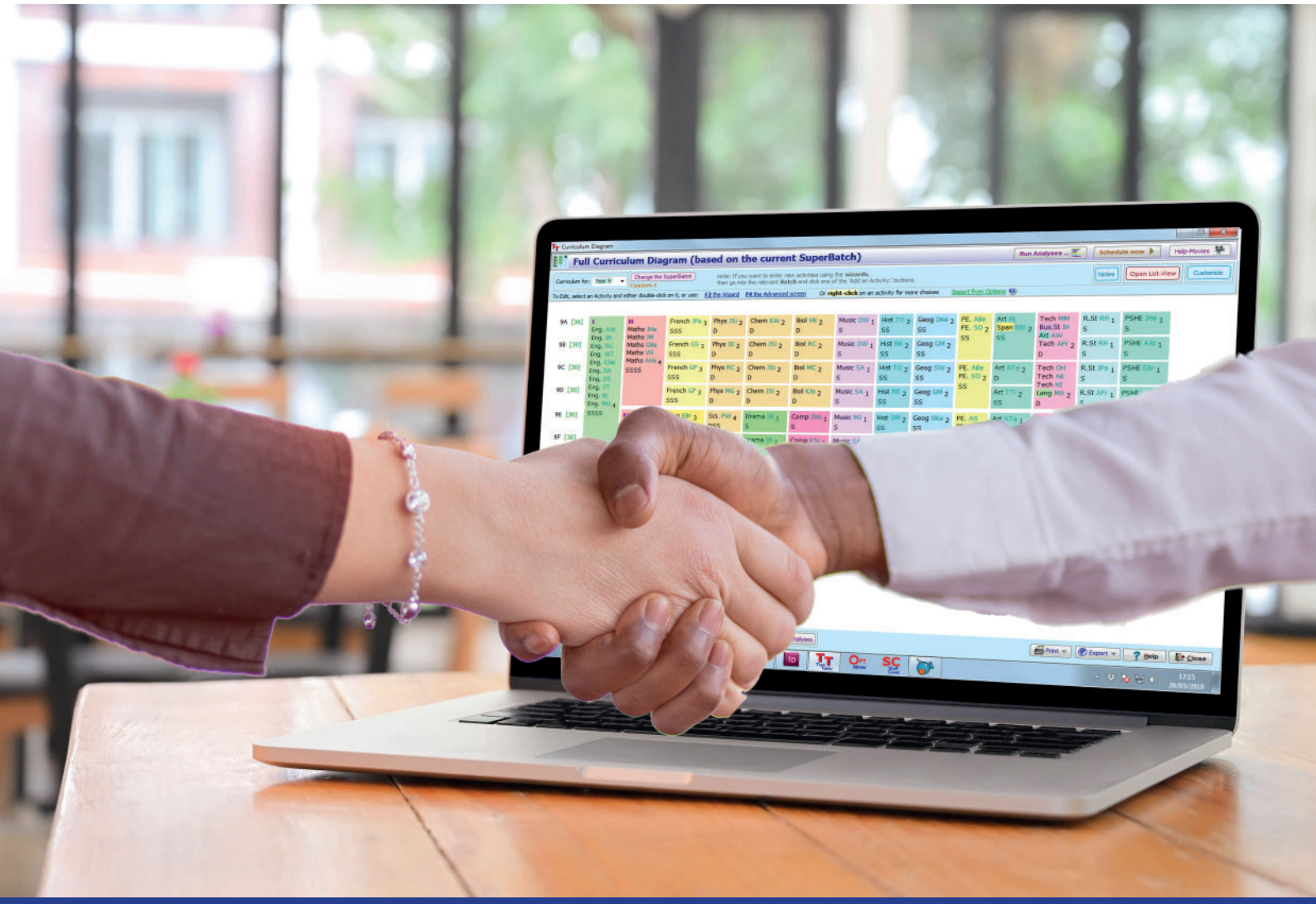
TimeTabler

Timetabling software for Schools



Help and Support

we provide

for your timetabling

October Resolutions Limited

Dear Timetabler,

Timetabling is probably the most important single event in the school year. It has a powerful effect on the life of a school or college, and as the Timetabler you carry a heavy responsibility.

This Booklet, like the others in the series, is designed to help you with specific aspects of timetabling.

An effective timetable is essential for a good school. A school which does not invest in creating a quality timetable will be forever struggling uphill.
These Booklets give you help on specific topics, so you can achieve the best results using our intuitive and smart software.
You have problems? We have solutions! Based on long timetabling expertise.

We are expert in all aspects of timetabling in schools and colleges, and we have been using our expertise to help and support schools for over 40 years in over 80 countries.

Whether you are new to timetabling, or an experienced timetabler; no matter how complicated your school or how complex your timetabling problems, we have **solutions** for you.

