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 on our website!