We use many different prepositions for talking about time. Here we are looking at: *in*, *on*, *at*, *during* and *for*.

We use *in*, *on* and *at* for lots of different times. Here's a table comparing the uses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>at</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Months:</strong> in January / in April</td>
<td><strong>Days of the week:</strong> on Monday</td>
<td><strong>Clock times:</strong> at 7.30 a.m. / at 5 o'clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seasons:</strong> in spring / in winter</td>
<td><strong>Days + parts of days:</strong> on Tuesday afternoon / on Saturday mornings</td>
<td><strong>Festivals:</strong> at Christmas / at Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years:</strong> in 1984 / in 2015</td>
<td><strong>Dates:</strong> on November 22nd</td>
<td><strong>Exceptions:</strong> at night / at the weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centuries:</strong> in the 20th century</td>
<td><strong>Special days:</strong> on my birthday / on New Year’s Eve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Times of day:</strong> in the morning / in the evening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Longer periods of time:</strong> in the past / in the 1990s / in the holidays</td>
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</table>

Wow! That’s a lot of uses! So I have to learn all those?

Yes, but you probably know most of them, don’t you?

Yes, maybe … Is that all of them? I mean, are there any exceptions?

Well, sometimes we don’t use a preposition of time, for example after *next/this/last/every*.

*We go skateboarding every Saturday afternoon.*

*I’ll see you next Friday.*
Good question! We say "on the eighth of July".

Oh yes, that's fine too. But we often leave out on with days of the week when we're speaking.

I'll see you Friday.

OK. Now, about dates ... You write “on 8th July” but how do you say that?

Good question! We say “on the eighth of July”.

OK, so I have to remember to say “on THE eighth OF July”.

Exactly.

One last question about in. Can I use it for the future, as in “I'll do it in a minute”?

Yes, that's very common. We use in for talking about something in the future a certain length of time from now.

She'll be back in a moment.
We're going away in two weeks.

And can I say, “We're going away for two weeks”?

Yes, but the meaning is completely different.

We're going away in two weeks. (= we leave two weeks from now)
We're going away for two weeks. (= our holiday will be two weeks long)

Ah, and what about “We're going away during two weeks”?
No, you can’t say that. We use for + a length of time, to say how long something goes on for, and during + a noun / noun phrase, to say when something happens.

*It snowed for three hours.*
*It snowed during the night.*

OK, that’s a useful rule. But, hang on, I can also say “It snowed in the night”.

Yes, absolutely.

And: “I did a lot of work in the holidays” or “I did a lot of work during the holidays”?

Yes, you’ve got the hang of this.

Good, so now I’m going to study for a few hours. I’ll see you on Tuesday, in the morning, at about 10 o’clock.

See you at some time during the morning!

Watch the video on our website!