



Learn to tell time

What's it all about?

The aim of this workshop is to familiarize young children with analog time reading. Using stencils and their imagination, they'll create a colorful dial, to which they'll attach two hands they can operate. What is a dial ? Why is there a long hand and a short one? What's an hour, a minute or a second? These are just some of the questions we'll be tackling to introduce the little ones to the notion of time passing. The workshop is followed by a guided tour of the museum, giving a colorful overview of the different display systems. **Children leave with their own colorful dial.**

What is an analog display?

The time display plays an indispensable role in any timepiece. It reflects a set of mechanical systems at the heart of the movement. A distinction is made between analog displays, as found on clocks and watches, and digital displays, which are very much in vogue these days (and which are tending to overtake analog readouts). Analog displays are well codified these days, and are generally divided into twelve hours. While this way of displaying the time is justified for many reasons, it is not and has not always been the only way to tell the time. There are, for example, dials indicating 6 hours only, or 10 hours or even 24 hours.

Why is this theme so important in the history of time measurement?

As far back as the 13th century and the appearance of the first tower clocks in monasteries, one of the primary functions of timepieces was to connect people and/or institutions with each other, thus enabling better organization of a community or society. Over the centuries, this "connection" took place on an ever larger scale: monastery, town, region, country, world. Evolving needs for precision determined the evolution of internal mechanisms, capable of measuring the passage of time ever more accurately, leading to more precise displays too (hour hand only, then minutes and seconds). The external display of the clock or watch, allowing the time to be read, has also evolved and harmonized over time to meet these two imperatives.

Practical infos

Who is this workshop for?

Children aged 4 to 6

Where does it take place?

At the MIH, in the Hall des pas perdus

When can you take part?

This workshop is available at any time on request from the museum secretariat, who will be happy to answer your questions on +41 32 967.68.61, or by e-mail at info@mih.ch

Workshops are regularly organized on fixed dates during the school vacations. Check our [agenda](#)!

How much does it cost?

CHF 10.- per child

(Minimum CHF 80.-)

(Schools in La Chaux-de-Fonds : subject to agreement)

