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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 05/02/15

## Time to discuss the time

Two hundred or so years ago every town and city in the UK had a different time. For example, if it was 11.00am in London, in Bristol, which is 200 miles to the west, it would be 10.50am. This is because each had their own time according to a local sundial. Local time had worked for hundreds of years – right across the world in fact!

When the railways started running, a railway timetable was introduced, as trains need to run on a timetable. This meant there could only be one time, from which everything would run from. That time in the UK was Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The time signal for this ran from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, London, along cables that ran alongside the railway lines to every station in the UK.

Standardised Time, as it was known, started on the Great Western Railway in November 1840. As the railways expanded over the next few years railway companies gradually altered local times to Standardised Time. Some railway clocks for a number of years showed two times – local time and railway time.

Another key purpose for the amendment of time was for safety reasons. It helped to reduce the number of accidents and near misses on the railways, which were becoming more frequent as the number of steam train journeys increased.

According to *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, in 1848, the railways that had adopted London Time included the London and South Western, the Chester and Birkenhead, the Lancaster and Carlisle, the East Lancashire, the York and North Midland, and the Midland.

So next time you visit your local railway station look up at the big station clock. It might remind you of this English lesson!

## SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about time. Go round the room swapping details with others.

## LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

## READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

## SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

**1) The article** – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

**2) The article** - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

**3) Article quiz** - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

### Student A questions

- 1) Name two railway companies.
- 2) What does GMT stand for?
- 3) What is the Royal Observatory?
- 4) Where is the Royal Observatory?
- 5) What is *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*?

### Student B questions

- 1) What might remind you of this English lesson?
- 2) What did some railway clocks show for some time?
- 3) What is a sundial?
- 4) What is Standardised Time?
- 5) What was another key purpose for the amendment to Standardised Time?

**Category: The Railways / Time / Railway Time**  
**Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate**

Time to discuss the time – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015

**WRITING / SPEAKING**

*In pairs.* On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**Time**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

**WRITING / SPEAKING**

*In pairs* choose three things you know about railway clocks. Write them below. Talk about them!

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Add** three things you might see on a railway station platform. Discuss together.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Add** three things you might see in a railway station (not on the platform!). Discuss together.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

*The teacher* will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1**

*In groups.* One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Time to discuss the time.*

- 1) A railway enthusiast.
- 2) A train driver.
- 3) A commuter.
- 4) A tourist.

*The teacher* will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

**SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY**

*In pairs – Student A* is a tourist. *Student B* is a station information officer. *Student A* is traveling from this station to somewhere else. Get some information from *Student B* about how to get from here to somewhere else and how much it will cost you?

**SPEAKING - DISCUSSION**

*Allow 10 minutes – As a class.*

<p><i>Discuss the following...</i></p> <p>Time - How important is it?</p>
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*The teacher* can moderate the session.

**DISCUSSION**

**Student A questions**

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Do you look at the railway clock when you dash into the railway station?
- 3) How often do you use a train?
- 4) When did your town/city convert to Standardised Time?
- 5) How often do you check the time?
- 6) What is the difference in time between your town/city and London in hours?
- 7) Do you think there would have been much opposition to the introduction of Standardised Time in your town/city when the railways arrived?
- 8) How many clocks and watches are there in your house?
- 9) Has this been a difficult lesson?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

**DISCUSSION**

**Student B questions**

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) When were you last in London?
- 3) Would you like to visit the Royal Observatory in Greenwich?
- 4) How do you read the time? Using what?
- 5) Had you heard about *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* before today's English lesson?
- 6) Would you prefer to be on local time rather than Standardised Time?
- 7) When did you last go on a steam train?
- 8) Would you like to work on the railways?
- 9) How safe are the railways today from accidents on the line?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

**GAP FILL: READING**

**Time to discuss the time**

Two hundred or so years ago every town and city in the UK had a different (1)\_\_. For example, if it was 11.00am in London, in Bristol, which is 200 miles to the west, it would be 10.50am. This is because each had their own time according to a local (2)\_\_. Local time had worked for hundreds of years – right across the world in fact!

