

1

Five words, in order

Lay the five unit cards out in a row, hours, days, weeks, months and years, and say each one as it goes down. Give every card something the class has lived through, this morning for hours, the whole of yesterday for a day, the school week for a week, this term for months and the time since last year's school photo for a year.

Say what a day is while the day card is going down. One day is 24 hours. If you eat breakfast, and then eat breakfast again, a whole day has gone by.

"Hours, days, weeks, months, years. Which one is the shortest?"

"How many days do you think fit inside one week?"

2

Something you have done

Work along the row again and let the class supply the example for each card, so the units are tied to their own lives rather than to yours. Write one example under each card and leave the row up for the rest of the unit.

"What else lasts about a day? Tell me one thing you have done."

"What takes weeks rather than days? How do you know?"

3

The card that does not belong

Put a sixth card named metres into the row and read all six out as though nothing were wrong.

"One of these is not a unit of time. Which one?"

"What does metres measure, if it does not measure how long something lasts?"

Metres measures how long an object is. The other five measure how long an event lasts, and naming that difference is what makes the word unit mean something.

4

Counting breakfasts

Ask how anyone could tell, without a calendar, whether something took more than a day. Take answers, then give them the test. One day is 24 hours, so if you ate breakfast, and then ate breakfast again before it finished, a whole day went by. Try it on school camp, on the holidays and on a trip to the shops.

"Did you eat breakfast twice before it finished?"

"How many breakfasts were there? So was it more or less than a day?"

Counting breakfasts is the benchmark students carry out of this lesson, and it works on events nobody has timed.

Print one set and cut along the dashed lines. The metres card is on the next page and stays out of the row until the third activity.

hours

days

weeks

months

years

metres