

Linking words – *while*, *during*, and *for*

The prepositions '*for*', '*during*' and '*while*' are often used in **time expressions**.

FOR

- **For** is followed by a **length of time** : **for** one hour.
It answers the question : **How long?**
 - I have been standing here **for** 10 minutes.
 - Tony is going to San Francisco **for** a week.
 - My parents lived in London **for** 2 years.
 - Have you been attending English classes **for** a long time?

DURING

- **During** is followed by a **noun**.
It means '**throughout the period**' or '**in the course of**' an action or event.
 - **During** the summer I go to the beach as often as possible.
 - Exercises were given to us **during** the lesson.
 - The bank was robbed **during** the night.
 - My grandparents often come to stay with us **during** the winter.

WHILE

- **While** is usually followed by a **subject and a verb**.
It means '**during the time that an action is taking place**'.
 - They held hands **while** they were watching the film.
 - The students took notes **while** the teacher was speaking.
 - We'll collect some seashells **while** we're walking on the beach.
 - Alex phoned **while** you were out.

It is often possible to drop **subject + be** :

- I generally listen to music **while** driving to work.
 - Sam twisted his ankle **while** playing tennis.
- **While** can also be a noun which means 'a period of time'.
 - I spoke to the neighbour for quite **a while** yesterday.
 - It's been **a while** since I read that book.

Exercise 1

Write down **during**, **for**, **while** to complete the sentences below.

1 She has been sleeping ten hours.

2 I lived in London over two years.

3 I met George my trip to Barcelona.

- 4 The singer fell ill they were on tour.
- 5 She gets up at 6 and meditates an hour before going to work.
- 6 He scored a goal the second half of the match.
- 7 She fell asleep the exam.
- 8 Paul has been in a wheelchair most of his life.
- 9 I met Sally I was on holiday in Scotland.
- 10 We should travel we are still young.

Exercise 2. Complete the sentences with while, during or for.

- 1 I fell and hurt myself _____ I was playing tennis.
It started to rain _____ the match.
We played tennis _____ two hours.
- 2 I worked in Italy _____ three years.
_____ the summer I stayed on a farm in Tuscany.
I learned Italian _____ I was there.
- 3 We went on holiday in Florida _____ three weeks.
_____ the day it was very hot, but it was cool at night.
We went to Disneyland _____ we were there.
- 4 We had a lovely meal yesterday. We sat at the table _____ three hours.
_____ the meal we exchanged news.
_____ I was talking to Barbara, I learned that Tony was in hospital.