There is (are/was/were) vs *It is (was)*

There is is normally used when something is talked about for the first time and then ***It*** (or ***They)*** is used to refer back to the original thing or situation.

e.g. ***There is*** a ship over there. ***It*** has come from Denmark.
e.g. ***There were*** 100 people at the conference. ***They*** came from all over the world.

There is is also used for something that exists or is located somewhere.

e.g. ***There is*** a lot of traffic during peak hour.
e.g. ***There are*** ATM machines all over the city.

It is is usually used in statements about the following:

fact – ***It is*** our opinion that all children should have ten years of education.
time – ***It is*** half past eleven.
weather – ***It is*** raining now.
distance – ***It is*** not far to drive to Drammen from Oslo.
general environment – ***It is*** very dusty in this house.

Practice Exercises
Use ***There is/was*** or ***There are/were*** or ***It is*** or ***It*** or ***They*** to complete the sentences below:

1. _____ many meeting rooms in the building but _____ are often occupied.

2. If _____ a problem with the computer, please let me know.

3. Look! _____ a clock on that building. _____ 1:15 so we should go to the bus stop now or we will miss our bus.

4. _____ common knowledge that too much alcohol can cause both mental and physical health problems.

5. _____ a saying in English - '_____ no use crying over spilt milk'.

6. _____ possible that we are killing the planet with pollution.

7. _____ two more items that I would like to add to the meeting agenda.

8. _____ several new projects that we will soon be working on.

_____ will involve the training of new staff.

9. Yesterday _____ a big traffic jam when I was driving home.

_____ looked like there had been an accident because ambulances and police cars kept going past.

10. _____ very sunny yesterday so _____ lots of people at the beach.

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