

APPENDIX 12: TELLING THE TIME

a For ordinary speaking, use clock-face time. Say the minutes first.

ten past six



a quarter past six



half past six



twenty-five to seven



a quarter to seven



We say **a quarter** (with or without **a**), but **half** (without **a**):

It's quarter to eight or It's a quarter to eight.

It's half past ten.

We say **o'clock** only for the exact hour: It's six o'clock.

b For talking about timetables and exact arrangements, we often use digital time. Say the hour before the minutes.

We use the 24-hour clock for written timetables.

WRITTEN

SPOKEN

24-hour clock

Digital time

Clock-face time

09:00

9:00 a.m. nine a.m.

=

nine o'clock in the morning

09:15

9:15 a.m.
nine fifteen a.m.

=

a quarter past nine in the morning

14:20

2:20 p.m.
two twenty p.m.

=

twenty past two in the afternoon

21:55

9:55 p.m.
nine fifty-five p.m.

=

five to ten in the evening

noon = twelve o'clock exactly in the day

a.m. = twelve midnight to twelve noon

midnight = twelve o'clock exactly at night

p.m. = twelve noon to twelve midnight

midday = the hours in the middle of the day