TimeTabler

Timetabling software for Schools

Scheduling a Special School

or a Pupil Referral Unit

or a small school

or a small 'Sixth Form'

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 ...see page 10 for details.
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 it keeps 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 page 10 for more details.

Happy timetabling!

Chris and Keith Johnson
and the rest of the Team

October ReSolutions Ltd

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Scheduling a Special School,
a Pupil Referral Unit,
a small school,
or a small 'Sixth Form'

Always check for a later version

Using TimeTabler in small schools and 'sixth forms'

Small schools, Special schools and PRUs give timetablers a particular timetabling challenge.
The *TimeTabler* printed Manual, Section I Worked Example 1, explains using *TimeTabler* in small schools, including Special Schools or Pupil Referral Units, where students follow Individual Learning Programmes.
This is a very powerful technique for small schools, and schools with small 'sixth forms' (years 12/13).

Advantages:

1. It is particularly good where students have a variety of groupings in no set pattern.
    For example, 'vertical' (mixed-age) groupings of students, mixed ad hoc groupings, schools where the students are not in clear Forms/TutorGroups, schools where students in the 'sixth form' (years 12/13) choose unusual combinations of subjects and so fixed blocks are too restricting.
    In these situations the method can find a surprising amount of flexibility, leading to timetable solutions which could not be obtained in other ways.

2. It allows easy printouts of Individual Student Timetables (because the students are treated like Teachers, so the 'Staff Timetables' automatically give Student Timetables).

Disadvantages:

1. There is a limit that the total of staff + students must be less than 400 ...but in practice it would be difficult to maintain accuracy of data with this many students.   Once you have more than 80-100 students it is increasingly difficult to maintain accuracy.
    The maximum number of teachers + students in any teaching group (see page 5) is 30.

2. Most MIS admin systems should import the completed timetable but it is possible that some few may struggle to make sense of it, because it is based on individual students and not Forms/TutorGroups.

Note: If yours is a Primary, Junior or Prep School, or if you timetable classes in the style of those schools, then please see: www.timetabler.com/SupportCentre/Primary-Junior-Prep-School-Timetabling.pdf

If you are scheduling IB Diploma see: www.timetabler.com/SupportCentre/Scheduling IB blocks.pdf

The following pages describe the details of a 'case study' example called 'The Dickens School'.
Make sure first that you already know how to use *TimeTabler* (eg. by working through the free Tutorial).

If you think this method is appropriate, just replace the sample data with your own.

Contents: The Dickens School   page

Case Study : Dickens Special School / Referral Unit

Students : In this case study example the school has **Students** with the following names:

Martin Chuzzlewit	mch	Oliver Twist	otw
Nicholas Nickleby	nni	Wilkins Micawber	wmi
Samuel Pickwick	spi	David Copperfield	dco
Ebenezer Scrooge	esc	Bill Sykes	bsy
Jacob Marley	jma	Joe Gargery	jga
Sam Weller	swe	John Jarndyce	jja
Estella Havisham	eha	Lucie Manette	lma
Bob Cratchit	bcr	Barnaby Rudge	bru

For entry into *TimeTabler* they have each been given a unique 3-letter code, as shown.
It helps to use lower-case only (as here) for the Students' codes, so that it is clear they are pupils.
It is absolutely *essential* that they are unique. *TimeTabler* will tell you if you try to enter the same code twice.

This isn't necessarily the first set of data to enter, but it has been mentioned first in this document so that you can consider the most important problem in using this 'Dickens' method : Can you see your way to giving each student a unique 3-letter code?

When you enter this student data into *TimeTabler*, you do it at :   [Availability] ➞ [Special Resources]

Enter each student as shown on the **Special Resources Screen**:

See also Section C18 in your Manual, and HelpMovie 21.

Special Resources

Abbrev.	Full Name
mch	M Chuzzlewit
nni	N Nickleby
spi	S Pickwick
esc	E Scrooge
otw	O Twist
wmi	W Micawber
dco	D Coppefield
bsy	B Sykes
jma	J Marley
swe	S Weller
eha	E Havisham
bcr	B Cratchit
jga	J Gargery
jja	J Jarndyce
lma	L Manette

TimeTabler will tell you if you make the mistake of trying to enter the same code twice.