What we offer you:

TimeTabler
Easy-to-use and intuitive smart software, used by schools world-wide to schedule their timetables.
TimeTabler can deal with any curricular structure, of any complexity.
It is supported in 12 ways by a friendly and experienced team ...as explained in this booklet.
TimeTabler exports your completed timetable to over 40 MIS Admin systems.

Options
An easy-to-use program for analysing and organising your students' Subject Choices (Electives).
It is important to get the highest satisfaction rate for the students, to let them study the subject Choices they have chosen. This improves students' motivation, and Exam results, and it improves relations with parents. And ***Options*** helps to keep the cost of staffing the curriculum as low as possible.

StaffCover
This well-known program is designed to help you to streamline the daily business of arranging and publishing Cover for absent staff or special events, as quickly and fairly as possible.
StaffCover links directly into *TimeTabler*, so you do not have to type in your timetable again.

The Timetabler's CookBook
This book is the definitive 'bible' on timetabling, for both new and experienced timetablers.

Help & Support
We provide a wide range of **free** Help & Support. See the following pages.

Happy timetabling!

Chris and Keith Johnson
and the rest of the Team

October ReSolutions Ltd

www.timetabler.com

ask@timetabler.com

Help & Support that we provide for Your Timetabling

Are you new to timetabling? Or experienced, but facing a new knotty problem?

Do you have problems scheduling Part-timers efficiently?
Or consistently-setted blocks in Lower School?
Or Container Blocks with 'spread' in the Sixth Form (Years/Grades 12 & 13)? Or the IB?

Perhaps you have collected all your data, and want to check if it is feasible?
Or perhaps you've almost finished but can't get the last few items to fit, and can't see the best compromises?
Or perhaps you have problems transferring the completed timetable into your school's MIS?

Timetabling is the art of problem-solving, and sometimes you may need help to do that.
This booklet spells out some of the many ways we can help you.

We offer the most comprehensive timetabling support on the planet.
It is worth remembering that you don't have to use it all. Use just what you need.

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1. The Tutorial

If you are thinking of buying ***TimeTabler*** then you need to try it out first, using the free Tutorial version.
Similarly if you are new to timetabling and your school already uses ***TimeTabler***, then you need to work through the free Tutorial, step-by-step, to learn about the main features.

You can download the free Tutorial from our web-site, like this:
at www.timetabler.com

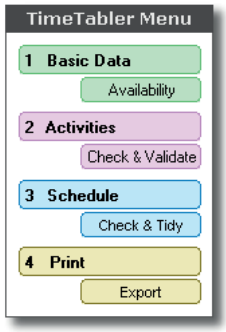
While you are waiting for the free Tutorial to be installed, you'll find it very helpful to view the short video at:
https://www.timetabler.com/images/Video-4-Steps-in-TimeTabler/

The Tutorial takes you step-by-step through the main features of ***TimeTabler***.
It takes about 1 hour, during which time you will do at least one timetable in ***TimeTabler***.

There are 3 ways that you can work through the Tutorial:

- Using the PDF which you can download with the Tutorial program. You may find it helpful to print out that PDF.
  or
- Using the free ready-printed version, that we can send to you by post:
  or
- If you have a copy of the full printed Manual (see p 5) you could use Section A of that Manual. However even if you have a copy of the full working version of ***TimeTabler*** we recommend that you download a copy of the free Tutorial version. Reason: the free Tutorial version installs (by default) into a separate folder from the full working version of ***TimeTabler***, so there's no chance for it to interfere in any way with your full version on the same machine, or the data that you have in it.

Whichever way you use, the Tutorial Booklet takes you through the main features.
There are 4 main steps in timetabling and the Tutorial explores all of them:



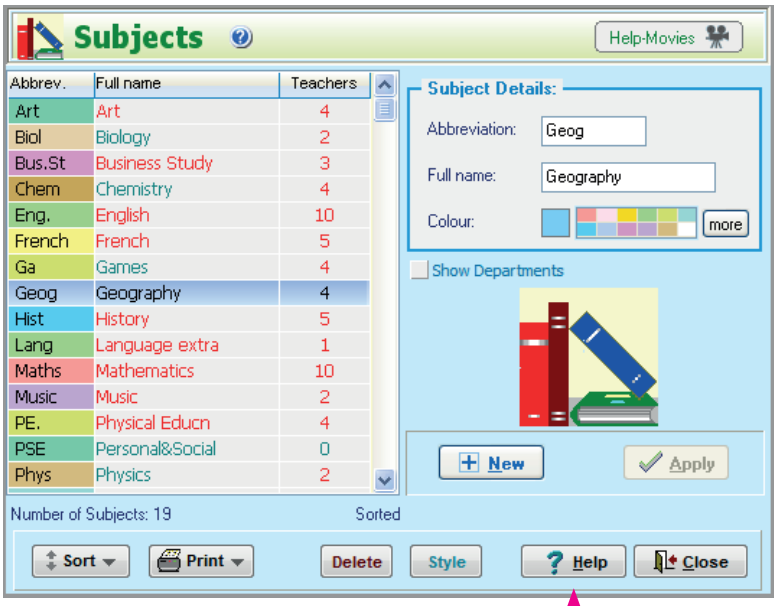
The Main Menu
As straightforward as 1-2-3-4

There are similar free Tutorials for ***Options***
and for ***StaffCover*** on our web-site:

2. The HelpScreens

Almost all the screens in ***TimeTabler*** (and ***Options***, and ***StaffCover***) have a Help button on them.

