

# Time

## Upper-intermediate

### 1 Rank order

Look at these periods of time. Put them in order from the shortest to the longest:

a millennium	a decade	forever	not long
an hour and a half	a split second	a couple of months	the Victorian era
a lifetime	a school term	a fortnight	a leap year
the eighteenth century	the football season	a generation	ages

### 2 Question time!

Use the words from question 1 to answer the questions:

- How long does a football match last?
- The year 2000 marked the end of what?
- The year 1800 marked the end of what?
- February 29th only occurs in what?
- What's a typical length of a summer holiday?
- How long would you be prepared to wait for a bus into your nearest town?
- What's the difference in time between first and second in the Olympic 100 metres race?
- What starts after one holiday and ends at the next holiday?
- What's the difference in time between you and your parents?
- How long do lovers promise to love each other for?

### 3 Fill the gaps

Complete the phrases with *time*. Use the prepositions from the list below. You may need to use some more than once:

on in at to for out of from upon by

- I enjoy going to a restaurant \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ time.
- He always arrives exactly \_\_\_\_\_ time. He's never early or late.
- You're just \_\_\_\_\_ time. The show is about to start.
- \_\_\_\_\_ the time I arrived, it had already started.

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- 5 The quiz contestant was \_\_\_\_\_ time. She hadn't answered all the questions.
- 6 I used to work in the United States \_\_\_\_\_ a time.
- 7 Once \_\_\_\_\_ a time, there lived a handsome prince.
- 8 It will never be possible to go back \_\_\_\_\_ time.
- 9 I really believed in those things \_\_\_\_\_ the time.
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_ times, my parents really get on my nerves.

### 4 Fill the gaps

Read the text. Fill in the gaps with one of the words below:

over	time	spend	day
passes	last	lasts	commodity

#### Finding time

In the 21st century time has become our most precious \_\_\_\_\_. Time \_\_\_\_\_ so quickly, and so unfairly, too. A two-week holiday by the seaside flies by. It seems to \_\_\_\_\_ no time at all. Standing in a queue, on the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_ for an eternity. We endure listening to teachers and bosses, boring us stupid, but, when we go to a concert or show, and we're really enjoying ourselves, it's \_\_\_\_\_ before we know it. And when life's hard? Well, problems blow over, but not before \_\_\_\_\_. We \_\_\_\_\_ most of our lives working, and the rest of it worrying that we're not working hard enough. And before we know it, we've outgrown our shoes, outgrown our friends, and had our \_\_\_\_\_.

According to the writer, in what way is time unfair?

### 5 Fill the gaps

Complete these sentences using the verbs and phrases below. The verbs are all used in the text in 4. You may need to change the tense of the verb:

pass	last	fly by	endure	blow over
spend	waste	outgrow	have (your) day	

- a. A rugby match \_\_\_\_\_ eighty minutes, plus injury time.
- b. It was a great holiday. It \_\_\_\_\_. I can't believe we're home already.

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- c. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ your time printing it all out and posting it. Send it to me by e-mail.
- d. Tommy has \_\_\_\_\_ his school trousers already. I'll have to buy some more.
- e. We had to \_\_\_\_\_ a really boring lecture on the history of coal mining.
- f. Well, I've \_\_\_\_\_. I'm going to retire and let someone younger take over.
- g. We \_\_\_\_\_ the afternoon rowing on the river. It was lovely. Time \_\_\_\_\_ so slowly.
- h. Don't worry about all the publicity. It'll \_\_\_\_\_. Your life will be back to normal soon.

### 6 True or false

Complete the *Time survey* by writing *true* or *false* next to each statement, depending on your own experience:

#### Time survey

I always wear a watch. I need to know what time it is.

I'm always on time. Punctuality is very important to me.

I set time limits for things that I do.

Timetables, itineraries and appointment diaries play a large role in my life.

I keep a daily diary so that I always know what time my appointments are.

When I meet friends, I always arrange an exact time.

I plan how much time I'm going to spend learning English every week.

I often feel rushed for time. I get anxious about it.

I often don't have time to do things I want to do.


Interview your partner about time. Do you think they are too worried about time?

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## 7 Time dictionary quiz

Try the quiz. If you have the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD-ROM you can find all the answers by finding the key word *time*, and following the various links:

- 1 In what ways is *time* like *money*?
- 2 If you *call time*, where are you working?
- 3 What do you do if you *bide your time*?
- 4 If you *do time*, where are you?
- 5 What's the difference between *extra time* and *injury time*?
- 6 What's the difference between *time out* and *time off*?
- 7 What sort of jobs are *time-consuming*?
- 8 Do we say *all-time* great or *full-time* great?
- 9 What are you if you are *ahead of your time*?
- 10 Do we say *he works all the time* or *he works all time*?
- 11 What things are *time-honoured*?

