Time is not a decimal: cross the hour with confidence

Years 3–5; read a digital clock first

1. A lesson starts at 9:45 am and ends at 10:20 am on the same day. How long is it? Mark the jumps on a timeline.

2. A journey begins at 11:50 am and lasts 35 minutes. At what time does it end?

3. A session ends at 2:15 pm after 50 minutes. When did it begin?

Try it. Explain it. Check it.

4. A pupil says 9:45 to 10:20 is 75 minutes because 1020 − 945 = 75. Explain the mistake.

5. Which is longer: 8:55–9:25 am, or 10:40–11:05 am? By how much?

6. Create a same-day interval lasting 45 minutes that crosses an hour. Give the start, finish and a check.

Answers and teaching notes

1. 35 minutes: 15 to 10:00, then 20 to 10:20.

2. 12:25 pm: 10 minutes to noon, then 25 more.

3. 1:25 pm: 50 minutes later is 2:15 pm.

4. Clock notation uses 60 minutes per hour, not 100. The calculation treats the readings as ordinary base-ten numbers.

5. First: 30 minutes. Second: 25 minutes. First is 5 minutes longer.

6. Example: 3:35 pm to 4:20 pm. 25 + 20 = 45 minutes. Accept any valid same-day interval crossing an hour.

What to ask next

Ask for a new interval with an unknown start. If the explanation is secure, introduce longer durations; do not infer a general difficulty from one slip.

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