The button is at the bottom-right of each screen, as shown here:



Clicking on a Help button gives you an ***interactive*** HelpScreen.

You will see another picture of the ***same*** screen.
On this image, click with your mouse on any button or part of the screen.
An explanation of that item is then shown to you:

Here the User has clicked on the 'Abbreviation' column of the image:

And you can click on any of the book or page symbols to read details about that part of ***TimeTabler***.

While on any HelpScreen, you can click on the buttons to see the previous or next page.

Click on the **Index** button to search for information.

You can also see the HelpScreens by pressing function key <F1>, or by selecting Help Topics on the Help Menu.

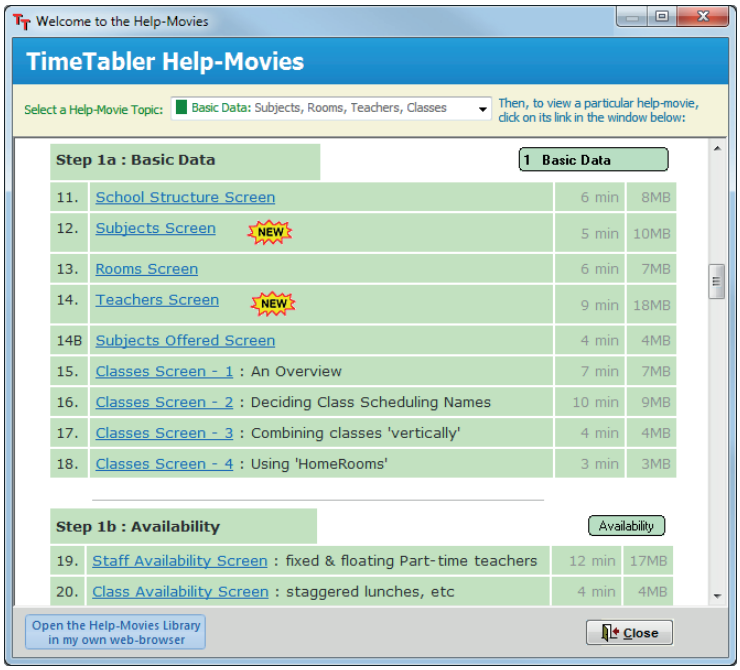
3. The HelpMovies

At any time you can click the button to see the Library of HelpMovies:

There are over 60 videos in the Library. They range in length from 1 minute to 30 minutes.

You can view them within ***TimeTabler***, or in your usual browser, and they cover all aspects of using the software.

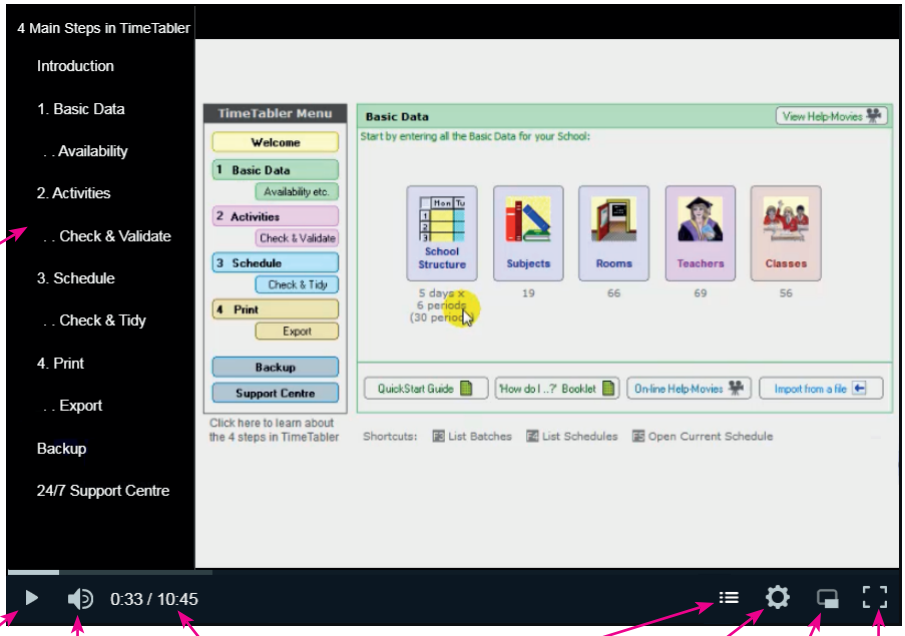
You can choose to play them faster (eg. 1.5x) to save your time.



