

SECTION THREE

TIME

This section is divided into three categories:

- 1 At the moment (pinpointed time)
- 2 Then and now (time preceding and following)
- 3 How long? (duration)

All the prepositions in this section express the relationship between times and events.

1 AT THE MOMENT

about around at in inside on within

about Approximate time

The lecture should finish at four, but that's unlikely, so I'll meet you about 4.30 in the coffee bar.

around Approximate time

We should arrive around three o'clock, if there's not too much traffic.

at Exact time

The train leaves London at 8.30 am and reaches Edinburgh at 12.45 pm.

Occasions, special days

We usually have four days' holiday at Easter.

in Parts of a day, seasons and years

Very few shops are open in the evening.

inside Defined periods (As *within* but slightly more colloquial)

You don't think they'll finish building the new swimming pool inside a year, do you? Be realistic!

on Names of days

The new teacher will start on Monday, 13th September.

within Defined periods (rather formal)

I'll be back with the shopping within an hour.

Set phrases

In time (with time to spare)

On time (at the given time exactly)

On the dot (precisely)

EXERCISES

1 Change this sentence according to the prompts.

For example: *We expect the ambassador to arrive at 2.30 this afternoon.*

Prompt: evening

We expect the ambassador to arrive in the evening.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a Monday | e the weekend |
| b the next hour | f May |
| c four o'clock (approximately) | g time |
| d Easter | h 10.30 tomorrow morning |

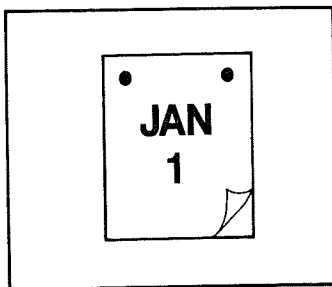
2 Fill in the gaps with a suitable preposition.

- a Most British children go to school . . . the morning and . . . the afternoon.
- b The sales start . . . 2 January but all the best bargains disappear . . . the first few hours.
- c Don't rush to get there . . . time, the doors open . . . eight but the main film starts . . . nine.
- d The term will finish next summer . . . 29 June, so I'll go on holiday . . . the first week of July.
- e You can open your presents . . . Christmas Day, not before.
- f By Concorde it's now possible to fly to New York from Europe . . . four hours.
- g My mother's so sentimental. I hope she doesn't cry . . . my wedding next week.

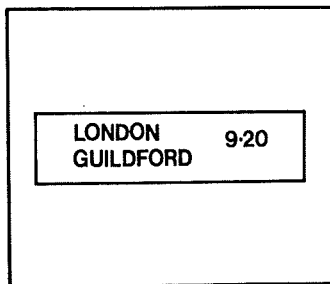
3 Answer the following questions.

- When were you born?
- When do you usually go on holiday?
- What time do you usually get up in the morning?
- When did man first land on the moon?
- In which month do you have the most public holidays in your country?
- How quickly can you read an average novel?
- On which day do you usually do your shopping?
- When do people give each other presents in your country?
- In which season do you get the best weather in your country?
- Do you usually arrive late for interviews? (Start with 'No . . .')

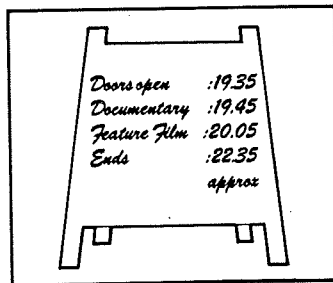
4 Write sentences about these diagrams.



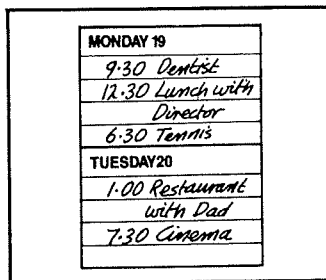
a The year begins . . .



b The Guildford train leaves . . .



c The doors open . . .
The film . . .



d On Monday . . .
On Tuesday . . .

5 Write these two telegrams in full.



2 THEN AND NOW

after before by past to

after Following a time

It's marvellous! All my lectures and seminars this year start after nine.

Following an event

'Did you manage to get to the station on time?'

