

bus·y¹

S1 W2

/'bɪzi/

adjective

(comparative **busier**, superlative **busiest**)

1 | person BUSY/NOT AVAILABLE if you are busy, you are working hard and have a lot of things to do:

She's busy now – can you phone later?

a busy mother of four

busy with

Mr Haynes is busy with a customer at the moment.

busy doing something

Rachel's busy studying for her exams.

*There were lots of activities to **keep** the kids **busy**.*

2 | time BUSY/HAVE A LOT TO DO a busy period of time is full of work or other activities:

December is the busiest time of year for shops.

*a **busy day***

*He took time out of his **busy schedule** to visit us.*

3 | place BUSY PLACE a busy place is very full of people or vehicles and movement:

*We live on a very **busy road**.*

4 | telephone (especially AmE) if a telephone you are calling is busy, it makes a repeated sound to tell you that the person you are calling is talking on their telephone

[SYN] engaged (BrE):

I called Sonya, but her line was busy.

*I keep getting a **busy signal**.*

5 | pattern DETAIL a pattern or design that is busy is too full of small details – used to show disapproval

THESAURUS

person

busy if you are busy, you have a lot of things you need to do: *Sorry I haven't called you, but I've been really busy. | a busy housewife | Angela was becoming more and more unhappy, but her husband was too busy to notice. | Not now Stephen, I'm busy. | Alex is busy studying for his exams.*

rushed/run off your feet [not before noun] **(especially BrE)** **(spoken)** very busy and in a hurry, because you have too many things to do: *We've been absolutely rushed off our feet getting ready for our son's birthday party.*

snowed under [not before noun] **(especially BrE)** so busy that you can hardly deal with all the work you have to do: *I can't stop for lunch today – I'm completely snowed under. | We've been snowed under with applications for the job.*

up to your ears/neck in something [not before noun] **(informal)** extremely busy because you have a lot of work to deal with: *Teachers say they are up to their ears in paperwork and don't have enough time for teaching.*

tied up [not before noun] busy in your job, so that you cannot do anything else: *I'm sorry, but he's tied up at the moment. Could you call back later? | I can't see you tomorrow: I'm tied up all day.*

have a lot to do **(especially spoken)** to have to do a lot of things, so that you need to hurry or work hard: *Let's get started – we have a lot to do.*

have a lot on **(BrE), have a lot going on** **(AmE)** **(especially spoken)** to be busy, especially because you have arranged to do a lot of things during a particular period: *I've got a lot on this weekend. | He says he'll try and see you as soon as possible, but he has a lot going on this afternoon.*

time

busy use this about times when you have a lot of things you need to do: *We have a busy day ahead of us tomorrow. | July and August are our busiest times.*

hectic a hectic time or situation is extremely busy, so that you are always in a hurry and often feel excited or worried: *It was really hectic at work today.* | *The band had a hectic recording schedule.*

the rush hour the time in the morning and evening when a lot of people are travelling to or from work: *The buses are so crowded during the rush hour you never get a seat.* | *In most British cities the rush hour does not start until about 8 o'clock.*

Word origin

Language: Old English

Origin: *bisig*

busy²

verb

[transitive]

(**busied**, **busying**, **busies**)

busy yourself with something SPEND MONEY

to use your time dealing with something:

He busied himself with answering letters.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

© Pearson Education Limited 2009, 2011, 2015