

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Visual Timers

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Timers are devices that keep track of a certain amount of time. You “set” a timer to count down and then alert you when time is up. To let you know that time has run out, the timer often beeps several times. *Visual timers* are a specific type of timer. Visual timers allow you to “see” the movement of time through clear, visual signals. Visual timers include sand timers where sand falls in an hourglass and *Time Timers®* where a colored dial or disc disappears as time passes.

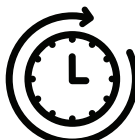
Visual timers are effective tools to use in school. Educators can use these timers to help students manage their time for tests, projects, and assignments, as well as help them plan for the remaining amount of time before they have to transition (move on) to something else. At home, you can use visual timers to help your children move along with a task or chore, or even to set a specific time for activities like reading or quickly answering questions when playing board games.

Why Use Visual Timers?

Visual timers have many uses and benefits. They can:



- **Give children an understanding of time concepts without them having to be able to tell time.** When using a visual timer, children can see the time remaining without having to figure out the hands on a clock—brushing their teeth for two to three minutes, for example.



- **Teach the concept of “How much longer?”** Children can look at a visual timer and know for themselves “how much longer” without having to ask—knowing they have only a few minutes left to clean up their rooms, for example.



- **Help children who have difficulty moving from one activity to another to anticipate and be ready for the change.** If children know that an activity is almost over, they can begin to prepare to switch to a new activity—putting away an assignment and getting ready to go to lunch, for example.



- **Improve children’s focus on tasks and activities.** When they complete an activity, using a visual timer, children can see time passing and can use their time better—double-checking their answers on a test before the five minutes left are up, for example.

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