

# Scheduling and time management

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL  
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER  
EN\_BE\_3106X

LANGUAGE  
English

lingoda

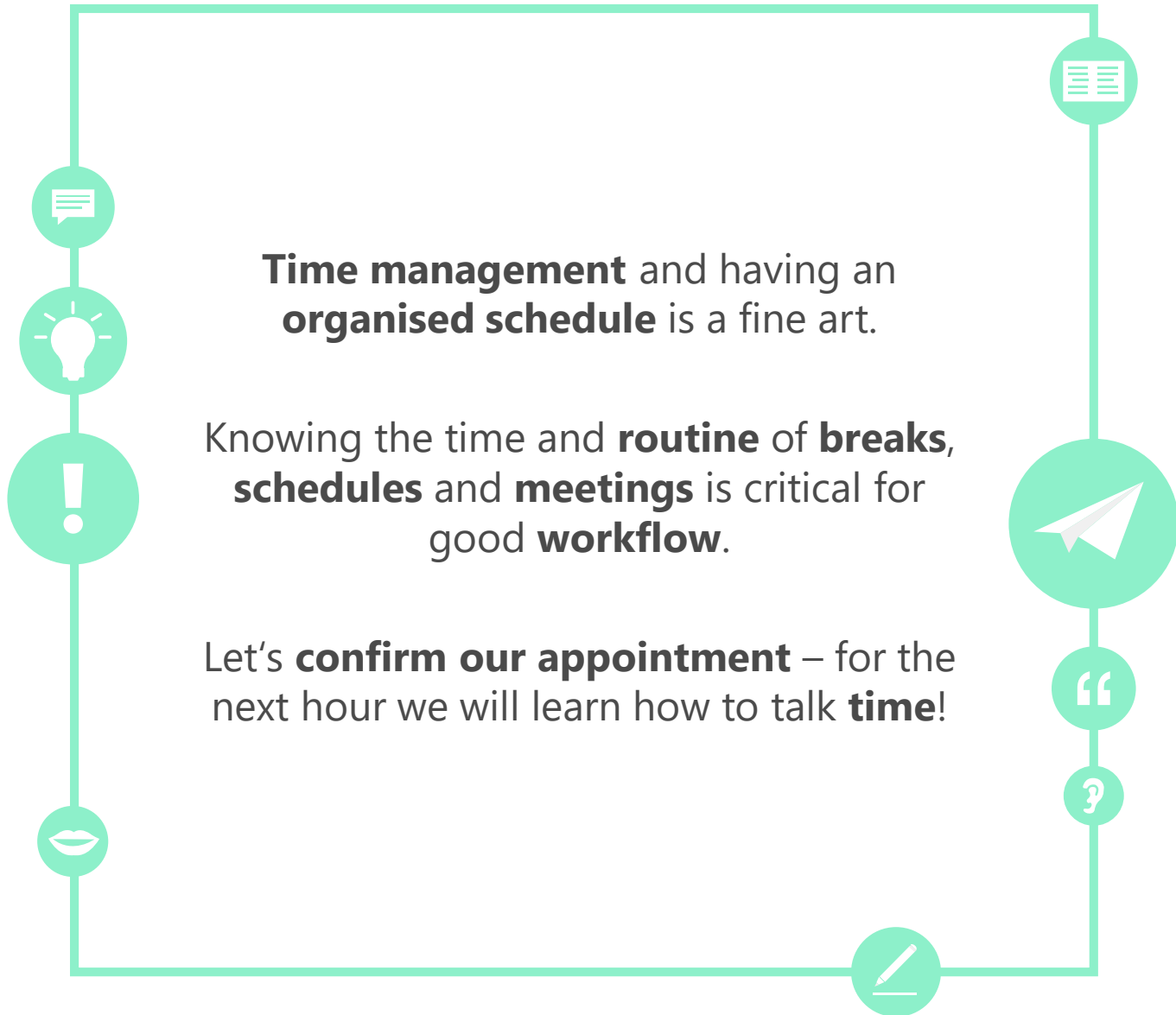




## Goals

- Can recognise and understand typical time expressions for making, changing and confirming an appointment
- Can use new phrases to describe schedules at my own company







## Warm-up discussion

Talk to your teacher about your typical daily **routine**.





