Time & Punctuality

The Date: When saying the full date in English, begin with the day of the week, followed by either the month or the number of the day, and end with the year. Note that, like first & last names, this is the opposite order of China.

Asking the Time: Three good ways to ask the time include, 1. "What time is it?"; 2. "Do you have the time?"; or 3. "Do you have a watch?" If you ask either #2 or "What's the time?", don't forget the "the," or you'll be asking whether someone has free time or what "time" itself means! Answer using the exact numbers, or quarter to/after and halves to estimate, but don't feel obligated to say that any time of __:30 is "half past ___."

When answering, a simple "It's..." will be enough, though note differences between AM, PM, or "military time" (which uses neither AM or PM and is uncommon in the USA). Also note two special times of noon and midnight. Which one is 12AM, and which one is 12PM?

_____ **/Periods of Time** (from shortest to longest): ·nanosecond ·second ·second ·minute ·hour ·day ·week ·fortnight ·month ·season ·year ·decade ·generation ·century ·age ·millennium ·geological era
Note that a moment may be either shorter than a second or many minutes long, as when someone requests that you "Please wait a moment." Often that actually means you'll be waiting *awhile* rather than *a bit*!

Early, Punctual, or Late?   Things that are scheduled to happen aren't always on time. Use the following structures to express differences in what's supposed to happen and what actuall happens.

Sth./Sb. was supposed to _____ at __:__ (TIME1)_ but Sth./Sb.actually _____-ed at __:__(TIME2)__
Sth./Sb. was #_____/TIME PERIOD(S) early/late

Prepositions   are among the shortest words in English, but it can take a long time to learn which ones to use. Use "at" for a specific time, "on" for a day, and "in" for anything longer than a month.

How long does it take to _____? Sth.   ? Can be answered simply, "It takes #_____/TIME PERIOD(S) to _____."

When will Sth./Sb. _____? say what will happen in the future, note whether the time will be specific or vague.

For exact times and dates, answer, " Sth./Sb._____ in/on/at #_____/TIME PERIOD(S)."

If the future event is conditional on something else happening, say either " Sth./Sb. will_____ when (Sth. else happens)" **OR** " Sth./Sb. won't_____ until (Sth. else happens)."

When was the last time Sth./Sb. _____-ed? /How long has it been since Sth./Sb. _____-ed? When did Sth./Sb. last _____?
To answer these questions about past events, say, "Sth./Sb. last _____-ed in/on/at _____" **OR** "It's been #_____ / TIME PERIOD(S) since Sth./Sb. _____-ed." **OR** " Sth./Sb. last _____-ed #_____/TIME PERIOD(S) ago."

How often do you/does Sth./Sb. _____? In the present tense, we can answer questions about how often we do things by saying, "I/Sth./Sb. #__ times a _____/TIME PERIOD(S)." For things done one or two times, shorten this by saying "once" or "twice." "Thrice" is an unusual way to say "three times." If you don't wan't to say exactly how often you do something, try these adverbs and phrases of frequency, from least to most: never, hardly ever, rarely/ seldom, occasionally, sometimes, often, half the time, usually, always.

Other Vocabulary: ·alarm clock   ·all in good time ·ASAP= as soon as possible ·better late than never ·clash ·clock radio ·Daylight Savings (in USA, "spring ahead" or "fall back" 1hr.) ·(the) end of an era ·(the) exact time ·expired   ·expiration date ·fashionably late ·forever   ·from dawn to dusk (all day long) ·generation gap ·GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) VS. UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) ·hourglass ·(The) International Date Line (180° Longitude) ·just in the knick of time ·nowadays   ·killing time ·out of date   ·overtime ·pocket watch ·premature (i.e. for babies) ·procrastinate ·put Sth. off (until...) ·run out of time ·stopwatch ·sundial ·tardy ·there's no time like the present ·time flies when you're having fun ·time heals all wounds ·time is of the essence ·time zones   ·timeless ·timekeeper/timer ·timely ·timepiece ·wait until "the last minute" ·wristwatch