At the Printouts stage (see page 8) you can choose to print out Individual Student Timetables for each of these people.

Note: that you only have to enter this Basic Data in the very first year of using *TimeTabler*.
In subsequent years you can just edit to tweak the existing data.

Teachers :

The Teachers at this school are:

Mr Wackford Squeers	WSq
Mr Thomas Gradgrind	TGr
Miss Cornelia Blimber	CBl
Mr M'Choakumchild	MCh

These also have been given a 3-character code, but now using the common mix of upper- and lower-case. Note that (to *TimeTabler*) **mch** [Martin Chuzzlewit] is not the same as **MCh** [Mr M'Choakumchild], because of the upper/lower case.

These Teachers' names and initials are entered on the **Teachers Screen :**

See also Section C9 in your Manual, and HelpMovie 14.

Initials	Full Name	Dept / Faculty	Main Subject	1st Room	2nd Room
WSq	Mr Wackford Squeers	-	Eng.	Rm 3	
TGr	Mr Thomas Gradgrind	-	Maths	Rm 2	
CBi	Miss Cornelia Blimber	-	Music	Rm 1	Rm 4
MCh	Mr M'Choakumchild	-	Art	Rm 4	

If any of them are part-time teachers, then go to the Staff Availability Screen, via:

Availability ⟹ Staff Availability

See Sections H3, C15 and HelpMovie 19, and the PDF in the KnowledgeBase.

Staff Availability

	Monday	3	4	5	6	Tuesday	3	4	5
WSq - Mr Wackford Squeers				X	X				
TGr - Mr Thomas Gradgrind									
CBi - Miss Cornelia Blimber									
MCh - Mr M'Choakumchild									

Subjects :

The Subjects to be taught in this school include Maths (M), English (E), Art (A), History (H), etc.
They will be entered as usual on the **Subjects Screen**:
(see Section C6 and HelpMovie 12).

Subjects

Abbrev.	Full name
Art	Art
Drama	Drama
Eng.	English
French	French
Games	Games
Geog	Geography
Hist	History

Rooms :

These are entered similarly (see Sections C7, C8 and HelpMovie 13.
You might also use the ⟦ Preferred Rooms for each subject ⟧ Screen (see C8).

You only have to enter all this Basic Data in the very first year of using *TimeTabler*.

For detailed step by step help, see the **QuickStart Guide**.

Choosing the Class Scheduling Names

TimeTabler expects each Activity (lesson) to have a '**Class Scheduling Name**'.
In this method of Worked Example 1 the Class Name is used in a slightly different way from other examples in the Manual and in the Tutorial. In this method they are just a convenient label to remind you what **Subject** is being taught.
So class 1**M** is a **M**aths group in Year 1, 1**E** is an **E**nglish group in Year 1, 1**A** is **A**rt, etc.

In fact the Year Number ('1' in these examples) does not have to bear any relationship to the age of the pupils.
And you can use any of the numbers 1–14 that you have ticked on the School Structure Screen (see C5 and HelpMovie 11).

But you might decide to relate it to the Key Stage of the pupils.
So 1M might be a Maths group of KS1 pupils, 2E might be an English group of KS2 pupils, 3A might be a KS3 Art group, and so on.
Even so, *any* group can contain students of *any* age from anywhere in the school.

Note 1 :   There needs to be a unique label for each group. There is a limit of 150 class names at present.

