

## Vocabulary – Telling the Time

### Telling the Time in Spoken English – Error Correction 2

#### 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 ten after eleven.      It's ten past eleven.
2. It's forty-nine minutes past one. \_\_\_\_\_
3. It's half to five. \_\_\_\_\_
4. It's four zero eight. \_\_\_\_\_
5. It's three thirty-five on the afternoon. \_\_\_\_\_
6. It's ten before six. \_\_\_\_\_
7. It's eighteen o'clock ten. \_\_\_\_\_
8. It is ten to three. \_\_\_\_\_
9. It's noon o'clock. \_\_\_\_\_
10. It's double zero twenty. \_\_\_\_\_
11. It's six to six. \_\_\_\_\_
12. It's two and ten. \_\_\_\_\_
13. It's quarter after nine. \_\_\_\_\_
14. It's eight in the evening. \_\_\_\_\_
15. It's ten o'clock in night. \_\_\_\_\_
16. It's one forty-nine minutes. \_\_\_\_\_
17. It's four o'clock pm. \_\_\_\_\_
18. It's just gone twenty. \_\_\_\_\_
19. It's twelve thirty am. \_\_\_\_\_
20. It's forty to two. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Answers:*

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| 1.  | It's ten after eleven.                   | It's ten past eleven. / It's eleven ten.  |
| 2.  | It's forty-nine minutes past one.        | It's eleven minutes to two. / It's one forty-nine. / It's nearly ten to two. /<br>It's nearly one fifty.      |
| 3.  | It's half to five.                       | It's half past four. / It's four thirty.  |
| 4.  | It's four zero eight.                    | It's eight minutes past four. / It's four oh eight. / It's nearly ten past four. /<br>It's nearly four ten.   |
| 5.  | It's three thirty-five on the afternoon. | It's twenty five to four [in the afternoon]. /<br>It's three thirty-five [in the afternoon].                  |
| 6.  | It's ten before six.                     | It's ten to six. / It's five fifty.   |
| 7.  | It's eighteen o'clock ten.               | It's ten past six [in the evening]. / It's six ten [in the evening].  |
| 8.  | It is ten to three.                      | It's ten to three. / It's two fifty.  |
| 9.  | It's noon o'clock.                       | It's noon / midday.   |
| 10. | It's double zero twenty.                 | It's twenty past midnight. / It's midnight twenty.  |
| 11. | It's six to six.                         | It's six minutes to six. / It's five fifty-four. / It's nearly five to six. / It's nearly five<br>fifty-five. |
| 12. | It's two and ten.                        | It's ten past two. / It's two ten.  |
| 13. | It's quarter after nine.                 | It's quarter past nine. / It's nine fifteen.  |
| 14. | It's eight in the evening.               | It's eight o'clock [in the evening].  |
| 15. | It's ten o'clock in night.               | It's ten o'clock [at night].  |
| 16. | It's one forty-nine minutes.             | It's eleven minutes to two. / It's one forty-nine. / It's nearly ten to two. /<br>It's nearly one fifty.      |
| 17. | It's four o'clock pm.                    | It's four o'clock [in the afternoon].   |
| 18. | It's just gone twenty.                   | It's just gone eight o'clock [in the evening].  |
| 19. | It's twelve thirty am.                   | It's half past midnight. / It's midnight thirty.  |
| 20. | It's forty to two.                       | It's twenty past one. / It's one twenty.  |