If you haven't yet got ***TimeTabler*** you can view a sample of 8 HelpMovies at:
https://www.timetabler.com/HelpMovieSamples/

HelpMovie number 4:

Each of the HelpMovies shows a Menu at the left-hand side.
Click to jump to the part you want, quickly.



Start or Stop

Sound or Mute

Timing

Show the Menu, or clear it

Change the speed eg. 1.5x to save time

Minimize, to see the program screen

Show full-screen

4. The printed Manual

Your purchase of the software includes a full printed Manual.
For ***TimeTabler*** it's a 256-page A4 hard-backed ringbinder:

It's full of timetabling Tactics, Tricks and Tips.

It contains a large number of Worked Examples, from how to schedule simple 'sets', to the most complicated 'Sixth Form' (Years/Grades 12/13).
Of course you won't need all of them; pick and choose the ones you need for your school.

This shows the main Contents of the ***TimeTabler*** Manual:

Contents

Only the main sub-sections are listed here.

Introduction

Installing ***TimeTabler*** on your computer
Support & Advice
Backing-up your data for safety : to a 'memorystick' and in the Auto-Backup Library

Section A — **An Outline of *TimeTabler***
The **Tutorial**

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D9 Re-using your data : Cloning and Promoting
D15 Collecting your Staffing data : Staffing Proformas
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Check & Validate
D19 **Analysing your data**
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D24 Auditing, Staff Loading
D25 Trial a Year
D26 Combing Chart
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E16 The Visual Builder Screen
E18 Dayblock Status (A, 3, 4, or 5)
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F14 Modifying your timetable : changing Teachers, Rooms, Subjects, Sets
F15 Class Timetable Screen
F16 Modifying your timetable : Un/Lock; Unassign; Exchanging two lessons
F22 Rooming Overview Screen; Room Timetable Screen
F24 Quality Optimiser Screen, Checking for split-teaching
F25 Tips for running your first timetable with ***TimeTabler***

Section G — **Automatic Timetabling**
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G2 AutoFit

Section H — **Timetabling Tips, Tactics and Tricks**
See the Contents page at the start of Section H, which lists the 51 examples.

Section I — **Worked Examples**
A list of the 24 Worked Examples is shown at the beginning of Section I.

Section J — **Printing & Publishing Your Timetable**
4 Print
J2 Checking Rooms and Subjects
J3 Changing your Day and Period labels
J5 The Print Set-up Screen
J8 The Advanced Printing Options Screen
J13 Master Staff Timetables
J15 Master Class Timetables
J16 Master Room Timetables
J17 Individual Staff Timetables
J18 Individual Class Timetables
J19 Individual Room Timetables
J20 Subject Timetables
J21 Free Staff and Rooms

Section K — **Flowcharts**
A list of the 13 flowcharts is shown at the beginning of Section K.

Section L — **Exporting**
Export
Exporting your timetable to SIMS .net, iSAMS, SEEMiS, Arbor, other systems.

Section M — **Data Grids**
These grids can be photocopied and used to prepare your data.

Section N — **Hints and Tips**

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It shows the huge range of timetabling problems that our 'smart' ***TimeTabler*** software can deal with.
And how ***TimeTabler*** can save your time!

Unlike some other systems, ***TimeTabler*** can deal with ANY curricular structure of ANY complexity.

5. The QuickStart Guide

QuickStart Guide Q

You can download this free QuickStart Guide from the Basic Data Screen in ***TimeTabler***.
It takes you step-by-step through this year's timetabling, with page references to the main Manual.

For example:

Specifying your School Structure

1 Basic Data

School Structure

3 ☐	Go to the **School Structure Screen** (see Section C5) and then check / edit the number of **days** in your timetable cycle. Rename the days if you wish.	**C5**
	For different types of 2-week timetables, see section H50.	**H50**
4 ☐	Check / Edit the number of **periods** in your school day, and the positions of breaks and lunch, as described in Section C5.	**C5**
	If you have staggered lunch-breaks, see section H15.	**H15**
	If you decide to add extra non-teaching periods (eg. for Registration, staggered lunch-breaks, etc) you will be able to change the period-labels that your colleagues will see (on the final printouts) via: PrintMenu->Publishing your Timetable.	**H36**
5 ☐ (optional)	If your entire school timetable has a definite fixed non-rectangular **Shape** (eg. the school is closed on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons) then you can use the Shape Screen, see C5.	**C5**
	In all other cases (eg. if *some* classes go home early on *some* days) use the Class Availability Screen at Step 15 of this QuickStart Guide.	**H14**
6 ☐ (optional)	Check / Edit the **Years** that you are going to be scheduling. If your school is on two or more **Sites**, specify which Year-groups are on which site.	**C5**

The 'How-do-I ?' Booklet

'How do I ..?' Booklet

This is a companion to the QuickStart Guide, and downloaded from the same Basic Data Screen.
Only 4 pages, it's an easy way to find what you want. For example:

In ***TimeTabler***,

How do I ... ?

