

Unit 72: PREPOSITIONS OF TIME

This unit shows you the meaning and use of **after, at, before, by, for, from, in, on, since, to, until** when we want to say when or how much time.

1

Monday comes **before** Tuesday. Tuesday comes **after** Monday.

2

at six o'clock / half past three...

midnight / midday / lunchtime

Christmas / Easter / the weekend... (ALSO **during**)

on Friday / the fourth of May / New Year's Day / Friday afternoon...

in the morning / the late afternoon... (ALSO **during**)

January / Ramadan / the first month... (ALSO **during**)

spring / summer / autumn / winter (ALSO **during**)

1989 / the 1960s / the eighteenth century ... (ALSO **during**)

3

I'll be there **by** six o'clock.

= I'll arrive at six or before.

I'll be there **until** six.

= I'll leave at six.

I won't be there **until** six.

= I'll arrive at six, not before.

By November, the weather had become very cold

= Before November, it got colder, and it was very cold in November.

I'll be there **from** three **to** six.

= I'll arrive at three and leave at six.

4

I can see you **in** five minutes.

(starting after five minutes)

I can see you **for** five minutes.

(a five-minute talk)

5

I have known him **since** 1985. = It is 2007. We first met twenty-two years ago (in 1985).

I have known him **for** twenty-two years.

NOTICE: We can use **after, before, since** and **until** before a subject and a verb:

We played football after we finished school.

We played football until it got dark.

We cannot use **at, by, for, in** and **on** in this way.