

Tomorrow's Bells

120-minute plan · 4 players · Break a repeating day

A bell tower announces tomorrow's opening before today's workers are ready. Three short rehearsals repeat until the town chooses how to begin together.

Content notice: Repeating sounds and public deadlines. Describe bells rather than making loud noises; the repetition ends after three rounds.

GM overview

Use four beats per rehearsal, three rehearsals maximum. At two beats remaining the second stroke closes the counterweight window; an unpinned tower can no longer be aligned that round. In a first round, hearing the square and watching the striker establish two retained observations. Reset returns the group to the square and refreshes pins and handbells. In a later round, pin early, invite a courtyard reply, then align the tower. The alternative is to distribute two handbells and brief volunteers, ending with a slower street-by-street opening. The tower plan requires both observations; the handbell plan needs only the understood mismatch. State that pins and promises reset even when knowledge does not, and place removed physical counters back on the table.

What is really happening

The tower's rehearsal ring holds three charges. Its noon striker is one turn ahead of the courtyard reply. The west counterweight can be pinned only before the second stroke. Learning the mismatch persists across resets, while pins, invitations and workers' positions return to rehearsal start. An aligned pair of bells or a distributed handbell opening ends the rehearsal.

Opening agreement and read-aloud

Agree on subjects to soften or skip. Each player names an ordinary skill and a reason to help. Evidence does not require a successful roll; uncertainty changes time, cost or obligations.

The tower rings for an opening nobody has attended. A paper cup falls from a ledge, lands upright, and leaps back into the same hand. The bell keeper whispers, "That was tomorrow again."

Time and preparation

120 minutes: Three chances, two kinds of opening

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Compare the tower and reply observations: 30 minutes

Reset and debate the two opening methods: 30 minutes

Carry out an opening with a final reserve round: 40 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

Measure and watch in round one, which closes its pinning window. In round two distribute and brief handbells, or pin first for the tower. The final round is a finite recovery, not extra free investigations.

Starting information: Three rehearsal spaces

Starting state: Rehearsal round = 1; Beats in this rehearsal = 4; Available counterweight pin = 1; Portable handbells = 2; Early stroke understood = false; Reply interval measured = false; Second stroke passed = false; West counterweight pinned = false; Courtyard reply invited = false; Handbells distributed = false; Volunteers briefed = false

With 4 players: share the roles of mapper, evidence keeper, speaker and timekeeper.

If the group gets stuck

A late pin can be retried in a remaining round, or bypassed by the two-handbell plan. After round three use spoken notices and postpone; do not reset to a fourth round or erase known timing.

Tomorrow square

Read aloud: A cup lands upright for the second time.

GM: Reset always begins here. Measuring the reply earns interval knowledge and a public timing card. Players may refer to old notes immediately.

Choice: Measure the courtyard reply

Ask: What reaches the square one breath after the tower?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal. Reply interval measured: true. Reveal A repeated reply

Result: Anni's flag consistently answers one breath late.

Choice: Begin the handbell opening

Ask: Accept a slower opening with the tower silent?

Requires: Handbells distributed is true and Volunteers briefed is true.

Result: Two small bells begin along separate streets.

Closure: Tomorrow arrives one street at a time

Striker gallery

Read aloud: The metal passes the mark one breath early.

GM: Watching earns mismatch knowledge. It also spends a beat, so watching and measuring often use up the safe pinning window this round.

Choice: Watch the striker pass its mark

Ask: Compare the striker with the reply flag?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal. Early stroke understood: true. Reveal The early chalk mark, Three rehearsal spaces

Result: The early striker and the narrow pinning window become clear.

West counterweight room

Read aloud: A single pin rests in a felt-lined tray.

GM: The pin action requires three beats remaining and must precede the second stroke. After reset the pin returns to the tray.

Choice: Pin the west counterweight before the second stroke

Ask: Spend the pin now instead of using this early beat to inspect?

Requires: Early stroke understood is true and Second stroke passed is false and West counterweight pinned is false and Beats in this rehearsal at least 3. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal; Spend 1 Available counterweight pin. West counterweight pinned: true

Result: The counterweight holds at the proper chalk mark.

Workers' courtyard

Read aloud: One volunteer raises a reply flag without ringing.

GM: A tower reply needs a renewed invitation every round. Handbells use both portable instruments and one briefing action; no tower pin is needed.

Choice: Invite the workers' reply

Ask: Ask Anni to give a willing reply this round?

Requires: Reply interval measured is true and Courtyard reply invited is false. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal.

Courtyard reply invited: true

Result: Anni agrees to raise the reply flag when invited.

Choice: Give both handbells to street volunteers

Ask: Commit the portable bells to a slower opening?

Requires: Early stroke understood is true and Handbells distributed is false. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal;

Spend 2 Portable handbells. Handbells distributed: true. Reveal Two streets, two handbells

Result: The upper and lower street each receive one bell.

Choice: Brief the two carriers

Ask: Explain invitation, reply and opening before they leave?

