

76 *it* as a subject/object



It snowed all night and it took a long time to clear the roads in the morning.

1 *it* as a subject

We can use *it* as a subject pronoun, to talk about a noun we have already mentioned:

There was an awful storm last night. It damaged the roof.

But often *it* has no real meaning, e.g. *It's raining*. We use *it + be*

- with an adjective, to describe a general situation: *I love living in Cambridge. It's nice here.*
- to talk about time: *What time is it? It's ten o'clock. What time will it be when we arrive?*
- to talk about days and dates: *What day is it? It's Monday. It was my birthday yesterday.*
- to describe distances: *It's five kilometres from home to the station. It's 200 kilometres away.*
- to talk about the weather: *It's raining. It isn't cold.*

We say *it takes five minutes, two hours*, etc. when we talk about how long we need to do something:

'How long does it take to get to the airport?' 'It takes about an hour.'

It took a long time to clear the roads in the morning.

2 *it* as an object

We also use *it* as an object pronoun to talk about a noun we have already mentioned:

There was a lot of snow yesterday. The children enjoyed playing in it.

3 *it's + adjective/noun + to*

We often use an adjective or noun after *be + infinitive* with *to*:

<i>It + be</i>	ADJECTIVE	INFINITIVE	<i>It + be</i>	NOUN	INFINITIVE
<i>It's</i>	<i>nice</i>	<i>to see you.</i>	<i>It was</i>	<i>a mistake</i>	<i>to accept this job.</i>
<i>It isn't</i>	<i>easy</i>	<i>to find our house.</i>	<i>It will be</i>	<i>a shame</i>	<i>to miss your wedding.</i>

4 *there and it*

We use *there + be* to give new information. We use *it* to say more about that information.

There's somebody at the door. It's the postman.

There's some soup on the cooker. It's tomato soup.



We don't use *it* to say where something is or when something happened. We use *there*:

~~✗ It's a swimming pool at the leisure centre.~~ ✓ *There's a swimming pool at the leisure centre.*

~~✗ It was a lot of snow last night.~~ ✓ *There was a lot of snow last night.*

Practice

1 Choose the correct word in *italics*.

- 0 'When's your birthday?' 'Is / *It's* on 30 May.'
- 1 Look out of the window – *it's* / *there's* snowing really heavily.
- 2 I'll do the dishes before we leave. *It won't* / *Won't* take long.
- 3 Mum gave me a scarf for my birthday. I *wear* / *wear it* all the time.
- 4 Have you seen the new building in the town centre? *It's* / *There's* really ugly.
- 5 We can go walking on the hill – *there isn't* / *it isn't* much wind today.
- 6 Gerry doesn't like being a shop assistant. *There's* / *It's* boring.
- 7 Paul is really happy these days – *it's* / *is* nice to see that.
- 8 How far *is there* / *it* to the station?

2 Match the two parts of the sentences.

0 Hello. It's really nice	→	A to make new friends.
1 The show isn't full so it isn't necessary	→	B to see the director now.
2 When you move to a different town, it isn't easy	→	C to speak on a mobile phone.
3 We're away next weekend. It will be a shame	→	D to see you again.
4 I'm sorry but it isn't possible	→	E to book seats before we go.
5 When you're driving in the UK, it's a crime	→	F to have an extra pen.
6 In an exam, it's important	→	G to miss your party.

3 Match the questions with the pictures. Then write answers.



0 What's the weather like? <i>D</i>	<i>It's really sunny.</i>
1 What time is it?
2 What's the date?
3 How far is Madrid?
4 How long does the car wash take?

4 GRAMMAR IN USE Read the story. Then complete it with *it* or *there*.

MY WORST JOURNEY EVER

A few years ago, I had to go to Stuttgart Airport to meet some friends. (0) *It* usually only takes about half an hour as (1) 's only about 25 kilometres from my house to the airport, but this day was totally different. (2) was some heavy snow in the night, but that isn't usually a problem in Germany – (3) 's usually easy to drive in snow because they clear the roads very quickly. Anyway, I left home a bit early because of the snow, as (4) was quite deep. Soon

after I left, (5) suddenly started snowing again and the car in front of me stopped. Luckily, I didn't hit (6) , but I saw that (7) was a really long queue of cars ahead. I sat in that queue for about two hours – (8) was really boring, but I finally found out what the problem was – (9) was an accident at the front of the queue. (10) was really late when I finally got to the airport, and then I found out that my friends' plane had gone to Frankfurt because of the snow!