

# Prepositions of Time: Parts of the Day & Future Duration

INTERMEDIATE

**Focus:** in the morning/afternoon/evening, on + day + morning, at night vs. in the night, Zero Preposition (last/next/this/every), Future 'in' vs. Duration 'in', Fixed Idioms.

## 1. Parts of the Day: General vs. Specific

We use different prepositions depending on whether we are talking about a general part of the day or a specific day's part.

Period	General Rule	Example
Morning / Afternoon / Evening	Use <b>in the</b>	I work best <b>in the</b> morning.
Night	Use <b>at</b> (General)	She doesn't like driving <b>at</b> night.
Specific Day + Part	Use <b>on</b>	We will meet <b>on</b> Friday morning. The party is <b>on</b> Saturday night.

**Note on "At night" vs. "In the night":**

- **At night:** Used for the time period generally (opposite of "during the day").
- **In the night:** Used to talk about a specific event happening during the hours of darkness (often interrupting sleep).
  - *Example:* I heard a strange noise **in the night**.

## 2. Zero Preposition (No at/on/in)

Do **not** use a preposition with time expressions beginning with **last**, **next**, **this**, or **every**. We also do not use prepositions with **today**, **tomorrow**, or **yesterday**.

- **Correct:** I saw him **last** Friday.
- **Incorrect:** I saw him ~~on~~ last Friday.
- **Correct:** We are leaving **this** afternoon.
- **Correct:** Are you free **next** week?

## 3. Future Time and Duration with 'In'

The preposition **in** is used in two specific ways regarding time periods:

### A. Future Time (Time from now)

Used to say *when* something will happen in the future (meaning "after this amount of time has passed").

- *Example:* The train leaves **in** five minutes. (5 minutes from now)
- *Example:* I will be back **in** a few days.

### B. Duration (Time taken to complete)

Used to say *how long* it takes to complete a specific task.

- *Example:* He ran the marathon **in** three hours.
- *Example:* Can you finish this report **in** ten minutes?

## 4. Fixed Expressions

- **at the moment** (right now)
- **at present** (formal: currently)

# Practice

---

**Instructions:** Complete the sentences using **in**, **on**, **at**, or **Ø** (if no preposition is needed).

1. I usually drink a large glass of water \_\_\_\_\_ the morning before I eat breakfast.
2. We didn't see the manager \_\_\_\_\_ last Tuesday; was he absent?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (you/come) to the cinema with us \_\_\_\_\_ Friday night?
4. Please sit down. The doctor will see you \_\_\_\_\_ a few minutes.
5. She \_\_\_\_\_ (not/work) here \_\_\_\_\_ the moment; she is on holiday.
6. Did you hear the storm \_\_\_\_\_ the night? It woke me up twice.
7. I \_\_\_\_\_ (not/go) shopping \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday afternoon because it was raining.
8. He is very fast; he learned to memorize the vocabulary list \_\_\_\_\_ just ten minutes.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ (you/be) free to meet \_\_\_\_\_ next week?
10. We \_\_\_\_\_ (not/expect) any visitors \_\_\_\_\_ night, so please lock the door.
11. The new schedule will be announced \_\_\_\_\_ this Monday.
12. Where \_\_\_\_\_ (they/go) \_\_\_\_\_ the evening usually?
13. \_\_\_\_\_ present, we have no plans to expand the business.
14. The flight was delayed, but we finally arrived \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday morning.
15. If we hurry, we can finish this project \_\_\_\_\_ two days.

## Answer Key

1. **in**
2. **Ø** (Zero preposition with "last")
3. Are you coming ... **on**
4. **in** (Future time)
5. is not working / isn't working ... **at**
6. **in** (Specific event during darkness)
7. did not go / didn't go ... **Ø** (Zero preposition with "yesterday")
8. **in** (Duration/Time taken)
9. Are you ... **Ø** (Zero preposition with "next")
10. do not expect / don't expect ... **at**
11. **Ø** (Zero preposition with "this")
12. do they go ... **in**
13. **At**
14. **on** (Specific day + part)
15. **in** (Duration or Future, depending on context context implies duration here)