By and until   By the time ...

By ... = not later than:

- I sent the documents to them today, so they should receive them **by Monday**. (= on or before Monday, not later than Monday)

- We'd better hurry. We have to be home **by 5 o'clock**. (= at or before 5 o'clock, not later than 5 o'clock)

- Where's Sarah? She should be here **by now**. (= now or before now -- so she should have already arrived)

This milk has to be used **by 14 August**.

Use by 14 August

MILK
MILK

We use **until** (*or* **till**) to say *how long* a situation continues:

- 'Shall we go now?'   'No, let's **wait until** it stops raining.' *or* '... **till** it stops raining.'

- I couldn't get up this morning. { I **stayed in bed until** half past ten.
  { I **didn't** get up **until** half past ten.

Compare **until** and **by**:

Something *continues* **until** a time in the future:	Something *happens* **by** a time in the future:
- Joe **will be away until** Monday. (so he'll be back *on* Monday)	- Joe **will be back by** Monday. (= he'll be back not later than Monday)
- I**'ll be working until** 11.30. (so I'll stop working *at* 11.30)	- I**'ll have finished my work by** 11.30. (= I'll finish my work not later than 11.30.)

You can say '**by the time** something happens'. Study these examples:
- It's too late to go to the bank now. **By the time we get there**, it will be closed. (= the bank will close between now and the time we get there)

- *(from a postcard)* Our holiday ends tomorrow. So **by the time you receive this postcard**, I'll be back home. (= I will arrive home between tomorrow and the time you receive this postcard)

- Hurry up! **By the time we get to the cinema**, the film will already have started.

You can say '**by the time** something happened' (for the past):
- Karen's car broke down on the way to the party last night. **By the time she arrived**, most of the other guests had left. (= it took her a long time to get to the party and most of the guests left during this time)

- I had a lot of work to do yesterday evening. I was very tired **by the time I finished**. (= it took me a long time to do the work, and I became more and more tired during this time)

- We went to the cinema last night. It took us a long time to find somewhere to park the car. **By the time we got to the cinema**, the film had already started.

Also **by then** *or* **by that time**:
- Karen finally got to the party at midnight, but **by then**, most of the other guests had left. *or* ... but **by that time**, most of the other guests had left.