

Saving time

What's wrong? Why is everyone staring at me when I walk into class? 'We've been waiting nearly two hours!', they tell me. 'Where have you been?' Oh no – I put my clock back instead of forward, again! I'm so sorry!

Believe me, I won't be the only one getting embarrassed around this time of year. In fact, people in over 70 countries across the world are going through the awkward annual ritual of putting the clock forward for spring or back for autumn. The period in between is known as 'Daylight Saving', because an hour of daylight (in some places, two) is considered to have been 'saved' by being moved from the early morning, when most people are sleeping, to the evening when they can enjoy it.

Why bother changing the clocks at all, when it causes such confusion and inconvenience? Especially to farmers, who are busy enough on spring mornings without having to work in the dark! And how do you explain to a cow that they'll have to wait another hour to be milked, just because those stupid humans have reset their clocks!

Sorry cows – Daylight Saving is here to stay, for economic reasons, if nothing else. Extra daylight in the evening means that more work gets done and less energy is used up on lighting etc. During the oil crisis in the 1970s, for instance, a two-month extension in Daylight Saving is thought to have resulted in energy savings equivalent to 600,000 barrels of oil in the United States alone. And in New Zealand, Daylight saving is estimated to reduce power usage by 3.5% every year.

Daylight saving has some interesting knock-on effects too. For instance, the lighter evenings encourage people to go out more. As a result, they tend to be more active, which improves their health and reduces medical bills. The extra spending of those who choose to spend their longer evenings shopping has been found to have a positive impact on the national economy. The longer evenings are also said to make the streets safer, because the improved visibility deters crime and reduces traffic accidents.

That's all very well and good. But how do I make sure I get the change right next year? Easy-peasy! *Spring* means to jump and *fall* is the American word for autumn. So, next time, just remember: 'Spring Forward and Fall Back'. It's foolproof!

1 Which paragraph in the text (1–6) matches each title below?

- 1 Main argument for Daylight Saving _____
- 2 Additional arguments for Daylight Saving _____
- 3 The downside to Daylight Saving _____
- 4 Practical advice _____
- 5 Introductory anecdote _____
- 6 What is Daylight Saving? _____

2 Read the article again and decide whether these statements about Daylight Saving are true (T) or false (F). Circle the correct statements and correct those that are false.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1 It increases the hours of daylight in the summer. | T/F |
| 2 Over 70 countries put their clocks forward in March. | T/F |
| 3 It causes problems for both farmers and farm animals. | T/F |
| 4 It has positive environmental and social effects. | T/F |
| 5 It discourages people from driving in the evening. | T/F |

3 Using a reporting verb in the passive is a common way to report an opinion or a new piece of knowledge, eg *an hour of daylight ... is considered to have been 'saved'* (paragraph 2). Complete the table with four other examples from the article.

Passive form of reporting verb	Infinitive: present (<i>to do / to be done</i>) or past (<i>to have done / to have been done</i>)
is thought	
	to reduce (power)
has been found	
	to make (the streets safer)

4 Rewrite these sentences, starting with the words 'Daylight Saving', using the grammar from exercise 3.

- 1 They say Daylight Saving was first proposed by Benjamin Franklin.

- 2 They estimate that Daylight Saving has reduced electricity usage in Brazil by 1%.

- 3 People believe that Daylight Saving benefits the tourist industry in Northern Ireland.

- 4 They have found that extended Daylight Saving time causes problems for electronic devices.

- 5 Everyone knows that Daylight Saving is unpopular with many farmers.

- 6 They say that Daylight Saving disrupts people's natural rhythms.

5 Complete these sentences with your own ideas.

- 1 People from my country are said _____
- 2 English is considered _____
- 3 The Earth is thought _____
- 4 Smoking has been shown _____
- 5 The climate is believed _____
- 6 Love is said _____

6 Discuss these questions with your partner(s).

- Are you for or against changing the clocks in spring and autumn?
- Are you a 'morning' or 'evening' person?
- Have you ever made similar mistakes to the one described in paragraph 1?

Glossary

- awkward** (*adjective*) - difficult to deal with - and often embarrassing
- ritual** (*noun*) - something we do regularly and in the same way
- bother** (*verb*) - take trouble
- reset** (*verb*) - to change a machine or instrument back to its original state
- knock-on** (*adjective*) - indirect
- deter** (*verb*) - discourage (people from committing crimes etc)
- easy-peasy** (*adjective - colloquial*) - very simple
- foolproof** (*adjective*) - sure to work
- anecdote** (*noun*) - personal story, usually about a funny or embarrassing incident