Note 2 :   If you have two KS3 Art groups, and if they could be taught by 2 different Art teachers with different students in the groups (and so they could be scheduled at the same time), do *not* use 3A for both [use 3A and 3a, or 3A and 3X, etc].
Reason : a class called '3A' cannot have 2 lessons at the same time, even if it has no resources in common, see the next page.
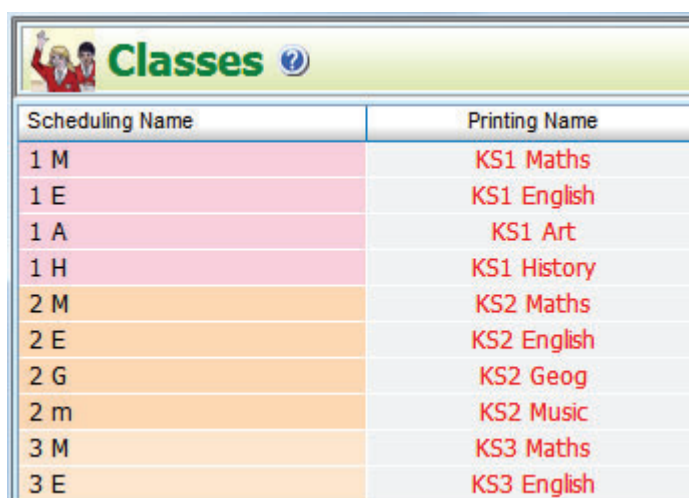
Note 3 :   If you have PE and PSHE in KS3 do *not* use 3P for both of them [use 3P, 3p, or 3P, 3S, etc].

Note 3 :   The Class Name should always have just a *single* letter after the Year Number.
Examples are: 1A, 3M, 10E, etc.

These Class Scheduling Names are entered on the **Classes Screen :**

See Section C10 in your Manual, HelpMovie 15.

Classes

Scheduling Name	Printing Name
1 M	KS1 Maths
1 E	KS1 English
1 A	KS1 Art
1 H	KS1 History
2 M	KS2 Maths
2 E	KS2 English
2 G	KS2 Geog
2 m	KS2 Music
3 M	KS3 Maths
3 E	KS3 English

The way in which you use these Class Scheduling Names is explained on the next page.
But remember, in this method, *any* group can contain students of *any* age from anywhere in the school.

Note: that you only have to enter this Basic Data in the very first year of using *TimeTabler*.
In subsequent years you can just edit to tweak the existing data.

Use the QuickStart Guide to ensure you cover everything, step by step.

Entering the Activities into *TimeTabler* in Batches   [Section D in your Manual]

Suppose the Yr 3 curriculum requires that pupils Martin Chuzzlewit, David Copperfield and Oliver Twist are to have 4 lessons per week (cycle) with Mr Gradgrind for Maths.   You would enter [Section D3]:
3M   SSSS   TGr mch dco otw

This is saying to *TimeTabler* that TGr (Mr Gradgrind) and the 3 students (mch, dco, otw) must be together in the same room for 4 Single lessons per week (cycle), and the label is 3M (to remind you it is Yr3 Maths). Each of these 4 lessons can *only* be scheduled at the times when *all* these people are available.

You can enter (and view) this data in 2 ways. Either way is good.

1. *Either:* **using the wizards**   [see Sections D5, D6 and HelpMovie 24]
Use the 'Simple Block' wizard, like this:

Simple Block

Because there are 4 people involved in this case, you need to enter 4 rows of Maths, and then the 4 people as 4 'staff'.

2. *Or:* **using the List-View Screen**   [see Sections D7, D8]

Open List-View

The Subject label (Maths in this case) that will appear on the final Printouts is decided:
either (i) by the Main Subject of Mr Gradgrind on the Teachers Screen (see page 3),
or   (ii) over-ridden by the 'Second Subject' you enter by clicking on the **Lesson Details** button on this screen [see D7].

If the curriculum requires that pupils Martin Chuzzlewit, Lucie Manette and Nicolas Nickleby are also to have 3 lessons per week with Mr Squeers for English (3E) then you would enter:
3E   SSS   WSq mch lma nni

TimeTabler will never schedule these 3 lessons at the same time as the Maths lessons above, because they have **mch** (Martin Chuzzlewit) in common. He cannot be in two places at once.

If for Art you entered:
2A   D   WSq bcr jga eha jja wmi

then *TimeTabler* could schedule this at the same time as the 3M Maths (there are no resources in common) but it could not schedule it at the same time as the 3E English (because Mr Squeers cannot be in two places at the same time).   And obviously any other lesson for 2A could not be scheduled at the same time as this 2A Art, because of the class name ...this is why the class names usually need to be unique.

