

# Why do schools have one-hour lessons?



I have been uploading my writing onto this website - dontbesheep.com - for over a year now. My rankings in Google and Yahoo and Yandex are excellent for the keywords I am going for. The trouble is, no one is searching for those keywords so my traffic is practically non-existent. My most recent YouTube video about transitional schools comes up number 6 on the YouTube search if anyone does a search for 'transitional school' - only, nobody does. This is why my video has nine views, and four of those were probably me.

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So here is another article which is asking a question that no one is asking, therefore no one will search for it and therefore nobody will read it.

Do a search on Google or any of the others for '*why do schools have one-hour lessons?*' today and you will get zero pages which address the question. Do the search again a few months from now and there will be I, proudly ranked, except still with no one interested.

But I ask the question anyway: ***Why do schools have one-hour lessons?***

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Not everything that happens in a school has to last for one hour, if I reflect on my experience of different schools. Registration is only ten minutes; morning break is twenty minutes; children are given twenty or thirty minutes to eat their

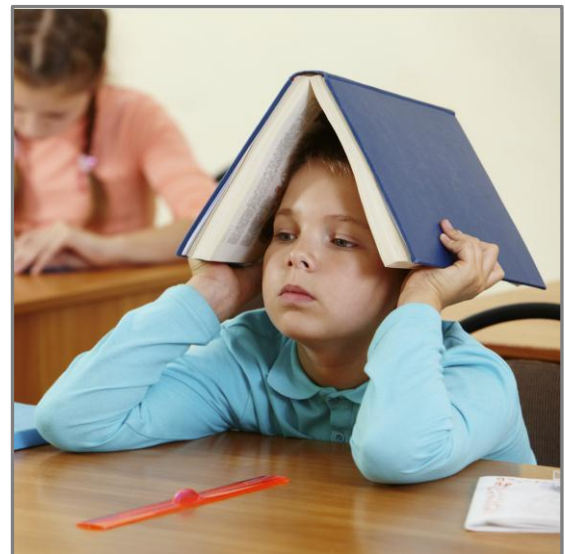
lunch; on parent evening, parents are given ten or fifteen minute slots; assemblies by the head teacher, ear-marked for an hour, usually only last about thirty minutes. So I can conclude that those who run schools are aware that there is not an unbreakable universal law that everything must last about one hour.

Yet, there it is in the timetable: 8-20 to 9-20 **MATHS!** 9,20 to 10.10 **ENGLISH!** (Although, I've always wondered how Maths is supposed to end at 9.20 and English start at 9.20.) So there really is no denying that the administrator is expecting an hour of Maths - it's there in black-and-white. And in case any renegade teacher has strange ideas about an hour of Maths being too much for a seven-year-old, they throw in the concept of sets so that the children all get mixed up and sent off to different places with the exclusive objective of **DOING MATHS** for that whole hour, so there's no getting around it. And if you are a 'good teacher' then you will prepare 'extension activities' for the fastest students so even if the kids have finished the task in thirty minutes there is still no getting around the obligation of doing Maths for an entire hour - day after day, I might add. **IT'S MATHS TIME!**

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So again I ask: *Who in their right mind came up with the idea of children doing an hour of Maths?*

This concept surely flies against everything we know about the way children learn and behave and their limited attention spans. All you need to do is watch children in the playground and observe how many children are doing the same type of activity in the same place for the whole hour of their lunch break. Approximately none, assuming Pokemon Go is banned.



Then ask yourself about your own experience of Maths in your daily lives. How often do you spend an hour doing Maths? Perhaps the monthly accounting or yearly tax returns; but that's a long, long, long, long, long hour is it not? For the large part, Maths is done in very short bursts. Calculating how much money you need to buy three beers and some crisps before you leave the house. Calculating what time you need to leave to get to work by eight-thirty. Checking your change in the shop. How many potatoes do I need to buy to feed eight people at Christmas dinner? These are all calculations which take a matter of seconds.

And yet we are expecting young children to do it for an hour. And of course it's not just Maths. If you write an email, practice the piano, read the

newspaper, cut the grass or any number of other daily activities - on how many of these things do you spend as long as a hour and for how many of these things would an hour be too long before getting bored and wanting to move on, even for an adult, let alone a child.

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From personal experience of teaching my own children at home, free from the constraints of an absurdly imposed timetable, an hour is almost always too much for any learning activity and not only too much but unnecessary and counter-productive. My children have been making much better progress in Maths - to go back to Maths again - since leaving school and our Maths lessons rarely consist of more than 10 minutes of explanation and discussion followed by fifteen or twenty minutes of independent work.

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Anyway, I don't expect anyone to believe me even if anyone ever bothers to ask the question. I guess that most people are so used to the ways things are, hour lessons and so on, that it never occurs to them to ask why. Me? I'm asking why. And I can't think of any reasonable answer because it makes no sense to me at all. I've figured that out, I'm asking the question, and I have the skill and knowledge to get the webpage which asks the question in the top three on Google.



But little good that seems to do if no one else out there is asking the question.

*GJI*