

Everyday Mysteries: Why we have daylight saving time

By Department of Energy, Department of Transportation and the U.S. Navy; adapted by Newsela staff on 03.10.17

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Technician Oleg Ryabtsev performs maintenance work on a clock in Minsk, Belarus, March 29, 2008. Clocks in Belarus will move one hour ahead at midnight March 11, 2017, ushering in seven months of daylight saving time. AP Photo/Sergei Grits

Question: Why do we have daylight saving time?

Answer: One answer you might hear is that we change the clocks to help farmers. They use daylight hours to work in their fields. The real reason is mostly to save energy and electricity. This helps to save money, too. Does it do that? We will explain later, but first, we will tell you what it is.

How It Works

By law, clocks in most parts of the United States move ahead one hour for the spring and summer. It is known as daylight time. Clocks are turned back an hour for fall and winter months. It is known as standard, or regular, time.

Daylight saving time happens at the same time each year in the United States. It begins on the second Sunday in March. On that day, clocks are turned ahead one hour. Daylight savings

time ends on the first Sunday in November.

Clocks are set back on the first Sunday in November. They are turned back one hour.

The idea is to have daylight hours when people want them. Some people like to have more light in the evening.

Does Everyone Change Their Clock?

Not all places in the United States follow daylight time. Hawaii and most of Arizona do not use it. Indiana started using daylight time in 2006.

Some other countries use daylight saving time. Parts of Iceland, Singapore and Belarus have tried it. Russia used it under one president. The president they have today is Vladimir Putin. He ended daylight saving time in 2014. People had gotten tired of late sunrises in winter.

Countries set their own rules for time changes.

History Of Daylight Time In U.S.

Benjamin Franklin gets credit for the idea of daylight saving. One morning in France he woke up extra early. He came up with the idea to make the best use of daylight hours.

The idea has stuck around because some people believe it saves energy and money. Franklin even wrote a letter to a French newspaper in 1784. He said that France could save money on candles if they changed when they slept and woke up. Then the light bulb was invented. People thought daylight saving would help save money on light bulbs.

Many countries used daylight time during World War I in the 1910s. They wanted to save coal during the war. Daylight time ended in the United States after the war ended. It was brought back in World War II in the 1940s.

Does Daylight Saving Time Actually Work?

This is a big question. Some people say that it can cost more money. Matthew Kotchen is a professor. He did a study in 2006 in Indiana.

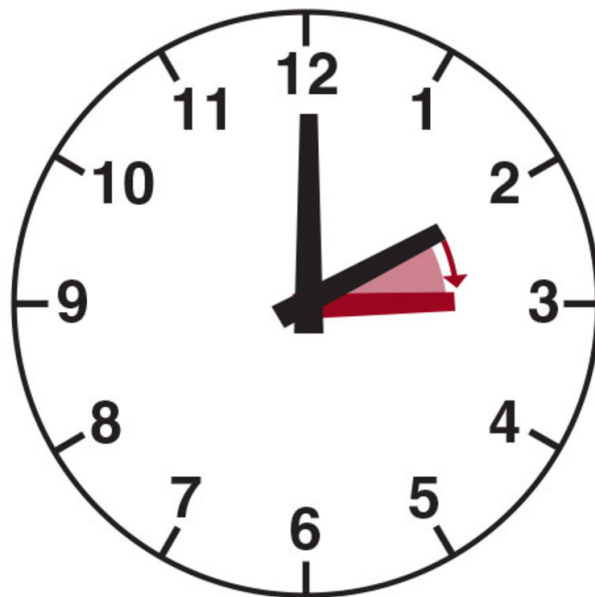
The study found that people used fewer lights during daylight saving time. But they used more heating and air conditioning.

Some people still want the time change. They say it makes money for their companies. This is because people spend more money during daylight. Other people say it helps safety. With more hours of sunlight, fewer bicyclists, runners and walkers are hit by cars.

Spring forward

Daylight saving time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday.

Remember to set your clocks forward one hour before going to bed Saturday



Quiz

- 1 Read the sentence from the section "History Of Daylight Time In U.S."

The idea has stuck around because some people believe it saves energy and money.

Which word could replace the phrase "stuck around" WITHOUT changing its meaning?

- (A) paused
- (B) remained
- (C) stopped
- (D) waited

- 2 Read the selection from the article.

Matthew Kotchen is a professor. He did a study in 2006 in Indiana.

Fill in the blank below.

A "professor" is a _____

- (A) doctor
- (B) coach
- (C) student
- (D) teacher

- 3 Which sentence BEST states a MAIN idea of the entire article?

- (A) Countries around the world decide for themselves if they will follow daylight saving time.
- (B) President Vladimir Putin decided that Russia would not follow daylight saving time anymore.
- (C) Daylight saving time became more popular during World War I as a way for people to save coal.
- (D) Some people say that daylight saving time helps companies make more money.

- 4 Which sentence from the section "How It Works" describes the MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) By law, clocks in most parts of the United States move ahead one hour for the spring and summer.
- (B) Daylight saving time happens at the same time each year in the United States.
- (C) The idea is to have daylight hours when people want them.
- (D) Some people like to have more light in the evening.