'No, I got there ten minutes after the departure time, so I got a taxi.'

before Preceding a time

Please try to arrive before eight o'clock or we'll miss the beginning of the play.

Preceding an event

Let's have a drink before dinner, and then we can eat.

by Preceding or at a time/point

Give me your homework by Friday, then I can mark it at the weekend.

past Following a time (more colloquial than after)

There's no point in going to the party now, it's past midnight.

Telling the time

Doesn't time fly when you're having fun? It's half-past eleven already.

to Telling the time

'What time is it?'

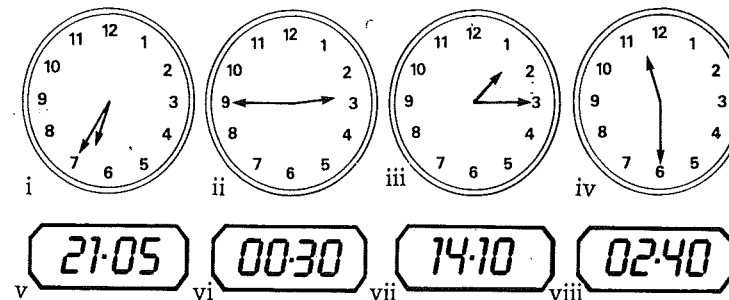
'It's already a quarter to six, let's go home.'

NB American English uses *after*, not *past*, when telling the time, for example: *It's ten after six*. (And sometimes *before* instead of *to*.)

EXERCISES

- Choose the correct preposition.
 - The committee will discuss this question on Friday, so please submit any suggestions — by/before/after — Thursday.
 - You've missed the last bus, it's already — to/after/by — 11.30.
 - Last drinks! It's already — past/to/by — eleven and I've got to close.
 - We don't have to leave yet, the bus goes at ten and it's only twenty — to/before/past — ten now.
 - My father's dead, actually. He died a year — before/after/past — my birth.
 - It's Monday today, and I can keep my library books another three days so I have to return them — after/before/by — Thursday.
 - Street lights are usually turned on just — to/after/before — dark.
- Paraphrase these sentences, using the preposition given.
 - The time is one-fifteen. **past**
 - I must pay the deposit before or on Saturday. **by**
 - The concert begins at 10.45 and finishes at 12.30. **to/past**
 - The train left at 10.50, but unfortunately I got to the station at 11.05. **to/past**
 - She finishes at the office at six and then she'll come and see you immediately. **after**
 - Ten-thirty is too late to arrive. **before**

- Match the watch-faces to the sentences and fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions.



- It's half- . . . eleven.
 - It's twenty . . . three . . . the morning.
 - It's five . . . nine . . . the evening.
 - It's a quarter . . . three.
 - It's a quarter . . . one.
 - It's thirty minutes . . . midnight.
 - It's twenty-five . . . seven.
 - It's ten . . . two . . . the afternoon.
- Look at this flight information board.

DEPARTURES			ARRIVALS		
8.55			9.05	LT079	FRANKFURT
9.10	AC1525	MONTREAL	9.10	AF1062	PARIS-CDG
9.15	DA729	MADRID	9.25		
9.30	PA1921	NEW YORK	9.30	BA9192	JOHANNESBURG
9.35	LT200	FRANKFURT	9.35	DA738	MUNICH
9.45	DA1910	MILAN	9.55	AA0107	TANGIER
9.50	PA8310	MONTEVIDEO	10.10		
10.10			10.15		
10.20			10.25	DA661	ATHENS

Fill in the missing flights above from the information in this paragraph.

Only one flight leaves the airport before nine o'clock in the morning, the BC218 to Edinburgh. Two flights leave after ten: at ten past the AF1063 to Paris — Charles de Gaulle, and ten minutes after that the SAS202 to Stockholm. There are three arrivals from America in the morning: the first one arriving from Miami at twenty-five past nine (BA4242); there's an arrival from New York at ten-fifteen (PA1918) and five minutes before that the PA2190 from Dallas.

