

For, during and while

A

For and during

We use **for** + a period of time to say how long something goes on:

for **two hours** for **a week** for **ages**

- ☐ We watched TV **for two hours** last night.
- ☐ Jess is going away **for a week** in September.
- ☐ Where have you been? I've been waiting **for ages**.
- ☐ Are you going away **for the weekend**?

We use **during** + *noun* to say when something happens (*not* how long):

during **the movie** during **our holiday** during **the night**

- ☐ I fell asleep **during the movie**.
- ☐ We met some really nice people **during our holiday**.
- ☐ The ground is wet. It must have rained **during the night**.



I fell asleep **during the movie**.

With 'time words' (for example: **the morning** / **the afternoon** / **the summer**), you can usually say **in** or **during**:

- ☐ It must have rained **in the night**. or ... **during the night**.
- ☐ I'll phone you sometime **during the afternoon**. or ... **in the afternoon**.

You cannot use **during** to say how long something goes on:

- ☐ It rained **for** three days without stopping. (*not during three days*)

Compare **during** and **for**:

- ☐ I fell asleep **during the movie**. I was asleep **for half an hour**.

B

During and while

Compare:

We use **during** + *noun*:

- ☐ I fell asleep **during the movie**.
└─ noun ─┘
- ☐ We met a lot of interesting people **during our holiday**.
- ☐ Robert suddenly began to feel ill **during the exam**.

We use **while** + *subject + verb*:

- ☐ I fell asleep **while I was watching TV**.
└─ subject + verb ─┘
- ☐ We met a lot of interesting people **while we were on holiday**.
- ☐ Robert suddenly began to feel ill **while he was doing the exam**.

Some more examples of **while**:

- ☐ We saw Clare **while we were waiting** for the bus.
- ☐ **While you were** out, there was a phone call for you.
- ☐ Alex read a book **while I watched** TV.

When you are talking about the future, use the *present* (*not will*) after **while**:

- ☐ I'm going to Singapore next week. I hope to see some friends of mine **while I'm** there. (*not while I will be there*)
- ☐ What are you going to do **while you're** waiting? (*not while you'll be waiting*)

See also Unit 25.



Alex read a book **while I watched** TV.