



Remember to watch the video first! Then read the conversation between Sophie and Maria, a student she met on her trip to Spain. Sophie's an expert on English grammar and Maria needs some help with her homework.



**Grammar
Snacks**

We often use *there + to be* and *It...* as a subject but they do not refer to any object. *There is / are* is used to introduce a topic, or say that something exists. *It...* is often used for the weather, time and distance.



Maria

Can I have some examples of *there is / there are*, please?

There's so much happening.
Is there anything much going on at the moment?
There are two new students in our class.
There aren't any good football matches on TV this week.



Sophie



What about other tenses? Is *there is / there are* only used in the present?

No, you can change the tense.

There were fire-breathing dragons in the streets.
Were there any accidents?
*I think ***there'll be*** loads of people at the festival.*
There haven't been many entries for the competition.



I'm a bit confused about when to use *there is / there are* and when to use *it* or *they*.

Have a look at these sentences. The topic is introduced with *there is / are*, then *it* and *they* refer back to something already mentioned.

There's a good film on channel 2. ***It*** starts at 10 o'clock. (It = the film)
There are two new students in our class. ***They're*** from Brazil. (They = the students)



So you can't use *it* or *they* as subjects in the first sentences?

No, you can't.



OK, but you can start some sentences with *it*, can't you? Like, '*It's* very hot today.'

Yes. We use *it* for talking about the weather, time, distance and days and dates.

It's warm and sunny

What time ***is it?*** > ***It's*** only 6 o'clock

How far ***is it*** to the shopping centre? > ***It's*** three km to my house from here. ***It's*** a long way to walk.

It's Saturday tomorrow, great!

What's the date? ***It's*** November 18th.



Phew! That's quite a lot of uses!

Yes, and there's more. We also use *it + to be + adjective + infinitive clauses*. In these sentences *it* refers forwards to the infinitive clause.

It's nice to meet you.

It's hard to hear anything with this noise.

Was ***it easy to understand*** him?

It'll be difficult to find the venue without a map.



OK, that's enough for one grammar snack. *It's* time to go.

That's a good *it* expression!



It's very good of you to say so!

Yes, *it* really is time to stop now! Bye.



Watch the video here: <http://bit.ly/NpS2ss>