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### Teacher's notes – Time (Upper-intermediate)

#### 1 Put the students in pairs to decide on the correct order.

##### Answers:

a split second > an hour and a half > a fortnight > a couple of months > a school term > the football season > a leap year > a decade > a generation > the Victorian era > a lifetime\* > the eighteenth century > a millennium > forever

**Notes:** \*a lifetime is of course of unpredictable length. Assuming it is typically seventy years, that is longer than the Victorian Era (1837 to 1901), but shorter than a century.

*Ages and not long are relative periods of time. Ages can mean a few minutes: I stood at the bus stop for ages waiting for the number 8, or many millennia:  
Through the ages, Man has had to adapt to change. Not long means a relatively short period of time, a few minutes, hours or days.*

#### 2 Put the students in pairs to answer the questions.

##### Answers:

- a. an hour and a half
- b. a millennium
- c. the eighteenth century
- d. a leap year
- e. a fortnight
- f. not long
- g. a split second
- h. a school term
- i. a generation
- j. forever

#### 3 Put the students in pairs to complete the phrases with *time*.

##### Answers:

- 1 I enjoy going to a restaurant from time to time.
- 2 He always arrives exactly on time. He's never early or late.
- 3 You're just in time. The show is about to start.
- 4 By the time I arrived, it had already started.
- 5 The quiz contestant was out of time. She hadn't answered all the questions.
- 6 I used to work in the United States for a time.
- 7 Once upon a time, there lived a handsome prince.
- 8 It will never be possible to go back in time.
- 9 I really believed in those things at the time.
- 10 At times, my parents really get on my nerves.

#### 4 Ask the students to read the text and answer the question.

In the 21st century time has become our most precious commodity. Time passes so quickly, and so unfairly, too. A two-week holiday by the seaside flies by. It seems to last no time at all. Standing in a queue, on the other hand, lasts for an eternity. We endure listening to teachers and bosses, boring us stupid, but, when we go to a concert or show, and we're really enjoying ourselves, it's over before we know it. And when life's hard? Well, problems blow over, but not before time. We spend most of our lives working, and the rest of it worrying that we're not working hard enough. And before we know it, we've outgrown our shoes, outgrown our friends, and had our day.

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**Answer:**

Time is unfair because bad, boring and annoying things take a long time, but pleasurable things seem to fly by very quickly.

**5 Put the students in pairs to complete the sentences using the verbs and phrases.**

**Answers:**

- a. A rugby match lasts eighty minutes, plus injury time.
- b. It was a great holiday. It flew by. I can't believe we're home already.
- c. Don't waste your time printing it all out and posting it. Send it to me by e-mail.
- d. Tommy has outgrown his school trousers already. I'll have to buy some more.
- e. We had to endure a really boring lecture on the history of coal mining.
- f. Well, I've had my day. I'm going to retire and let someone younger take over.
- g. We spent the afternoon rowing on the river. It was lovely. Time passed so slowly.
- h. Don't worry about all the publicity. It'll blow over. Your life will be back to normal soon.

**6 Give the students a few minutes to complete the *Time survey* by writing *true* or *false* next to each statement, depending on their own experiences. When they are ready, put the students in pairs or small groups to discuss their answers. Find out which students are most preoccupied with time.**

**7 If your students have access to the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD-ROM, set them the following quiz. They can find all the answers by finding the keyword *time*, and following the various links.**

**Answers:**

- 1 In what ways is *time* like *money*?  
**Because you buy and use both time and money.**
- 2 If you *call time*, where are you working?  
**In a pub**
- 3 What do you do if you *bide your time*?  
**Wait in a patient way for an opportunity to do something.**
- 4 If you *do time*, where are you?  
**In prison**
- 5 What's the difference between *extra time* and *injury time*?  
**Extra time: a period of time that can be added to the end of a match if both teams have the same score, injury time: time added at the end of a match because time has been lost dealing with injured players.**
- 6 What's the difference between *time out* and *time off*?  
**Time out: A period of time when you stop what you usually do and rest, time off: time when you are not at work or school.**
- 7 What sort of jobs are *time-consuming*?  
**Students' answers will vary.**
- 8 Do we say *all-time* great or *full-time* great?  
**All-time**
- 9 What are you if you are *ahead of your time*?  
**At an earlier time than people expected.**
- 10 Do we say *he works all the time* or *he works all time*?  
**He works all the time.**
- 11 What things are *time-honoured*?  
**Customs, methods and procedures**