

ANCIENT GREECE

Discussion 7 : Why is time divided?

Objectives: To discuss the importance of measuring time and to look at different systems of measuring it.

Materials: None required.

Class set-up: Whole group discussion or small groups brainstorming then sharing ideas

Vocabulary: decade, century, millennium

Discussion:

Discuss the systems that we use to break time into segments (i.e. seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia).

- How do we measure time?
- Why is it important, useful or helpful to break time into segments?

Ask pupils to consider the divisions they have identified and define how they are similar and different. Draw a table on the board and ask pupils to classify the ways that we divide time today as either 'natural' divisions of time or 'constructed' divisions of time (or by some other system that they define collectively or individually).

- Which are 'natural' divisions and which are 'constructed' divisions?

Ask pupils to consider the need for these types of systems. Ask them to consider the ways that we use these systems.

- Why do people create systems and mechanisms for measuring, organizing and ordering time?

Discuss the systems and mechanisms that we use today to keep track of time (e.g.: calendars, watches).

- What vehicles or mechanisms do we use to keep track of time?

Discuss situations in which we rely on the accuracy of time. Discuss how the need for accuracy in measuring time has brought about the development of such systems and mechanisms.

- Why do we need this degree of accuracy today?

Establish that there is a relationship between the need to measure time and the creation of 'constructed' divisions of time. Close the discussion by thinking about what the needs of the ancient Greeks might have been in terms of measuring time

Background information:

None available for this activity.