- 5 Now answer these question with full sentences.
- How many departures are there before ten o'clock in the morning?
 - How many flights arrive from Europe after 9.30, but before 10.30?
 - If passengers have to arrive at the airport one hour before departure, by what time should you check in for your flight to Frankfurt?
 - If you're meeting a friend from Munich, what time should you be at the airport? (Use *before*.)
 - What time should you arrive at the airport if you want to fly to Sweden?
 - Robert wanted to fly to Canada, but he arrived ten minutes after his flight had taken off. What time did he arrive?
 - If it takes 45 minutes to fly to this airport from Paris, did Flight AF1062 leave Paris before or after 8.30?
 - The plane coming from Paris returns to Paris soon after its arrival. How soon after?

3 DURATION

about as from/of between during for
from . . . till/until/up to since throughout
till/until up to within

about Approximate duration
The carnival lasts about eight days.

as from/of Unknown duration from a given time
*The seat belt law will be in force as from 31 January.
As of today I won't eat any more cakes or chocolate.*

between From one point to another
The period between the two world wars was a period of depression for most of Europe.

during Period of time
The weather was fantastic during our holiday; we were able to go onto the beach every day.

Event in a certain period
John Lennon was shot during an early morning walk.

for Duration of a given length
In 1972 India had been independent for 25 years.

from . . . till Duration between two given points
*From the day he read the article on lung cancer till the day he died, he didn't touch another cigarette.
(Until and up to are used in the same way.)*

in Specified duration
Wait for me here, please. I'll be back in a few minutes.

since Duration from a given point until the present
India has been independent since 1947.

throughout From the beginning to the end
Throughout her life, Golda Meir dedicated herself to the establishment of a Jewish state.

till Duration to a given point
She'll be studying till 1985, when she takes her final exams.

until Same as *till*

up to Same as *till*

within Specified duration
He'll have the solution within a few hours.

EXERCISES

- Fill in the gaps with a suitable preposition.
 - The French Revolution started . . . the reign of Louis XVI.
 - The plumber will be here . . . two o'clock . . . five this afternoon.
 - I was so terrified that I trembled . . . the whole trip.
 - Gandhi lived in South Africa . . . many years.
 - 'Will you be long?'
'No, only. . . another half an hour.'

- f Mrs Young will be responsible for the department . . . next Wednesday.
 g I haven't visited Morocco . . . I saw my cousin in 1975.
 h Don't worry about me; the bus will get me home . . . an hour.
 i Geologists believe Britain's coal resources will have run out . . . fifty years.

2 Make sensible sentences from these phrases.

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) He will be our new boss | i) during 1984. |
| b) A British Prime Minister stays in office | ii) from 1849 until he died in 1883. |
| c) Britain has had four TV channels | iii) since November, 1982. |
| d) Inflation in Britain dropped | iv) for about five years. |
| e) Karl Marx lived in London | v) during a strike by sanitation workers. |
| f) Luther King was assassinated | vi) as from 1 March. |

3 Put these words into the correct order to make sensible sentences.

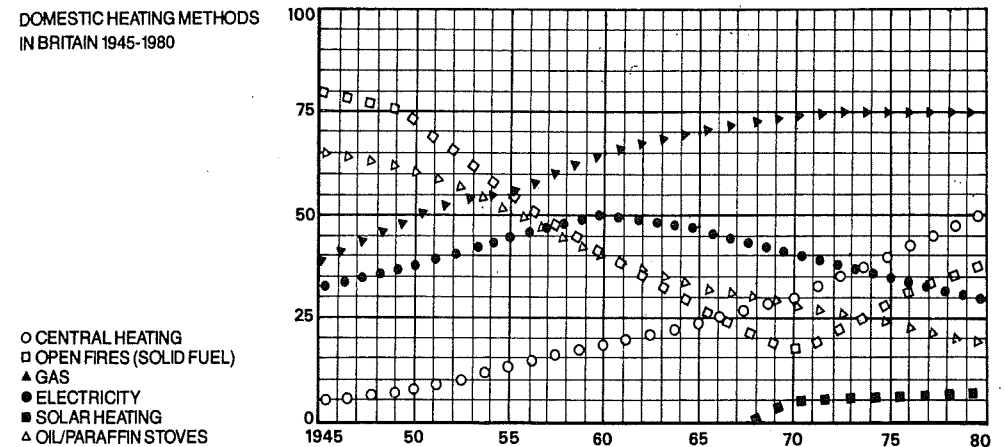
- a I'll/ to school/ I'm/ go/ until/ 16/ have to
 b he/ in/ for/ China/ stayed/ two years
 c welfare officer/ to/ the/ between/ one/ report/ and five pm
 d risen/ the/ few/ inflation/ during/ years/ has/ past
 e in power/ about/ they've/ years/ been/ two/ for
 f since/ my childhood/ been/ there / haven't/ I

