

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.