

## Vocabulary – Telling the Time

### Telling the Time in Spoken English – Error Correction 1

A. Read the 8 rules for telling the time in English:

1. Use **'It's'** not 'It is'. We usually measure time in **five-minute intervals**: five past, ten past, etc.
2. There are two ways to *tell* (not *say*) the time:  
**past** (up to half): five past, ten past, quarter past, twenty past, twenty-five past, half past, *and*  
**to** (up to the hour): twenty-five to, twenty to, quarter to, ten to, five to  
*or*, say the **two numbers** that you can see from left to right, e.g. 11:10: 'It's eleven ten.'
3. For the hour, use **'o'clock'**: 'It's four o'clock.' We don't say 'It's four.' *or* 'It's four hour.'
4. For numbers in between, we add **'minutes'**: six minutes past, etc. Say **'oh'** not zero: 14:04 = two oh four
5. If it is one or two minutes *before* an interval, use **'nearly'** / **'about'**: 04:09 = 'It's nearly ten past four.'  
If it is one or two minutes *after* an interval, use **'just gone'**: 04:11 = 'It's just gone ten past four.'
6. Don't say 'am' or 'pm'. Use **'in the morning / afternoon / evening / at night'** if necessary, unless the context makes it clear, e.g. we may have a class at 11 o'clock *in the morning*, but not 11 o'clock *at night*
7. Morning = 00:00-11:59; afternoon = 12:00-16:59; evening = 17:00-20:59; night = 21:00-23:59 (this may vary, e.g. in the summer it may feel like 21:30 is still *evening*, while in winter it definitely feels like *night*)
8. Don't tell the time using the 24-hour clock. Also, 00:00 = *midnight* and 12:00 = *midday* or *noon*. We say: **'It's midnight / midday'**, not *midnight at night / midday in the afternoon*. 00:10 = ten past midnight, 12:10 = ten past twelve [in the afternoon]

B. Write the following **incorrect** times correctly:

1. It's quarter after nine.      It's quarter past nine.
2. It's ten behind two.      \_\_\_\_\_
3. It's twenty before seven.      \_\_\_\_\_
4. It's forty past eight.      \_\_\_\_\_
5. It's a quarter past twelve.      \_\_\_\_\_
6. It's fourteen.      \_\_\_\_\_
7. It's thirty past three.      \_\_\_\_\_
8. It's fourteen oh eight.      \_\_\_\_\_
9. It's ten fifteen pm.      \_\_\_\_\_
10. It's eighteen o'clock.      \_\_\_\_\_
11. It's eleven thirty in the evening.      \_\_\_\_\_
12. It's eight past two.      \_\_\_\_\_
13. It's five.      \_\_\_\_\_
14. It's six one five.      \_\_\_\_\_
15. It's twelve o'clock at night.      \_\_\_\_\_
16. It's half past thirteen.      \_\_\_\_\_
17. It's two o'clock at night.      \_\_\_\_\_
18. It's four mins past six.      \_\_\_\_\_
19. It's twenty-eight to two.      \_\_\_\_\_
20. It's midday o'clock.      \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Answers:

1. It's quarter after nine.      It's quarter past nine. / It's nine fifteen.
2. It's ten behind two.      It's ten to two. / It's one fifty.
3. It's twenty before seven.      It's twenty to seven. / It's six forty.
4. It's forty past eight.      It's twenty to nine. / It's eight forty.
5. It's a quarter past twelve.      It's quarter past twelve. / It's twelve fifteen.
6. It's fourteen.      It's two o'clock [in the afternoon].
7. It's thirty past three.      It's half past three. / It's three thirty.
8. It's fourteen oh eight.      It's eight minutes past two [in the afternoon]. / It's two oh eight [in the afternoon]. / It's nearly ten past two [in the afternoon]. / It's nearly two ten [in the afternoon].
9. It's ten fifteen pm.      It's quarter past ten [at night]. / It's ten fifteen [at night].
10. It's eighteen o'clock.      It's six o'clock [in the evening].
11. It's eleven thirty in the evening.      It's half past eleven [at night]. / It's eleven thirty [at night].
12. It's eight past two.      It's eight minutes past two. / It's two oh eight. / It's nearly ten past two. / It's nearly two ten.
13. It's five.      It's five o'clock.
14. It's six one five.      It's quarter past six. / It's six fifteen.
15. It's twelve o'clock at night.      It's midnight.
16. It's half past thirteen.      It's half past one [in the afternoon]. / It's one thirty [in the afternoon].
17. It's two o'clock at night.      It's two o'clock [in the morning].
18. It's four mins past six.      It's four minutes past six. / It's four oh six. / It's nearly five past six. / It's nearly six oh five.
19. It's twenty-eight to two.      It's twenty-eight minutes to two. / It's one thirty-two.
20. It's midday o'clock.      It's midday / noon.