

Unit 115 For, during and while

a For and during

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

for **six years** for **two hours** for **a week**

- I've lived in this house **for six years**.
- We watched television **for two hours** last night.
- Ann is going away **for a week** in September.
- Where have you been? I've been waiting **for ages**.
- Are you going away **for the week-end**?

You cannot use **during** in this way:

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

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

during **the film** during **our holiday** during **the night**

- I fell asleep **during the film**.
- We met a lot of interesting people **during our holiday**.
- The ground is wet. It must have rained **during the night**.
- I'll phone you some time **during the afternoon**.

b During and while

We use **during** + *noun*. We use **while** + *subject + verb*. Compare:

I fell asleep	during	<i>noun</i> the film.
I fell asleep	while	<i>subject + verb</i> I was watching television.

Compare **during** and **while** in these examples:

- We met a lot of interesting people **during our holiday**.
- We met a lot of interesting people **while we were** on holiday.
- Robert suddenly began to feel ill **during the examination**.
- Robert suddenly began to feel ill **while he was doing** the examination.

Here are some more examples of **while**:

- We saw Ann **while we were waiting** for the bus.
- **While you were** out, there was a phone call for you.
- Tom read a book **while I watched** television.

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

- I'm going to London next week. I hope to see Tom **while I'm** there.
- What are you going to do **while you are** waiting?

See also **Unit 9a**.

For **while -ing** see **Unit 67b**. For **for** and **since** see **Unit 19b**.