Note: Many of these topics also have more details in an article and/or a PDF in the KnowledgeBase at : Support Centre

1 Basic Data

...rename the Days?	School Week	See C5
...mark Breaks and Lunches?	School Day	See C5
...label the Periods? ...add Period Times?	School Day or Edit Day & Period Labels	See J3
...enter a non-rectangular week?	Class Availability or Class	See C5, F14, H14
...specify Scottish Years (S1 etc) or Grades?	Years & Sites	See C5
...specify the Sites in a split-site school?	Years & Sites	See C5

6. The Timetabler's CookBook

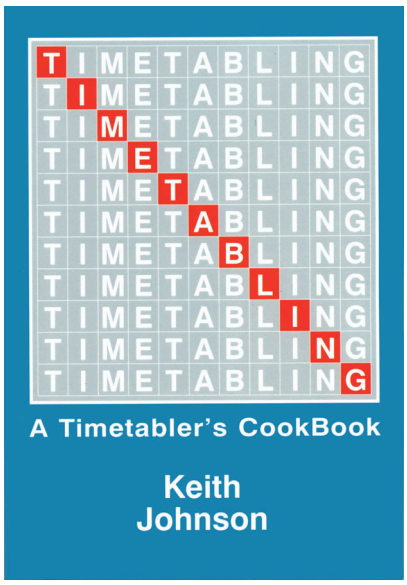
This 232-page book is the timetabler's 'bible'.

It explains the **principles** of timetabling, and covers the entire timetabling process.

It includes over 200 illustrations, as well as extra resources.

You can download some sample chapters at:
https://www.timetabler.com/book/

It is available only using this Order Form:
https://www.timetabler.com/PDFs/OrderForm-Book.pdf

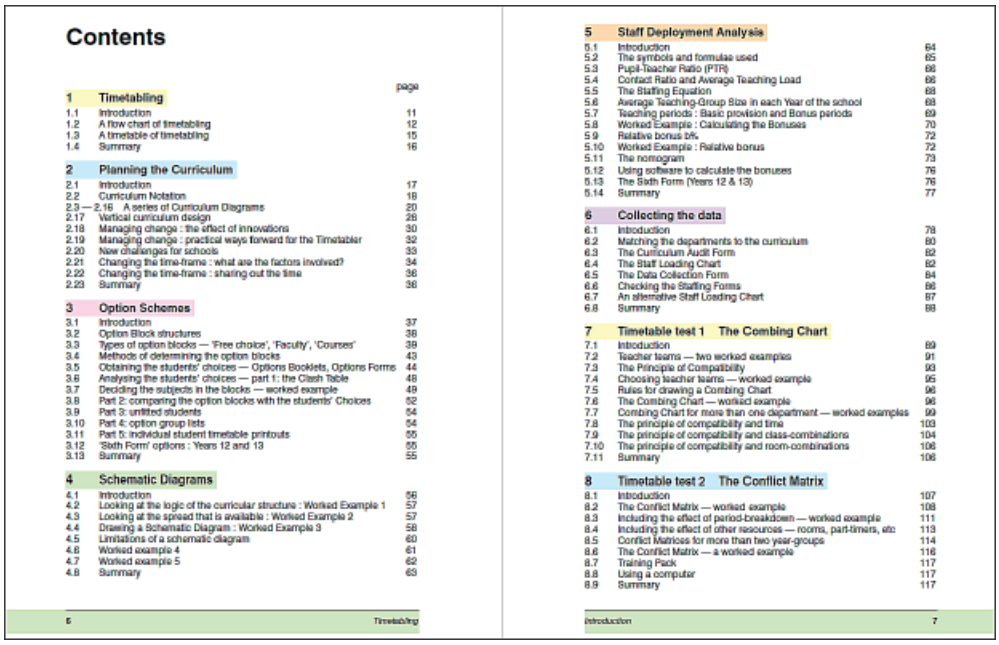


Here are the Contents so you can get an idea of the range:

Chapters 1-8:

The chapters are colour-coded and there are some cartoons to lighten the tone.