Requires: Handbells distributed is true and Volunteers briefed is false. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal.

Volunteers briefed: true

Result: Both carriers repeat the sequence in their own words.

Covered bell bridge

Read aloud: The two bell ropes hang close enough to compare their movement.

GM: Resolve the aligned pair here once pin and reply are ready. If a pin was forgotten after reset, show the empty pinned box before offering the handbell or postponed opening.

Choice: Open with the aligned tower and reply

Ask: Let the courtyard answer before declaring the opening?

Requires: West counterweight pinned is true and Courtyard reply invited is true and Early stroke understood is true and Reply interval measured is true.

Result: The two signals occur in their agreed order. The cup stays on the ledge.

Closure: An opening that waits for its answer

Connections and changing routes

Tomorrow square - Striker gallery: Climb the public stair. Available.

Tomorrow square - Workers' courtyard: Enter the work yard. Available.

Striker gallery - West counterweight room: Follow the striker rail. Available.

West counterweight room - Covered bell bridge: Take the west bridge. Available.

Covered bell bridge - Workers' courtyard: Descend to the reply stand. Available.

Striker gallery - Covered bell bridge: Use the keeper's crossing. Early stroke understood is true.

Tomorrow square - Covered bell bridge: Use the staffed public ramp. Available. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal

Pell - Bell keeper

Goal: Announce the opening at the agreed time

Offers: One pin and three rehearsal charges.

Will not accept: Will not invent a fourth rehearsal.

Voice: "We can practice again, twice at most."

Anni - Reply flag keeper

Goal: Have workers answer before work is declared open

Offers: The courtyard reply and its timing.

Will not accept: The tower cannot consent on workers' behalf.

Voice: "Wait until we answer."

Dov - Street volunteer

Goal: Reach neighbors who cannot hear the tower clearly

Offers: Two portable handbells and a slower route.

Will not accept: Needs a briefing, not just an instrument.

Voice: "Give us the order, then the bells."

Discovery card: A repeated reply

Give only when revealed in play.

The tower sounds. One breath later the courtyard flag rises. Write which signal should invite which response.

Keep this note when objects return to their starting places.

Player task: Compare the two timing observations and plan a later round.

GM answer: The tower is early; workers need an invitation before the opening declaration.

Discovery card: The early chalk mark

Give only when revealed in play.

The striker reaches its chalk mark before the courtyard signal. A west pinhole passes out of reach at the second stroke. A pin already in place stays until the next reset.

Player task: Choose whether to inspect or pin early this round.

GM answer: The second stroke happens at two beats left. Pin with at least three beats, before spending time elsewhere.

Discovery card: Three rehearsal spaces

Give only when revealed in play.

Round one: ____ . Round two: ____ . Round three: ____ . Remembered notes remain. Pins, handbells, invitations and positions return. After round three, the rehearsal ring is empty.

Player task: Separate the retained plan from jobs that must be done again.

GM answer: Knowledge persists, but both pin and invitation must be renewed after a reset.

Discovery card: Two streets, two handbells

Give only when revealed in play.

Upper street: bell carrier ____ . Lower street: bell carrier ____ . Both must hear the order: invitation, reply, opening. The route is slower than the tower but reaches every doorway.

Player task: Assign two carriers and brief the shared sequence.

GM answer: Distribute both bells, brief volunteers, then choose the street opening.

State sheet

Rehearsal round: 1 (clock, minimum 1, maximum 3)

Beats in this rehearsal: 4 (clock, minimum 0, maximum 4)

Available counterweight pin: 1 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 1)

Portable handbells: 2 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 2)

Early stroke understood: false (knowledge)

Reply interval measured: false (knowledge)

Second stroke passed: false (flag)

West counterweight pinned: false (flag)

Courtyard reply invited: false (flag)

Handbells distributed: false (flag)

Volunteers briefed: false (flag)

Event: The second stroke

Trigger: Beats in this rehearsal at most 2

The free pinhole passes behind its cover. A pin already placed still holds; a new pin must wait for another rehearsal.

Second stroke passed: true

May recur in each round.

Event: The last rehearsal beat

Trigger: Beats in this rehearsal is 0

The banner returns to its first fold. Reset if a charge remains, or finish with the postponed opening.

May recur in each round.

Repeating rounds

There are 3 rounds. Reset: Beats in this rehearsal, Available counterweight pin, Portable handbells, Second stroke passed, West counterweight pinned, Courtyard reply invited, Handbells distributed, Volunteers briefed. Retain: Early stroke understood, Reply interval measured. Revealed cards and discovered places remain known.

Return to Tomorrow square with four beats. Pins return to the tray, handbells to the courtyard, and workers forget this round's invitations. Keep the measured interval, early-striker knowledge and all observation notes. Cross off one of the three rehearsals.

When repetitions run out: Rehearsal ends without an opening performance. Workers use spoken notices today, and the town plans a later celebration.

At any place: Wait for another stroke

Spend one rehearsal beat listening?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Beats in this rehearsal

The striker advances and the reply flag follows.

