

Time Prepositions: in & at & on

B1 Intermediate · Lesson 1 · Idiomatic Time Expressions

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Listening Gap Fill

Listen to the recording and fill in each gap with the correct time expression.

The manager asked everyone to arrive (1) _____ for the meeting, and most people managed it, although Sarah only arrived just (2) _____ before the doors closed. The project deadline had been set well (3) _____, so the team had plenty of time to prepare. However, (4) _____, a client requested some changes, and the team had to work quickly to meet them. (5) _____, the marketing department continued with their own tasks. The final report will be published (6) _____, once all the figures have been checked. (7) _____, the company is reviewing its overall strategy, and (8) _____, this should make things run more smoothly.

2. Multiple Choice

Circle the correct preposition to complete each sentence.

1. The train left ____ time, so we didn't need to rush.
a) on b) in c) at
2. We got to the airport just ____ time to check in before it closed.
a) on b) in c) at
3. Please book your tickets ____ advance, as they sell out quickly.
a) on b) at c) in
4. She always finishes her assignments ____ the last minute.
a) at b) on c) in
5. I'll call the supplier now; ____ the meantime, could you check the invoice?
a) at b) on c) in
6. We haven't finalised the date yet, but we'll let you know ____ due course.
a) in b) on c) at
7. ____ present, we don't have enough data to make a decision.
a) On b) In c) At
8. The new machine is expensive, but ____ the long run it will save us money.
a) at b) in c) on
9. ____ average, we receive about fifty applications a week.
a) On b) At c) In
10. The system is reliable, although ____ occasion it does crash.
a) in b) at c) on

3. Matching

Match each time expression (1–8) to its correct meaning (a–h).

Expression		Meaning
1. on time	_____	a) over a long period of time; eventually
	—	
2. in time	_____	b) now; currently
	—	
3. at the last minute	_____	c) at the appropriate future time, without hurrying
	—	
4. in advance	_____	d) during the period between two events
	—	
5. in the meantime	_____	e) before something happens; ahead of time
	—	
6. in due course	_____	f) very close to a deadline; at the final possible moment
	—	
7. at present	_____	g) with enough time to spare; before it's too late
	—	
8. in the long run	_____	h) punctual; at the exact time planned
	—	

4. Gap Fill

Complete each sentence with in, at, or on.

1. Could you send the documents _____ advance so we can review them first?
2. The doctor is running late, so _____ the meantime, please take a seat.
3. He submitted the report _____ the last minute, right before the deadline.
4. The flight arrived exactly _____ time — not a minute early or late.
5. We missed the start, but we got there _____ time for the main speech.
6. _____ present, the office is closed for renovations.
7. It's a difficult decision now, but _____ the long run it's the right one.
8. The results will be announced _____ due course.

5. Error Identification

Read each sentence. Is there an error with in / at / on? If so, correct it. If not, write "Correct".

1. Please confirm your attendance on advance of the event.
2. We arrived in time for the performance to begin.
3. The changes were requested in the last minute.
4. At present, the team is finalising the budget.
5. I'll finish the draft now; on the meantime, read the notes.
6. The committee will publish its findings at due course.

6. Sentence Transformation

Rewrite each sentence using the target time expression given, keeping the same meaning.

1. Rewrite using 'on time': The bus was exactly when it was supposed to be.

2. Rewrite using 'in advance': Book your seat before the day of the concert.

3. Rewrite using 'at the last minute': He cancelled the trip right before it started.

4. Rewrite using 'in the long run': It costs more now, but it will be cheaper eventually.

5. Rewrite using 'on average': Typically, we sell two hundred units a month.

7. Complete the Conversation

Complete the workplace conversation with the correct time expressions.

A: Did the shipment arrive _____ this morning?

B: Almost — we got it _____ before the store opened.

A: Good. Did you order the extra stock _____?

B: Yes, though the supplier confirmed it _____ — right before the deadline.

A: Okay, _____, can you check the delivery van?

B: Sure. And I'll send you the full report _____.

TEACHER ANSWER KEY

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1. Listening Gap Fill

Listen to the recording and fill in each gap with the correct time expression.

The manager asked everyone to arrive (1) _____ for the meeting, and most people managed it, although Sarah only arrived just (2) _____ before the doors closed. The project deadline had been set well (3) _____, so the team had plenty of time to prepare. However, (4) _____, a client requested some changes, and the team had to work quickly to meet them. (5) _____, the marketing department continued with their own tasks. The final report will be published (6) _____, once all the figures have been checked. (7) _____, the company is reviewing its overall strategy, and (8) _____, this should make things run more smoothly.

Answers: (1) on time, (2) in time, (3) in advance, (4) at the last minute, (5) in the meantime, (6) in due course, (7) at present, (8) in the long run

2. Multiple Choice

Circle the correct preposition to complete each sentence.