To see these Contents more clearly, go to:
timetabler.com/PDFs/contentsofbook.pdf



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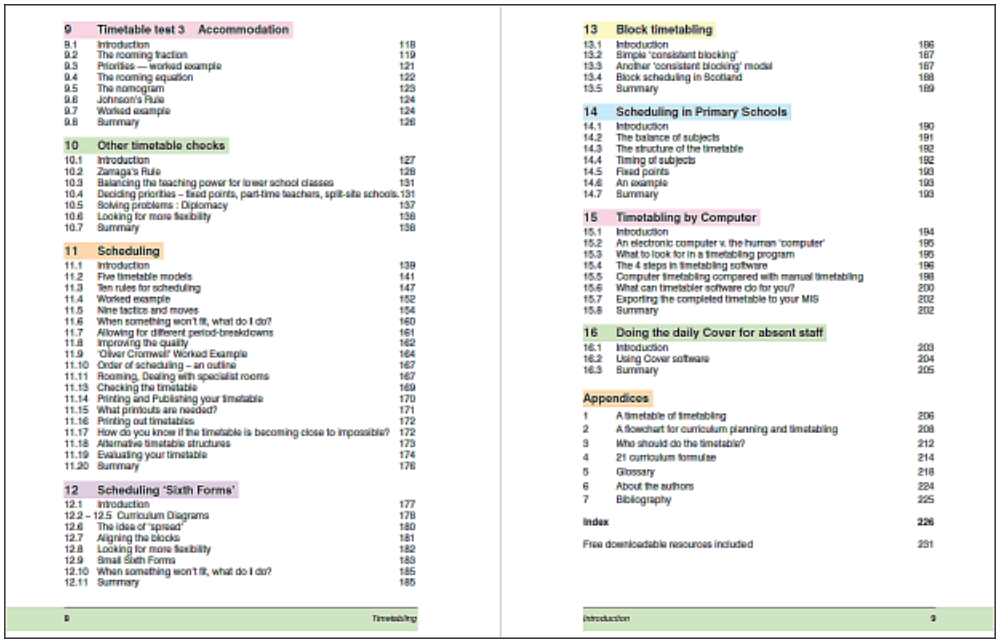
Chapters 9-16, plus Appendices, and some extra resources including INSET packs.

You can download sample chapters at:
timetabler.com/book



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7. The monthly NewsLetter

The free monthly eNewsLetter is a great way to remember what needs to be done each month, and to see the latest timetabling news.
It also includes details of Courses (both on-line and on-site) for ***TimeTabler*** and ***Options*** during the current term.
It is timed for schools in the northern hemisphere, but schools in the southern hemisphere can save it and read it later.

You can sign up for it at: www.timetabler.com/signupfornewsletter/

To ensure that you receive it, please make sure that newsletter@timetabler.info is on your school's 'allow list', or else provide your home email address as it is less likely to be blocked.

Here's a sample of the sort of information in each NewsLetter:

TimeTabler NewsLetter : March

Dear Timetabler,

As the tempo starts to speed up, here are some suggestions for what you should be considering this* month.
There is a lot in this NewsLetter, so please take a few moments to see what is here to help you, to save your time.

Note: the Licence allows you to install a second copy of ***TimeTabler*** or ***Options*** on your home machine
(and then transfer the data, using a memory stick or Dropbox etc, as explained in HelpMovie 10).

In this issue:

Options:
1. Completing the Options process : Counselling students.
   Exporting your data to ***TimeTabler*** or to **SIMS**, **iSAMS**, **PASS**, **Bromcom**, etc.

TimeTabler:
2. Are you New to Timetabling?
3. Have you moved from a different timetabling program (eg. Nova)?
4. Getting Help.
5. How do I ... ?
6. New features in ***TimeTabler***; new videos.
7. Getting a New QuickStart Guide or a New Manual.
8. Some suggestions for your New timetable, including ideas for '**Catch-up**'.
9. **Key** documents to help you this year.
10. Recent support documents; Part-timers, Headteachers.
11. Timetabling in Scotland : Importing to SEEMiS.

Re-using last year's data, to save your time :
12. Cloning & Promoting.
13. Entering/Editing your Curricular Structure.

Collecting your Staffing Data :
14. Preparing Heads of Subjects.
15. Doing a Curriculum Audit.
16. Collecting the Data : Staffing Proformas.
17. Vetting the Data.

This month's **Key Topics** : Features you may need this year:
18. Dealing with Registration.
19. Vertical groupings; Mixed-age groups.
20. 'HomeRooms' for younger classes.
21. Scheduling a Senior school and Junior school with shared staff.
22. Timetabling in a Primary school or a Prep school.
23. Container Blocks - do you need them?
24. Topics covered in recent NewsLetters.

25. **On-line Courses / Training / CPD / INSET** -- Have you booked yours yet?

Two small problems with your Staff List, Jim
...Mr Watts retired in 2020, and
Superman is a fictional character...

To see the Full contents of this NewsLetter, just click on:
https://www.timetabler.com/eNewsLetter/NewsLetter--March...

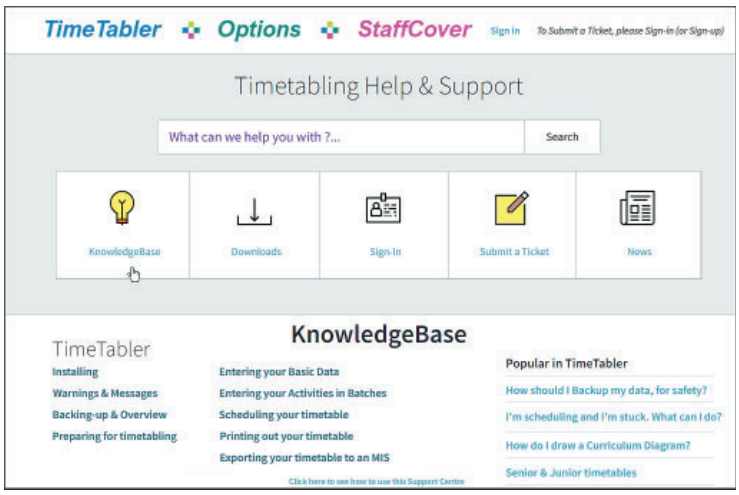
8. The Support Centre

Clicking on this button in the program takes you to the 24/7 Support Centre which includes a KnowledgeBase (see below) and a Ticket system for you to submit Tickets about your problems.

Your Tickets are answered (free of charge) by timetabling experts.
The average response time last year was less than 2 hours!

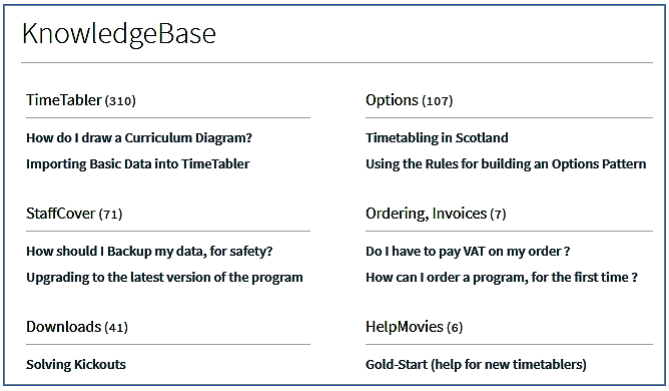
For more details about how the Support Centre works, and how to submit a Ticket, see:

- www.timetabler.com/supportcentre/
- HelpMovie 4.



The KnowledgeBase

The KnowledgeBase is a Library of over 300 articles on all aspects of timetabling, available to you at the touch of a button.
You can enter a topic in the Search Box (see above), or you can click on an article you see:



Many of the articles offer you a download of a 'White Paper' Booklet like the one you are reading.

Other titles in this series include:

Go to: https://www.timetabler.com/timetabling-ebooks/ if you want copies.

9. Export documentation

Export

You can export your completed timetable to your school's MIS.
This saves you a lot of time and hassle.

There are exports to SIMS, SEEMiS, Arbor, Bromcom, iSAMS/Ed:gen, Engage, Integris, WCBS PASS/HUBmis, and thirty others. Some of them are shown below.
The full list is shown at: https://www.timetabler.com/adminMISsystems

We provide fully illustrated documentation, and if you need extra help there is the Support Centre (see page 9).

Printing

4 Print

In addition of course you can print out your timetable (at any stage) in a huge variety of formats, including:

- as 'individual' timetables and
- as 'master' timetables;

- on paper,
- as a PDF,
- as an Excel spreadsheet,
- as HTML for your school web-site.

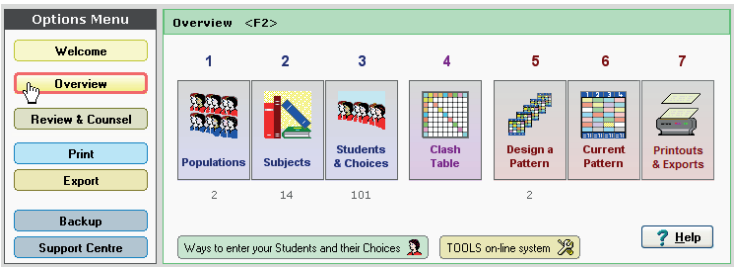
10. Other programs

As well as the main program, ***TimeTabler***, we also provide you with other tools, to help you before and after your timetabling:

Options

Before you start timetabling, if you have older pupils, the ***Options*** program helps you to find the most efficient options pattern / option blocks / columns / arrangement of 'elective' choice subjects.

Options helps you to deal speedily and efficiently with the Students' Choices in order to develop the best Option Block Pattern to suit these particular students and your staffing.



