

How to tell the time in English

ASK FOR THE TIME

In English, there are two ways to ask for the time:

1. What's the time?
2. What time is it?

Some useful expressions to ask for the time :

- What time is it? / What's the time?
- Have you got the right time?
- Could you tell me what time it is?
- What time are you leaving?
- What time do you go to work?
- What time do you want to get up?
- Are you on time?

GIVE TIME

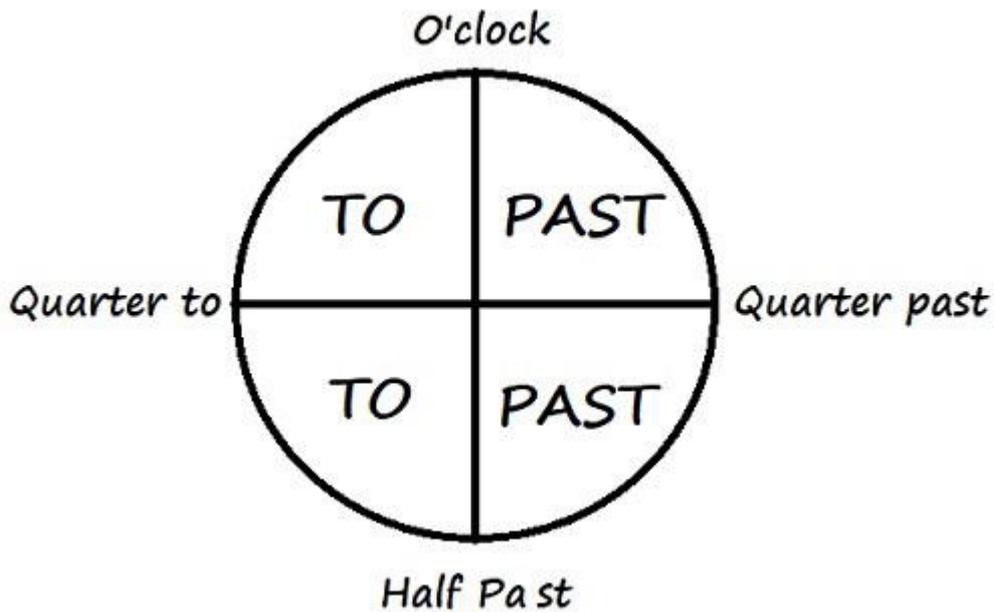
To give the "full" hours, we often add o'clock (= of the clock, to the clock).

- It's twelve o'clock.
- It's one o'clock.

To give the "not full" hours:

First the minutes (before or after the hour) are mentioned, then the hour is indicated. For everything between the hour and the half (i.e. after the hour), we use **past**; for everything after the half (i.e. before the hour), we use **to**:

- It's three o'clock => 03:00
- It's five past three => 03:05
- It's ten past three => 03:10
- It's a quarter past three => 03:15
- It's half past three => 03:30
- It's a quarter to four => 03:45
- It's ten to four => 03:50



If we want to be very specific, we add the word *minutes*:

- It's two minutes to ten. => 9:58

For the schedules, it's quite simple:

- The bank close at 5:30 p.m.
- My plane leaves at 4:22 p.m.

Some additional examples:

- It's eleven o'clock. => 11:00
- It's ten past eleven. => 11:10
- It's a quarter past eleven. => 11:15
- It's half past eleven. => 11:30
- It's twenty to twelve. => 11:40
- It's a quarter to twelve. => 11:45
- It's five to twelve. => 11:55
- It's time for lunch.

In both the United States and Great Britain, morning hours are distinguished by adding a.m. (which means *ante meridiem*) of those of the afternoon by adding p.m. (*post meridiem*).

- It's 2 a.m. => It's 2 o'clock in the morning (02:00)
- It's 2 p.m. => It's 2 o'clock in the afternoon (14:00)

Only the European system of a clock from 1 to 24 is used for schedules (train, plane, etc.).