In this way *TimeTabler* only schedules what is possible, and ensures that no Teacher or Student is ever double-booked. And if you are using 'Auto' for 'What if...?' experiments it runs very quickly.

But it is absolutely *essential* that the data is accurate, and so you need to check very carefully that you have entered your data accurately. The oldest proverb in computing is "GIGO - Garbage in, Garbage out".

Looking at the Curriculum Diagram

Because of the way that Class Scheduling Names are used in this 'Dickens' method (see pages 4–5) the Curriculum Diagram looks a different shape from the usual ones in the Manual.

If the entries for the Key Stage 3 (Year 3) activities were these:

No.	Class	Lessons	Teacher Team
1	3M (KS3 Maths)	SSSS	TGr mch dco otw wmi bsy jma swe
2	3E (KS3 English)	SSS	WSq mch lma nni spi esc otw swe
3	3A (KS3 Art)	D	MCh mch nni spi esc lma
4	3H (KS3 History)	SS	WSq bru lma jja jga
5	3G (KS3 Geog)	SS	CBi mch nni spi esc otw wmi

then the Curriculum Diagram for this Year 3 data can look like this:

where the total number of periods vertically should add up to the number of periods in your timetable cycle.

Alternatively, the display can be extended by choosing,

at: [Customize] ⟹ ☑ Use Class Printing Names   ☑ Special Resources   to show:

Scheduling the activities   `3 Schedule`

Entering your activities into Batches (page 5) is what takes the time. Once you have done that you can quickly schedule them to specific times of the week (cycle).
You can schedule the activities as described in the Tutorial and in Sections E, F, G in the printed Manual, and in HelpMovies 36 onwards.

Most people work on the Visual Builder Screen:

In this example, the Year 3 Maths & English lessons have been placed interactively, in the mornings ...and Science is about to be placed.

We recommend using **Interactive** scheduling at first, especially for:
• 'Fixed Point' activities that need to be at specific times of the week (eg. Games), and
• any key activities that you feel should be in the mornings (eg. Maths & English; use the Filter).

Later you can use **Semi-automatic** scheduling or even **Fully-automatic** scheduling to complete the rest of the timetable ...you'll find that the scheduling is usually completed within seconds.
All 3 methods are described in Section G1 and in HelpMovie **6**.

Look at the Class Timetable Screen (section F14) and the Staff Timetable Screen (F12) to see the results.
For example, after scheduling Year 3:

In this example, KS2 Maths (2M) has been aligned with KS3 Maths (3M), so that Nicholas Nickleby can join the lower group for Maths (only).

If you hit a problem see Section F6 and the 'kickouts' article in the Support Centre. `Support Centre`

To get Printouts to publish to your staff and pupils, see the next page.

Printouts [Section J in your Manual] [4 Print]

The 'master' Staff and 'individual' Staff Timetable Printouts [Sections J13, J17] give you the timetables of both
- the real Teachers *and*
- the 'dummy teachers/Special Resources' (ie. the students).

The 'Class' printouts may be more useful to you if you use the 'all-inclusive' option, see Section J15 for the alternatives …it depends on how you used the 'Year-number' in choosing the Class Scheduling Names. For example:

Class Timetable for Laura Norder High School
All-inclusive 17/03/2019

Monday

	period 1 9.00-9.50	period 2 9.50-10.40	period 3 11.00-11.50	
Year 3	Mr Thomas Gradgrind Mathematics Rm 2 M Chuzzlewit Mathematics Rm 2 D Coppefield Mathematics	Mr Wackford Squeers English Rm 3 M Chuzzlewit English Rm 3 L Manette English	Miss Cornelia Blimber French Rm 1 B Rudge French Rm 1 L Manette French	M

As well as 'master' printouts you can also get an Individual 'Staff' Timetable for:
- each Teacher, and for
- each Student, by selecting: [Advanced] ➡ Special resources — Student timetables: ☑