At any place: Postpone the opening and stop rehearsing

Use an ordinary spoken notice and arrange another opening day?

Requires: Available.

Pell removes the rehearsal ring and the repeated cup finally settles.

Ending: An opening that waits for its answer

Requires: West counterweight pinned is true and Courtyard reply invited is true

The town opens after the workers reply. The tower keeps the corrected interval and the rehearsal ring goes dark.

Next: Who will check the reply before the next public announcement?

Ending: Tomorrow arrives one street at a time

Requires: Volunteers briefed is true

The tower rests while two volunteers carry an agreed opening to every street. The opening takes longer, but neighbors hear the invitation clearly.

Next: Should the handbells remain part of future openings?

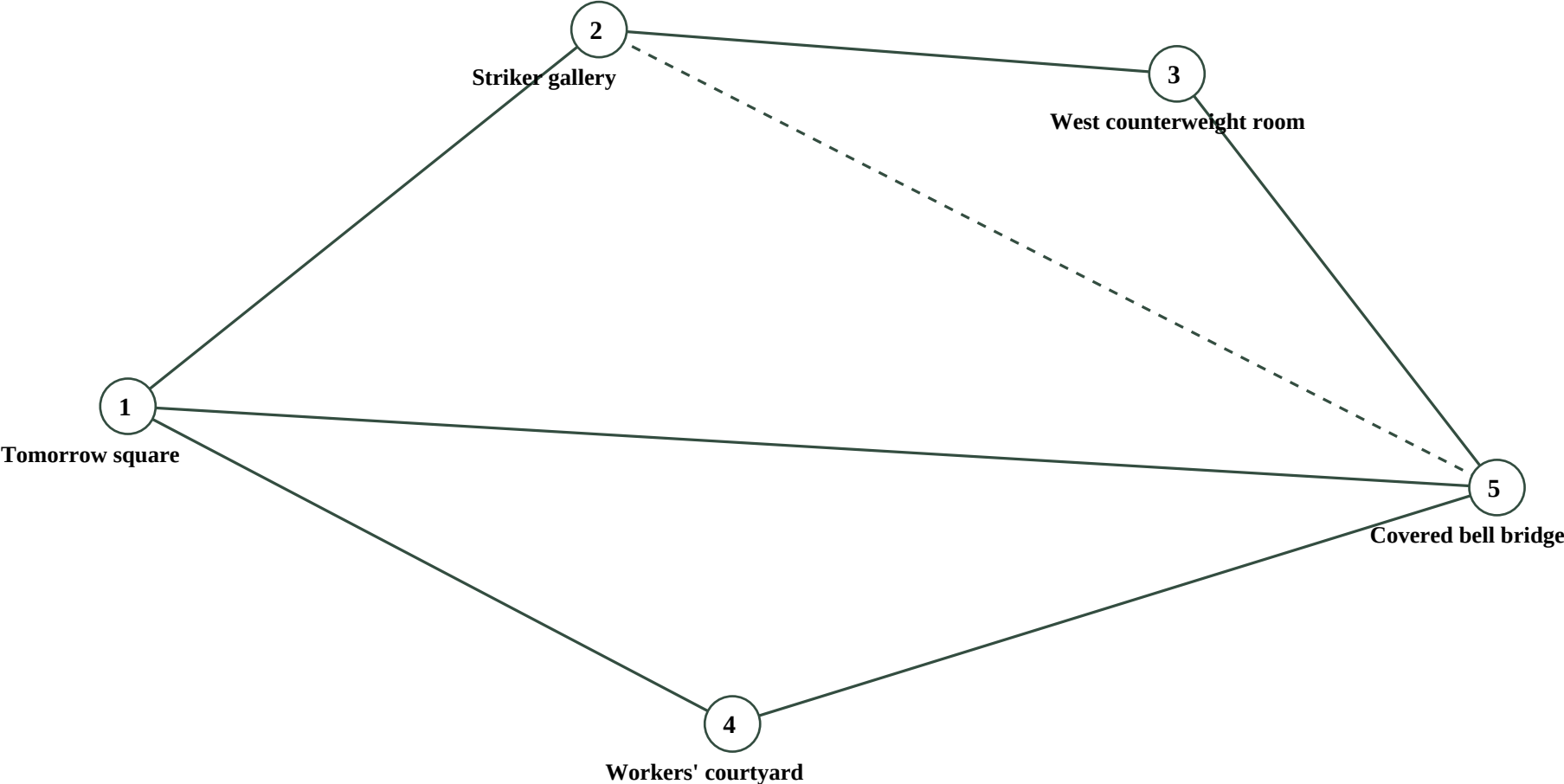
Ending: An ordinary day before the celebration

Requires: Available

Rehearsal ends without an opening performance. Workers use spoken notices today, and the town plans a later celebration.

Next: What should be agreed before another rehearsal begins?

Tomorrow's Bells - GM decision map



Dashed paths need conditions. Read Connections and changing routes for costs and direction.