The main aims are:

- To achieve the maximum 'Satisfaction Rate' for the students.
  ie. with the maximum number of students getting their chosen subjects.
  This is important for students and parents, and can affect the ethos of the school or college.
- To use the minimum number of groups consistent with good teaching practice.
  ie. to keep the cost of staffing the curriculum as low as possible.
  This can make a big difference to the school budget.

The program includes **TOOLS**, which allows your pupils/parents to enter their Choices on-line, via a laptop, a smart-phone, iPad, tablet, etc.

So they do the typing-work for you.

You can view a short video giving an overview of ***Options*** at:
www.timetabler.com/images/Video-OptionsOverview/

And you can download a free Tutorial version of ***Options*** via: www.timetabler.com/download-opt/

StaffCover

After you have completed the timetable in ***TimeTabler*** you can use ***StaffCover*** to arrange the daily Cover of absent staff or special events.
Although your MIS may include this feature, many people find that ***StaffCover*** deals with the situation more efficiently.

You can view a short video giving an overview of ***StaffCover*** at:
https://www.timetabler.com/images/video-staffcoveroverview/

And you can download a free Tutorial version of ***StaffCover*** via:
https://www.timetabler.com/download-sc/

11. Gold-Start Support

If you want even more support, we also offer Gold-Start Extra Support.

Gold-Start

Every **new** purchase of ***TimeTabler*** or ***Options*** or ***StaffCover*** is offered free Gold-Start Enhanced Support.

For ***TimeTabler*** this Extra Support includes help with:

1. Installation of ***TimeTabler.***
2. Setting up your Basic Data :
   - Specifying your School Structure
   - Entering/ importing Subjects, Teachers, and Rooms
   - Part-Time Staff
   - Class Scheduling Names
   - Staffing & Scheduling constraints
3. Curriculum design
   - Setting out your Curriculum Diagram
   - Gathering staff information for the timetable
4. Analysis of curriculum and staffing
   - Combing Charts
   - Conflict Matrices

Later stages are covered by the standard HelpLine Support, KnowledgeBase, HelpMovies, etc.

Gold-Start for ***Options*** and Gold-Start for ***StaffCover*** are similar.

For more details see: https://www.timetabler.com/gold-start/

New Gold-Start users are also given access to our On-line **Onboarding Portal**, to structure and streamline their learning and scheduling.

Gold-Start & Gold-Start-PLUS

If your school has previously used ***TimeTabler*** (or ***Options***, or ***StaffCover***) but you are the New timetabler, you can purchase the extra Gold-Start Support.

See the Order Form at: https://www.timetabler.com/PDFs/Gold-Start-OrderForm.pdf which explains the options.

Uh-oh? What do you mean 'uh-oh'?

12. The Associates

In addition to all the Help on the previous pages, there is also a team of ***TimeTabler*** Associates. The Associates are all experienced school timetablers, who are available to give you extra help. For an agreed fee they can help you by giving expert help for your particular timetable, either in-school on-site, or on-line via 'Zoom' or a similar connection.

Their contact details are given at: https://www.timetabler.com/inset-courses/

As well as individual 'bespoke' support for you and your school, some of them also provide INSET/ CPD Courses, either at the Timetabling Academy in Market Harborough or on-line.
The dates of the face-to-face Courses are advertised in the monthly NewsLetter (see page 8), while the on-line Courses can be used at any time convenient to you.

The current Associates, with their bases, are:

Chris Knights-Branch	Peter Knights-Branch	John Clarke	Debbie Hayton	Ted Fenton	Janet Glass	Liam O'Brien	Terry Howe	Margaret Hall	Neil Farquharson	David Miles
England	England	England	England	England	England	Ireland	Scotland	England	Scotland	UAE

You can contact any of them directly, to agree a fee and to discuss their availability.
To contact any of them, see their contact details at: https://www.timetabler.com/inset-courses/

Summary

We hope this booklet has given you a clear idea of the huge amount of Help & Support that we provide for the ***TimeTabler***, ***Options***, **TOOLS** and ***StaffCover*** software.
This is the most comprehensive and expert timetabling support on the planet.

There is more information on our web-site: www.timetabler.com

To order any of the software see: www.timetabler.com/how-to-buy

If you have any queries, please contact us at: ask@timetabler.com

Chris and Keith Johnson
and the rest of the Team

October ReSolutions Ltd

Other booklets in the series include:

Timetabling Primary and Prep schools

Timetabling a Special School or PRU

Timetabling Part-timers

Improving your school's Option Choices

A Guide for Headteachers

Doing 'What if...?' investigations

Download these Booklets and others, free of charge,
from: https://www.timetabler.com/timetabling-ebooks/

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler"

– Albert Einstein

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TimeTabler
Providing timetabling solutions for 40 years