1. The train left ____ time, so we didn't need to rush.

a) on b) in c) at

Answer: a) on — 'On time' means punctual, at the exact planned time.

2. We got to the airport just ____ time to check in before it closed.

a) on b) in c) at

Answer: b) in — 'In time' means with enough time to spare / before it's too late — not necessarily exact.

3. Please book your tickets ____ advance, as they sell out quickly.

a) on b) at c) in

Answer: c) in — 'In advance' means before something happens, ahead of time.

4. She always finishes her assignments ____ the last minute.

a) at b) on c) in

Answer: a) at — 'At the last minute' means very close to a deadline.

5. I'll call the supplier now; ____ the meantime, could you check the invoice?

a) at b) on c) in

Answer: c) in — 'In the meantime' means during the period between two events.

6. We haven't finalised the date yet, but we'll let you know ____ due course.

a) in b) on c) at

Answer: a) in — 'In due course' means at the appropriate time in the future, without rushing.

7. ____ present, we don't have enough data to make a decision.

a) On b) In c) At

Answer: c) At — 'At present' means now, currently.

8. The new machine is expensive, but ____ the long run it will save us money.

a) at b) in c) on

Answer: b) in — 'In the long run' means over a long period of time, eventually.

9. ____ average, we receive about fifty applications a week.

a) On b) At c) In

Answer: a) On — 'On average' means typically, when you calculate a general figure.

10. The system is reliable, although ____ occasion it does crash.

a) in b) at c) on

Answer: b) at — 'On occasion' means sometimes, but not often — note this is one of the exceptions where 'on' is used, not 'at'.

3. Matching

Match each time expression (1–8) to its correct meaning (a–h).

Expression	Meaning
1. on time	_____ a) over a long period of time; eventually

2. in time	_____ b) now; currently

3. at the last minute	_____ c) at the appropriate future time, without hurrying

4. in advance	_____ d) during the period between two events

5. in the meantime	_____ e) before something happens; ahead of time

6. in due course	_____ f) very close to a deadline; at the final possible moment

7. at present	_____ g) with enough time to spare; before it's too late

8. in the long run	_____ h) punctual; at the exact time planned

Answers: 1-h, 2-g, 3-f, 4-e, 5-d, 6-c, 7-b, 8-a

4. Gap Fill

Complete each sentence with *in*, *at*, or *on*.

1. Could you send the documents _____ advance so we can review them first?

Answer: in

2. The doctor is running late, so _____ the meantime, please take a seat.

Answer: in

3. He submitted the report _____ the last minute, right before the deadline.

Answer: at

4. The flight arrived exactly _____ time — not a minute early or late.

Answer: on

5. We missed the start, but we got there _____ time for the main speech.

Answer: in

6. _____ present, the office is closed for renovations.

Answer: at

7. It's a difficult decision now, but _____ the long run it's the right one.

Answer: in

8. The results will be announced _____ due course.

Answer: in

5. Error Identification

Read each sentence. Is there an error with *in* / *at* / *on*? If so, correct it. If not, write "Correct".

1. Please confirm your attendance on advance of the event.

Answer: "on" should be "in".

2. We arrived in time for the performance to begin.

Answer: Correct — no error.

3. The changes were requested in the last minute.

Answer: "in" should be "at".

4. At present, the team is finalising the budget.

Answer: Correct — no error.

5. I'll finish the draft now; on the meantime, read the notes.

Answer: "on" should be "in".

6. The committee will publish its findings at due course.

Answer: "at" should be "in".

6. Sentence Transformation

Rewrite each sentence using the target time expression given, keeping the same meaning.

1. Rewrite using 'on time': The bus was exactly when it was supposed to be.

Suggested answer: The bus was on time.

2. Rewrite using 'in advance': Book your seat before the day of the concert.

Suggested answer: Book your seat in advance.

3. Rewrite using 'at the last minute': He cancelled the trip right before it started.

Suggested answer: He cancelled the trip at the last minute.

4. Rewrite using 'in the long run': It costs more now, but it will be cheaper eventually.

Suggested answer: It costs more now, but it will be cheaper in the long run.

5. Rewrite using 'on average': Typically, we sell two hundred units a month.

Suggested answer: On average, we sell two hundred units a month.

7. Complete the Conversation

Complete the workplace conversation with the correct time expressions.

- A: Did the shipment arrive _____ this morning?

Answer: on time

- B: Almost — we got it _____ before the store opened.

Answer: in time

- A: Good. Did you order the extra stock _____?

Answer: in advance

- B: Yes, though the supplier confirmed it _____ — right before the deadline.

Answer: at the last minute

- A: Okay, _____, can you check the delivery van?

Answer: in the meantime

- B: Sure. And I'll send you the full report _____.

Answer: in due course