Laura Norder High School 17/03/2019

Timetable for M Chuzzlewit

	period 1 9.00-9.50	period 2 9.50-10.40	period 3 11.00-11.50	period 4 11.50-12.40	period 5 1.40-2.30	period 6 2.30-3.20
Monday	Mathematics Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	English Rm 3 Mr Wackford Squeers	French Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber	Geography Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber	Drama Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	Personal&Soc Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind
Tuesday	Mathematics Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	French Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber	History Rm 3 Mr Wackford Squeers	Science Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	Art Rm 4 Mr M'Choakumchild	
Wed	English Rm 3 Mr Wackford Squeers	Drama Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	Technology Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind		PhysicalEdu Rm 4 Mr M'Choakumchild	Music Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber
Thursday	Mathematics Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	French Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber	Geography Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber	Religious Ed Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	Science Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	Personal&Soc Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind
Friday	Mathematics Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	English Rm 3 Mr Wackford Squeers	Music Rm 1 Miss Cornelia Blimber	History Rm 3 Mr Wackford Squeers	Science Rm 2 Mr Thomas Gradgrind	

Additional Notes

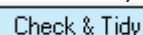Worked Example 1 in Section I in your printed Manual gives you more details and more examples.

It also explains how you can quickly re-do the timetable,
- if new students arrive, or students leave your school,
- if pupils are moved to different groups,
- if 'sixth form' students have changed their mind about their subjects when they return after the GCSE results are published.

Registration

As usual we have ignored any Registration periods (or Assemblies) while scheduling the timetable.
You can add them, when the timetable is complete, at : [Check & Tidy] ➟ [**+** Add a Period]

Exporting to your MIS Admin System

For exporting the completed timetable into an MIS, see the detailed notes relevant to your MIS,

at : [Export] ➟ [Read the latest instructions]

Note 1: Although each activity includes a lot of Special Resources, these Special Resources are not exported to the MIS.

Note 2: Although it is possible, as an alternative, to enter the students as 'teachers' on the Teachers Screen (instead of on the Special Resources Screen) we do not usually recommend that method. Reason: When you export to most** MIS, all the teachers (the real ones and the dummy/ student 'teachers') would be exported and this is likely to confuse the MIS which will expect to receive details only of real teachers.

** The exceptions are the exports to SEEMiS and to DoubleFirst Engage, which each use a matching screen.

Extra Help & Support   [📖 Support Centre]

If you have any problems please contact our 24/7 Support Centre, as described in HelpMovie 4.

Help & Support for your timetabling

With *TimeTabler* we provide the most comprehensive and expert timetabling support in the world.

We support you in **12** ways:

1 There is a free **Tutorial**, with a step-by-step Tutorial Booklet, to give you a quick introduction to the general style of the program.
Visit **www.timetabler.com** and use the Menu shown to get your free copy:

2 In *TimeTabler* every screen has its own interactive **HelpScreen** (as you can see in the free Tutorial versions).
Just click on the part of the screen you want Help on.
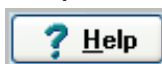
? Help

3 We provide a range of animated **HelpMovies** (video tutorials), to explain each main screen with a guided tour.
This is good at the start, to learn it quickly, and also at the start of each new timetabling season for quick revision.

4 *TimeTabler* comes with a fully-illustrated 200-page **printed Manual**. This contains a large number of **Worked Examples**, from simple 'setting' to the most complicated 'Sixth Form'.
It includes lots of timetabling Tactics, Tricks and Tips, spelt out step by step.

5 We provide a **QuickStart Guide**, with a checklist of steps that you need to take.

6 The book by Keith Johnson, Mervyn Wakefield and Chris Johnson on *"Timetabling – A Timetabler's CookBook"* is the standard 'bible' on timetabling **principles**.
It covers every aspect from A to Z.
The web-site also has some free **INSET/CPD materials** on timetabling principles.
And if you are **new** to timetabling, there is more information for you.

A Timetabler's CookBook
Keith Johnson

7 We send you a **monthly NewsLetter** to remind you of the essential tasks at each stage of the timetabling year. To receive your copy, go to:
www.timetabler.com/signupfornewsletter/

8 You will have access to our 24/7 **SupportCentre**.   **Support Centre**
This includes a large fully-searchable '**Knowledge Base**', where you can find answers to common timetabling problems, and you can download over 300 articles on timetabling.

9 We provide detailed documentation on how to **Export** your completed timetable to SIMS .net, Arbor, iSAMS, RM-Integris, and the other Admin Systems.

10 Before you start timetabling, our *Options* software helps you to find the most efficient arrangement of 'elective' choice subjects.   Simply and quickly.

11 Above all there is the expert **HelpLine Support**, from our team of experienced timetablers.
For New Users we provide **Gold-Start** **Enhanced** Support & Guidance.
 More details at: www.timetabler.com/gold-start

12 And if you need a training course, or if you want some on-site in-school Help, then our *TimeTabler* **Associates** can provide it.

So we provide a complete service for Timetablers. For you.
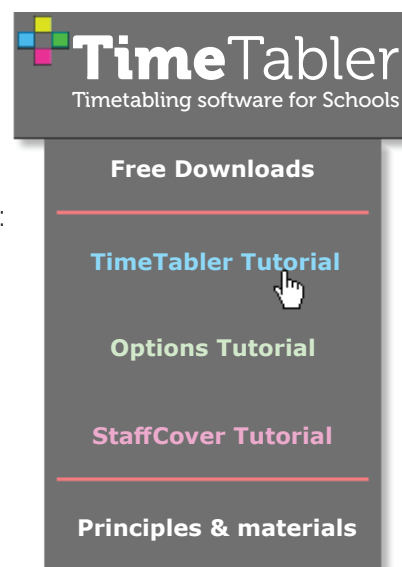
QR code for your tablet or phone

For more information and free downloads, visit   www.timetabler.com

Other titles in the series:

TimeTabler:

- Timetabling for Social Distancing.

- *TimeTabler* Tutorial (+ free Tutorial software).

- White Paper on Improving your school's Timetable.

- Saving Money for your school via the timetable.

- Will your next timetable be more difficult?

- Doing 'What if...?' investigations.

- Exporting the finished timetable from *TimeTabler* to your MIS.

Options:

- White Paper about different Options Structures.

- What is the most efficient way of collecting your pupils' optional Subject Choices?

- Improving your school's Options.

- Exporting from *Options* to SIMS, iSAMS, Bromcom, etc.
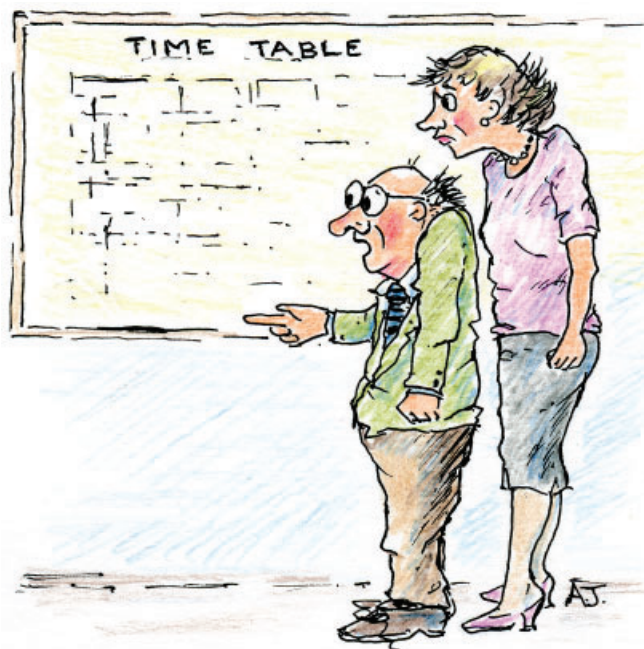
You're right — it **is** last year's, turned upside-down !

Other booklets in the series include:

- Help & Support we provide for you

- Timetabling Primary and Prep schools

- Employing & Timetabling Part-timers

- Timetabling : A Guide for Headteachers

- Improving your school's Option Choices

- 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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Timetabling software for Schools