## Talking about time

**Why is it so important to be able to speak directly and clearly about time? Speak your mind.**



efficiency?

professionalism?

ensuring you  
don't waste  
anyone's time?



## Speak your mind

**What are some good tips for managing your time effectively?**

## time expressions

Offices are busy places – everyone has their own unique **schedule** and it can be complicated to organise time for meetings, breaks and appointments that **suit** everyone. Being able to talk about **time management** and your schedule is a critical skill for working in a company. For instance, you need to be able to discuss your **availability** and make, change or confirm an appointment.



Thursday at 4pm... Yes, **I'll be able to make it.**



## New expressions

**deadline**

I will have to stay up late to make my **deadline**.

**to put forward**

Jane **put** Friday at 2pm **forward** as a good time to meet.

**every now and then**

I go to Rosis for lunch **every now and then**.

**to move forward**

It will be necessary to **move** the deadline **forward** to satisfy our clients.

**to call off**

We had to **call off** the merger after key demands were not met.

**to postpone**

Apologies, but I have had to **postpone** the work party until next Friday.





## New expressions

**in a hurry**

Sorry I have a meeting in 5 minutes – I'm **in a hurry**. I will talk to you later!

**to find the time to  
do something**

I'll **find the time to** organise a presentation, it's just a matter of organisation.

**to be available on  
that date**

I can ensure I will **be available on that date**. Count on me.

**that date and time  
suit me**

Yes, **that date and time suit me**. I will attend the meeting.

**that time slot suits  
me**

That's perfect, **that time slot suits me**.

**to be able to make  
it**

Sorry, I don't think I will **be able to make it**.

## making appointments

**Making appointments** is very important for the effective functioning of a company. It can be a challenge to **juggle** several different people's schedules – sometimes it might be necessary to persuade some of the attendees to change their plans.



I propose we **get together** on Thursday afternoon to discuss the project.



## Tell your teacher

**Making appointments can often be a challenge, especially in bigger companies.**

**Why might this be so?**



clashing schedules?

workload?

priorities?



## Challenges

**List some of the potential obstacles when making appointments with colleagues or clients. Talk about each of these challenges with the teacher.**





## Making an appointment

**Practise making an appointment with your teacher.  
Use the useful expressions in the boxes below to check if they can  
make it, or ask if they have a preference.**



Do you think you  
can make that  
time?

What works best  
for your schedule?

Would you prefer  
we do it on  
Thursday?

Are you sure that  
time suits you?



## Changing an appointment

**Unfortunately some last-minute work came up and you can't make the appointment you made with your colleagues yesterday.**

**Draft a memo informing them that you will have to change the appointment. Use some of the expressions below.**

Something unexpected came up...

Unfortunately, I won't be able to make it.

I am afraid I have to call off the...

## schedule

A **schedule** is simply a list of planned activities, duties or commitments together with the times and dates when they are planned to take place.

In the **context** of the **workplace**, schedules are commonly used to map out a plan for organising the completion of a project and to estimate how long it should take.

It is also a **verb: to schedule**. This is used in the context of making a plan, for example **scheduling a meeting**.



Is the project on **schedule**?



Let me just check my **schedule**.



## Company schedules

Companies often follow daily or weekly **schedules** to organise the office and maintain order and efficiency.

Talking about project schedules and your own balance of tasks and projects is critical to working effectively in an office. Schedules can also be used to refer to the progress of a particular project.

Some of the tasks and procedures that might be scheduled at particular times include:

- **Work breaks**
- **Team building exercises**
- **Staff briefings**
- **Meetings**
- **Training sessions**







## Talk to the teacher

Talk about your weekly **schedule**  
with the teacher.  
Is it similar **week-to-week**?



## Schedules

**Talk about the schedules in your company.  
Discuss the regular routines which occur in the workplace.**



Breaks?

