noon		
Shopping at the supermarket		

If the learners have difficulty with reading and writing, give them labels with the activities.

Appendix 2

- The training's break lasts 15 minutes; do I have time to:
    - Go to the bakery and buy something to eat?
    - Go to reception for my administrative file and have a cigarette?
    - Smoke a cigarette and have a coffee?

- The lunch break lasts an hour; do I have time to:
    - Go home for lunch?
    - Eat and go shopping at the supermarket?

- How much time do I need in the morning before I leave home for training?