4 Paraphrase these sentences, using the prepositions given.

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| a Because of a serious accident Elena was unable to walk between the ages of eight and thirteen. | from . . . to |
| b Martin has been living in Holland since 1979. It's now 1985. | for |
| c If they are lucky, African children spend approximately six years in full-time education. | about |
| d He proposed to his fiancée on a liner cruising the Mediterranean. | during |
| e I'm going to give up drinking. Today I'll have my last glass of wine. | as from |
| f He spent the whole of 1967 in prison. | throughout |

5 Look at the chart below.

DOMESTIC HEATING METHODS IN BRITAIN 1945-1980



Write a few sentences about the success of each type of fuel, using prepositions of duration, like this:

Oil/paraffin heating

During the period from 1945 to 1980 the number of households using oil and paraffin fell greatly. In 1945 approximately 65% of all households were heated by this method, but by 1960 fewer than 50% were using it. From 1945 to 1960 the percentage dropped gradually, but between 1960 and 1980 it dropped a lot more quickly.

CONSOLIDATION OF SECTION THREE

1 Look at these sentences.

- a) He'll be here by Thursday.
 b) He'll be here within a week.
 c) He'll be here till the middle of the week.
 d) He'll be here till the weekend.
 e) He'll be here during the week.
 f) He'll be here till past midnight.
 g) He's been here since last week.

one of the time phrases in the sentences on the left. Which one can go into which sentence?

- i) . . . from Monday to Friday.
 ii) . . . by this time next week.
 iii) . . . throughout the whole week.
 iv) . . . for the past week.
 v) . . . before or on Thursday.
 vi) . . . till about Wednesday.
 vii) . . . till after midnight.

Now look at the phrases on the right. Each one of them can be substituted for

2 Look at this timetable and answer the questions that follow it.

Monday to Friday										
London Eston	Coventry	Birmingham International	Birmingham New Street	Wolver- hampton	Wolver- hampton	Birmingham New Street	Birmingham International	Coventry	London Eston	
dep	arr	arr	arr	arr	dep	dep	dep	dep	arr	
0650	0823B	0834B	0850B	0916B	X	0600	0618	0628	0640	0600
X	0740	0850	0901	0918	X	0630	0648	0658	0710	0829
X	0810	0920	0931	0948	X	0700	0718	0728	0740	0855
X	0840	0950	1001	1018	X	0730	0748	0758	0810	0925
X	0910	1020	1031	1048	X	0800	0818	0828	0840	0955
X	0935	1045	1057	1114	X	0830	0848	0858	0910	1029
X	1005	1123	1133	1151	X	0900	0918	0928	0940	1055
X	1040	1153	1203	1222	X	0930	0948	0958	1010	1135
X	1110	1223	1233	1252	X	0946A	1018	1028	1040	1202
X	1140	1253	1303	1322	X	1030	1048	1058	1110	1233
X	1210	1323	1333	1352	X	1047A	1118	1128	1140	1302
X	1240	1353	1403	1422	X	1130	1148	1158	1210	1333
X	1310	1423	1433	1452	X	1142A	1218	1228	1240	1405
X	1340	1451	1503	1522	X	1230	1248	1258	1310	1433
X	1410	1523	1533	1552	X	1246A	1318	1328	1340	1505
X	1440	1551	1603	1622	X	1330	1348	1358	1410	1533
X	1510	1623	1633	1652	X	1343A	1418	1428	1440	1605
X	1540	1646	1657	1714	X	1430	1448	1458	1510	1633
X	1610	1720	1731	1748	X	1445A	1518	1528	1540	1702
X	1640	1746	1757	1814	X	1530	1548	1558	1610	1736
X	1710	1818	1828	1846	X	1546A	1618	1628	1640	1800
X	1740	1848	1859	1916	X	1630	1648	1658	1710	1830
X	1810	1916	1927	1944	X	1647A	1718	1728	1740	1858
X	1840	1946	1957	2014	X	1730	1748	1758	1810	1931
X	1910	2016	2027	2044	X	1745A	1818	1828	1840	2003
X	1940	2051	2102	2119	X	1830	1848	1858	1910	2028
X	2030	2136	2147	2204	X	1904	1929	1941	1953	2111
X	2140	2250	2301	2321	X	1940	2003	2013	2025	2143
						2130	2148	2158	2210	2328

