

## For, during and while

### A

#### For and during

We use **for** + a period of time to say how long something goes on:

for **two hours**      for **a week**      for **ages**

- We watched TV **for two hours** last night.
- Jess is going away **for a week** in September.
- Where have you been? I've been waiting **for ages**.
- Are you going away **for the weekend**?

We use **during** + *noun* to say when something happens (*not* how long):

during **the movie**      during **our holiday**      during **the night**

- I fell asleep **during the movie**.
- We met some really nice people **during our holiday**.
- The ground is wet. It must have rained **during the night**.



I fell asleep **during the movie**.

With 'time words' (for example: **the morning** / **the afternoon** / **the summer**), you can usually say **in** or **during**:

- It must have rained **in the night**. *or* ... **during the night**.
- I'll phone you sometime **during the afternoon**. *or* ... **in the afternoon**.

You cannot use **during** to say how long something goes on:

- It rained **for** three days without stopping. (*not* during three days)

Compare **during** and **for**:

- I fell asleep **during the movie**. I was asleep **for half an hour**.

### B

#### During and while

Compare:

We use **during** + *noun*:

- I fell asleep **during the movie**.  
└ *noun* ┘
- We met a lot of interesting people **during our holiday**.
- Robert suddenly began to feel ill **during the exam**.

We use **while** + *subject* + *verb*:

- I fell asleep **while I was watching TV**.  
└ *subject + verb* ┘
- We met a lot of interesting people **while we were on holiday**.
- Robert suddenly began to feel ill **while he was doing the exam**.

Some more examples of **while**:

- We saw Clare **while we were waiting** for the bus.
- While you were** out, there was a phone call for you.
- Alex read a book **while I watched** TV.

When you are talking about the future, use the *present* (*not* will) after **while**:

- I'm going to Singapore next week. I hope to see some friends of mine **while I'm** there. (*not* while I will be there)
- What are you going to do **while you're** waiting? (*not* while you'll be waiting)



Alex read a book **while I watched** TV.

See also **Unit 25**.

## 119.1 Put in for or during.

- 1 It rained for three days without stopping.
- 2 I fell asleep during the movie.
- 3 I went to the theatre last night. I met Sue ..... the interval.
- 4 Martin hasn't lived in Britain all his life. He lived in Brazil ..... four years.
- 5 Production at the factory was seriously affected ..... the strike.
- 6 I felt really ill last week. I could hardly eat anything ..... three days.
- 7 I waited for you ..... half an hour and decided that you weren't coming.
- 8 Sarah was very angry with me. She didn't speak to me ..... a week.
- 9 We usually go out at weekends, but we don't go out ..... the week very often.
- 10 Jack started a new job a few weeks ago. Before that he was out of work ..... six months.
- 11 I need a break. I think I'll go away ..... a few days.
- 12 The president gave a long speech. She spoke ..... two hours.
- 13 We were hungry when we arrived. We hadn't had anything to eat ..... the journey.
- 14 We were hungry when we arrived. We hadn't had anything to eat ..... eight hours.

## 119.2 Put in during or while.

- 1 We met a lot of interesting people while we were on holiday.
- 2 We met a lot of interesting people during our holiday.
- 3 I met Mike ..... I was shopping.
- 4 ..... I was on holiday, I didn't read any newspapers or watch TV.
- 5 ..... our stay in Paris, we went to a lot of museums and galleries.
- 6 My phone rang ..... we were having dinner.
- 7 There was a lot of noise ..... the night. What was it?
- 8 I'd been away for many years. .... that time, many things had changed.
- 9 What did they say about me ..... I was out of the room?
- 10 I went out for dinner last night. Unfortunately I began to feel ill ..... the meal and had to go home.
- 11 Please don't interrupt me ..... I'm speaking.
- 12 There were many interruptions ..... the president's speech.
- 13 Can you hold my bag ..... I try on this jacket?
- 14 We were hungry when we arrived. We hadn't had anything to eat ..... we were travelling.

## 119.3 Use your own ideas to complete these sentences.

- 1 I fell asleep while I was watching TV.
- 2 I fell asleep during the movie.
- 3 Nobody came to see me while .....
- 4 Can you wait for me while .....
- 5 Most of the students looked bored during .....
- 6 I was asked a lot of questions during .....
- 7 Don't open the car door while .....
- 8 The lights suddenly went out while .....
- 9 It started to rain during .....
- 10 It started to rain while .....
- 11 What are you going to do while .....