

There or it/they

1 Look at these sentences:

There is a big market near the river; it is very good for fruit and meat.

There are two buses on Sunday; they both go to the station.

We use **there is/are** when we talk about something for the first time in a conversation, and when we say where it is or when it is. We do not use **there** to talk about the same thing again; we use singular **it** (here meaning 'the big market') or plural **they** (here meaning 'the two buses'). Here are some more examples:

There are two schools here; they are both new.

There's a good programme on Sunday; it gives all the sports news.

2 We use **there** with different forms of **be**:

There weren't any CDs thirty years ago.

A: *Have there been any problems this year?*

B: *Yes, there have.*

There used to be a park here. (= There was a park here but it isn't here now.)

There may be some eggs in the fridge. (= It is possible that there are some eggs ...)

3 We also use **there is/are** etc. to talk about the number of people or things in a place. Look at these questions and answers:

A: *How many people were there at your party?*

B: *There were about twelve.*
(NOT ~~We were about twelve.~~)

A: *Are there many restaurants here?*

B: *Yes, there must be ten or more.*
(NOT ~~They must be ten.~~)

We can use **of us, of them**, etc. after the number:

There were about twelve of us.

4 For the weather, we use **it** with a verb or adjective, but **there** with a noun:

it + verb: It *rained/snowed* a lot last winter.

it + adjective: It was *foggy/sunny/windy/cloudy*.

there + noun: There was a lot of *fog/cloud*.

5 Notice these examples with **it takes**:

It takes seven years to become a doctor.

A: *How long does it take to make bread?*

B: *It takes several hours (to make bread).*

These sentences describe the time that is necessary to do something.

Practice

A Put in **there is**, **there are**, **it is** or **they are**.

► *There are* two cinemas in our town; *they are* both near my flat.

1 one train on Sundays; an express train.

2 two national holidays this month, and both on a Friday.

3 several trees in our garden, but not very tall.

4 a big lake in the park; very deep.

B Write answers to the questions using **there were ... of** and the words in brackets ().

► A: How many people were there at your party?

B: (twenty/us) *There were twenty of us.*

1 A: How many of you were there in the car?

B: (five/us)

2 A: How many sailors were there in the boat?

B: (six/them)

3 A: How many people were there at the supper?

B: (twelve/us)

C Rewrite the sentences using the words in brackets () and *it* or *there*.

- ▶ There's a lot of snow in December.
(snows a lot) *It snows a lot in December.*
- ▶ It's quite cloudy this morning.
(quite a lot of cloud) *There's quite a lot of cloud this morning.*
- 1 There's a lot of rain in April.
(rains a lot)
- 2 It's foggy on the motorway this morning.
(fog on the motorway)
- 3 There are a lot of clouds in the mountains.
(very cloudy)
- 4 It's very windy on the west coast.
(a lot of wind)

D Use *there* and the words in the box to complete the sentences. Use each word in the box once.

have been is may be used to be was will be

- ▶ *There is* an accident on this road almost every day.
- 1 Last year a terrible fire at that factory.
- 2 Next Monday at 7 p.m. a meeting of the committee.
- 3 When I was young, a lot more cinemas than there are now.
- 4 Since 1900 two world wars.
- 5 a late-night bus, but I'm not sure if there is.

E Look at the times needed to prepare certain foods, then write a statement or a question and answer.

bake bread	– about three hours
prepare a salad	– about ten minutes
cook a stew	– about two hours
cook an omelette	– a few minutes
boil an egg	– about three minutes
make tea	– about five minutes.
make a cake	– about an hour.

- ▶ It takes about three minutes to boil an egg.
- ▶ A: How long does it take to prepare a salad ?
B: It takes about ten minutes
- 1 It an omelette.
- 2 A: How long tea?
B:
- 3 It bread.
- 4 A: How long stew?
B:
- 5 It cake.