When the railways started running, a railway timetable was introduced, as (3)\_\_ need to run on a (4)\_\_. This meant there could only be one time, from which everything would run from. That time in the UK was Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The time signal for this ran from the Royal (5)\_\_ in Greenwich, London, along (6)\_\_ that ran alongside the railway lines to every (7)\_\_ in the UK.

Standardised Time, as it was known, started on the Great Western Railway in November 1840. As the (8)\_\_ expanded over the next few year's railway

**observatory / timetable / railways / trains / sundial / time / station / cables**

companies (1)\_\_ altered local times to Standardised Time. Some railway clocks for a number of years showed two times – (2)\_\_ time and railway time.

Another (3)\_\_ (4)\_\_ for the amendment of time was for safety reasons. It helped to reduce the number of accidents and near misses on the railways, which were becoming more (5)\_\_ as the number of steam train (6)\_\_ increased.

According to *Bradshaw's Railway* (7)\_\_, in 1848, the railways that had adopted London Time included the London and South Western, the Chester and Birkenhead, the Lancaster and Carlisle, the East Lancashire, the York and North Midland, and the Midland.

So next time you visit your local railway station look up at the big station (8)\_\_. It might remind you of this English lesson!

**clock / frequent / purpose / journeys / key / gradually / local / guide /**

**GAP FILL: GRAMMAR**

**Time to discuss the time**

Two hundred or so years ago every town and city in the UK had a different time. For example, if it was 11.00am in London, in Bristol, (1)\_\_ is 200 miles to the west, it (2)\_\_ be 10.50am. This is (3)\_\_ each had their own time according to a local sundial. Local time had worked for hundreds of years – right across the world in fact!

(4)\_\_ the railways started running, a railway timetable was introduced, as trains need to run on a timetable. This meant there (5)\_\_ only be one time, from which everything would run from. (6)\_\_ time in the UK was Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The time signal for this ran from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, London, along cables that ran alongside the railway lines to (7)\_\_ station in the UK.

Standardised Time, as it was known, started on the Great Western Railway in November 1840. As the railways expanded (8)\_\_ the next few year's railway

**which / over / because / every / when / could / would / that**

companies gradually altered local times to Standardised Time. Some railway clocks (1)\_\_ a number of years showed two times – local time and railway time.

Another key purpose for the amendment (2)\_\_ time was for safety reasons. It helped to reduce the number of accidents and near misses (3)\_\_ the railways, which were becoming more frequent as the number of steam train journeys increased.

According to *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, in 1848, the railways that had adopted London Time included the London and South Western, the Chester and Birkenhead, the Lancaster (4)\_\_ Carlisle, the East Lancashire, (5)\_\_ York and North Midland, and the Midland.

(6)\_\_ next time (7)\_\_ visit your local railway station look up (8)\_\_ the big station clock. It might remind you of this English lesson!

**for / you / and / the / so / on / of / at**

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

### Time to discuss the time

\_\_\_\_\_ years ago every town and city in the UK had a different time. For example, if it was 11.00am in London, in Bristol, which is 200 miles to the west, it would be 10.50am. This is because each had their own time according \_\_\_\_\_. Local time had worked for hundreds of years – right across the world in fact!

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## WRITING/SPELLING

### WRITING / SPEAKING

**1) On the board** - *In pairs*, list 20 things you might see at a railway station. *One-two minutes. Talk about each of them.*

**2) Sentence starters** - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) The station clock \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) The railways \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Time \_\_\_\_\_

**3) Homework** - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **Time to discuss the time.** Your email can be read out in class.

### GAP FILL READING

- 1) time
- 2) sundial
- 3) trains
- 4) timetable
- 5) observatory
- 6) cables
- 7) station
- 8) railways

### ANSWERS

- 1) gradually
- 2) local
- 3) key
- 4) purpose
- 5) frequent
- 6) journeys
- 7) guide
- 8) clock

### SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) because
- 2) timetable
- 3) sundial
- 4) which
- 5) everything
- 6) Greenwich
- 7) observatory
- 8) signal
- 9) cables
- 10) alongside

### SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

**Pass = 12**

**Good = 15**

**Very good = 18**

**Excellent = 20**

- 11) every
- 12) gradually
- 13) another
- 14) key
- 15) amendment
- 16) safety
- 17) accidents
- 18) guide
- 19) might
- 20) across

Time to discuss the time – *5<sup>th</sup> February 2015*