A - Change at Birmingham New Street. B - Change at Rugby. Valid until 15 May

- Are these times valid for every day?
- From when is the timetable itself no longer valid?
- How quickly can you get from London to Birmingham New Street?
- What time is the earliest train from Birmingham International to London?
- What time must you leave London if you want to get to Wolverhampton by 10.30 am, without changing?
- How long would it take you if you caught the 12.30 train from Wolverhampton to London?
- If you leave Wolverhampton at 9.30 am and arrive back there at 5.15 pm, how long will you spend in London?

3 Complete this paragraph by using suitable prepositions and information from the timetable.

Stephanie Jamieson is a journalist. Tomorrow she's going to Birmingham to write an article about the Motor Show. The show opens . . . nine o'clock, and to arrive at Birmingham International station . . . that time she must leave London at Stephanie can only stay at the show . . . one o'clock, as she is meeting a colleague in the centre of Birmingham . . . one-thirty, and the train at . . . will get her to New Street station . . . one twenty-five. . . the afternoon she will stay at her colleague's office, and then she'll catch the . . . train from Birmingham

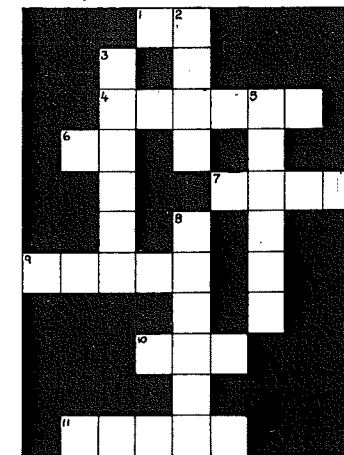
New Street to meet a friend in Wolverhampton at a quarter . . . five. She wants to be back in London . . . eight-thirty, so she'll catch the . . . train back. As she is on the train . . . almost . . . hours she will be able to write her article . . . her journey.

4 Look at these two pages from a diary and then write as much as you can about this person's week, using the prepositions you have been practising.

For example: *On Tuesday she's catching the half past nine train to Cambridge.*

<p>MON 2</p> <p>AM - New secretary starts</p> <p>2.30 - Meeting</p> <p>6.30 - J & F for drinks</p>	<p>FRI 6</p> <p>12.30 - Meet Gamma, take to pantomime</p> <p>7.00 - Return to Frank's for dinner</p>
<p>TUES 3</p> <p>9.30 - Train to Cambridge</p> <p>12.30 - Lunch with Cambridge Sales Manager</p>	<p>SAT 7</p> <p>10.30 - Hairdresser</p> <p>8.00 - Meet G. at Leicester Sq. Adam</p>
<p>WED 4</p> <p>Cambridge</p>	<p>SUN 8</p>
<p>THURS 5</p> <p>Cambridge</p> <p>4.45 - Train to London</p> <p>7.30 - Badminton lesson</p>	<p>NOTES</p> <p>Don't forget documents for Liverpool next week</p>

5 Fill in this crossword using the clues below. Each answer is a preposition.



ACROSS

- We have to attend school . . . to the age of 16 in Britain.
- How can they expect us to do this exam . . . three hours?
- Meet me . . . nine o'clock on the dot.
- They stayed at the hospital . . . 7.30 till midnight.
- He hasn't been perfectly healthy . . . his last illness.
- She lived in Brazil . . . several years.
- I'll return your book to you . . . I've read it.

DOWN

- Surely you're not going out now? It's . . . eleven o'clock.
- I'll get to the hospital . . . an hour.
- I learnt a lot of Russian . . . my stay in Moscow.
- It is advisable to book at least three months . . . departure to ensure a place on the holiday.