# 38 Prepositions in time phrases

I'm afraid I can't stop and talk – I'm **in a hurry**.
I'm going to Jo's wedding and I have to get to the church **on time**.
If I get the 3.30 train, I'll be there **in time** to walk to the church.

The ceremony is quite short, so we won't be in the church **for long**.
**By the time** the wedding ceremony is over though, I'll be hungry.
We're all going to the reception afterwards, and we'll be there **for a while**.

It'll be great: I haven't seen my cousins **for ages**.

I enjoy weddings, but **at times** I get emotional and cry.

Jo told me last year she was getting married. **At the time** I was very surprised!

It was difficult finding anywhere to live, but **at last** they've bought a flat.
They can't move in yet. **In the meantime**, they'll live with Jo's parents.

**SPOTLIGHT** *at last*

**At last** means 'in the end' or 'finally', but is often used after there has been a long wait and/or a number of problems.

- *We spent all day looking for a pharmacy, then **at last** we found one.*

(NOT *We went to the cinema, had a meal, then ~~at last~~ went home.*)

**GLOSSARY**

| | |
|---|---|
| **in a hurry** | needing or wanting to do sth very quickly |
| **on time** | not late or early; at exactly the correct time |
| **in time (for sth/ to do sth)** | not late |
| **for long** | (used in questions and negative sentences) for a long time |
| **by the time** | used for saying what has already happened when sth else happens |
| **for a while** | a period of time (not usually a long time) |
| **for ages** | for a very long time |
| **at times** | sometimes: *My job is difficult **at times**.* |
| **at the time** | (referring to a past time) then |
| **in the meantime** | in the time between two things happening SYN **meanwhile** |

**1 Make seven more time phrases using words the box.**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| by ✓ | in | in the | at | ages | time | meantime | the time ✓ |
| for | for a | at | in a | while | times | last | hurry |

▶ by the time ..... ..... ..... .....
..... ..... ..... .....

**2 Complete the sentences.**

▶ The students are usually here on time .
1 I ran back to the shop, but by the ..... I got there, it was closed.
2 Seb's not here, but he won't be out for ..... because it's nearly dinner time!
3 Li went to the beach, so he'll be gone for a ..... . In the ....., let's chat.
4 I was standing in the rain for half an hour and then at ..... they got here.
5 Martin was in a ....., so he couldn't stop for lunch.
6 Do you know, I haven't seen my next-door neighbour for ..... .

**3 Complete the sentences with a suitable time phrase.**

▶ It's usually warm here, but at times it can get cold in the evenings.
1 It doesn't matter if you're early. Just make sure you're there ..... for the meal.
2 When Max says 8 p.m., he means 8 p.m., so be there ..... .
3 We haven't been outside Europe ..... : it must be about five years.
4 When I got there, Sylvia was studying, so I didn't stay ..... .
5 I don't remember much about the cottage. ..... I was just a small child.
6 We spent months looking for somewhere to live, then ..... we found just the right place – close to the centre but in a quiet road.
7 When I first lived in Edinburgh, I stayed with my aunt ..... – just a couple of weeks.
8 I'd like to play tennis, but ..... I finish this work, it'll be too late.
9 My parents said they would be back in a couple of hours, so ..... we could watch a video.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS