



The English-Speaking Union
English in Action

Time Flies When You're Having Fun!*



Happy New Year! In honor of the passage of time, from one year to the next, here are some commonly used idioms and expressions that relate to the topic of time. Read them with your conversation partner and discuss their meanings and proper usage. Then take turns coming up with sentences using these idioms and expressions.

on time: arriving at the correct / expected / scheduled time

in time: not too late (maybe early, maybe on time, maybe even *after* the scheduled time--as long as one is not too late)

just in time: at the time when someone / something is most needed

timely: punctual; happening at a convenient time

(just) in the nick of time: barely in time, but not late

at times / from time to time: sometimes

all (of) the time: always; very often

much of the time: frequently

time after time: again and again; repeatedly

for the time being: for now (but not permanently)

time out: a short pause in a sporting event when the "game clock" is temporarily stopped

take time off: take a vacation

take one's time: not hurry

two-time: date / have a relationship with two people at the same time (while pretending to be interested in only one person)

have the time of one's life: have an extremely good time

overtime: time spent in addition to normal working hours; extra time added to a sporting event if the score is tied at the time when the game would normally end

halftime: "break" between the two halves of a basketball game, (American) football game, etc. (During this period, there is often entertainment.)

a timepiece: a watch

"Once upon a time": traditional way of beginning a story (especially a children's story)

***"Time flies when you're having fun!":** traditional proverb that means when you're enjoying yourself, time seems to pass more quickly than usual



Most of this material was borrowed, with thanks, from Dave's ESL Café.



Grammar Exercise

Prepositions of Time and Date: at, in & on

Use:

in + month or year– *in March; in 2013*

on + date (with the year or without it) or day of the week– *on April 2; on March 3, 1999; on Saturday*

at + clock time, midnight or noon– *at 3:30 p.m.; at 4:01; at noon*

Remember also:

in + season– *in the summer; in the winter*

in + morning, afternoon or evening– *in the morning; in the evening*

at + night– *at night*

Fill in the blanks with the correct preposition (**at, in or on**):

1. Can we get together _____ six o'clock?
2. I like to ski _____ the winter.
3. I got married _____ March 23, 2011.
4. My father is never late; he's always _____ time.
5. We met _____ New Year's eve.
6. My parents always get up early _____ the morning.
7. My teenage brother always goes to bed late _____ night.
8. Let's get together _____ a few weeks.
9. They drove to Los Angeles _____ September 20th.
10. We arrived in this country _____ September.

(Answers are below.)

Answers: 1. at; 2. in; 3. on; 4. on; 5. on; 6. in; 7. at; 8. in; 9. on; 10. in

Culture Corner

"I Have a Dream"

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a national holiday and a time to honor one of the most important figures in the civil rights movement of the United States. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is observed on a Monday close to his birthday, January 15th. This year, it is observed on the 21st.

Dr. King was an eloquent African-American Baptist minister who led the civil rights movement in the U.S. from the mid-1950s until he was assassinated in 1968. He was instrumental in helping to end segregation laws in this country.

During a visit to India, Dr. King became convinced that non-violent resistance was the most powerful weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. He was inspired by India's leader, Mahatma Gandhi. In 1963, Dr. King led the historical March on Washington where more than 200,000 people gathered peacefully in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, in Washington, D.C., to demand equal justice for all citizens under the law. The crowd was uplifted by the emotional strength and prophetic quality of his famous "I have a dream" speech.

In 1964, Dr. King was awarded the Nobel prize for peace. On April 4, 1968, he was killed by a sniper's bullet while standing on the balcony of the motel where he was staying. He was 39 years old.



You can hear Dr. King's famous speech in this youtube video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnklfYs>

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