Projects?

Training?

## prioritising

**Effective time management** is only possible by **prioritising** tasks. When faced with a large workload, we need to be able to separate the most important tasks from the least important.

Successful prioritising focuses on the most urgent and important work that must be completed as soon as possible, or the tasks with the **highest priority**. Recognising the **optimal order of workflow** is key to prioritising effectively.



Jonathon is adept at **prioritising** his tasks.



## Rank the following tasks in terms of priority

**Prioritise the following tasks at work from most to least important.  
Explain your answers to the teacher.**

Replying to non-urgent emails

Having a coffee with your manager

Finishing the project which has its deadline soon

Emptying the waste paper bin

Starting a new project

Helping out the new trainee

Replying to urgent emails

Attending meetings

Cleaning your desk



## Resolve each of the problems below

1. Julian doesn't have enough time to complete all of his tasks at work.



Julian should **prioritise** his jobs and write a list of which jobs are most urgent.

2. Steffi needs to organise a staff meeting but everyone has a conflicting schedule.



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3. Timothy has a deadline tomorrow and his manager wants him to attend two meetings today.



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4. Linus missed last week's training session due to poor organisation.



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5. Frank overslept and will be late for the meeting.



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## What are your priorities?

**Write a short paragraph explaining when you had to prioritise something.**

**Length should be 100 words.**





## Schedules

**Talk about the regular schedules and time distribution in your company.**

**Discuss the regular routines which occur in the workplace.**



How good are you at managing time?

social events?

staff meetings?

breaks – how  
many, and how  
long?

meetings?



## Write an email

**You are a team manager and need to organise a meeting in the next three days. Send an email to your team members and attempt to organise a time that suits everybody. Try to include some of the useful expressions you have learned.**

The image shows a simplified email composition window. At the top right, there are three window control buttons: a minus sign, a square, and a red 'x' button. Below these, there are two input fields. The first is labeled 'To:' and contains the text 'Marketing team'. The second is labeled 'Subject:' and contains the text 'Team meeting'. Below these fields is a large rectangular area for the email body, which contains several horizontal lines for text entry.





## Re: I can't make it!

— □ ×
To: _____
Subject: Re: Team meeting
<p>Thanks for getting in touch.</p> <p>Due to my upcoming deadline it is going to be difficult for me to make your proposed time. I'm in a hurry to get everything done before Thursday. I can find the time to be available some time on Friday afternoon if that suits you?</p> <p>Sorry that I can't be more flexible this week.</p> <p>Jessica Marketing Coordinator MediaKompany.</p>

**Reply to your colleague's email and try to successfully reschedule the meeting.**



## Talking about times of the day

- Often when making appointments in English we **specify the time** of the day when our plans will take place.
- Remember that each person has a **different perspective** on times of day, so make sure to confirm a rough time to avoid misunderstandings.

- **Midday:** the middle of the day: 12pm.
- **Morning:** the hours before midday.
- **Afternoon:** the hours after midday, but before 17:00.
- **Evening:** the hours after 17:00.
- The words **early** and **late** add degrees to these terms. **Late morning** is much closer to **midday** than **early morning**.



**after**

**before**

The time expressions **after** and **before** are extremely useful when making plans or appointments as they can be used to indicate when something can happen in relation to something else. Each works as a **subordinating conjunction** and can be used at the **beginning** or **middle** of a sentence.



Are you able to attend a quick meeting about your monthly targets **after** lunch?



I'll try and meet you **before** close of business today.

## when

Another useful time expression is **when**, another subordinating conjunction which can be used to indicate when something happens directly after something else.

**When** can also be used more loosely, to indicate something happening immediately or later on:

- I should hear from Elvis **when** he has finished dinner.

The sentence above indicates a more general use of the word **when**.



I'll take my lunch break **when** I've finished replying to these emails.



## Unscramble

**Unscramble the events and activities below into an organised daily schedule. Personalise the schedule by filling in the blanks with events from your own day. Remember to specify at what time of day you do each thing.**





## Practise

**Try to arrange a time to meet up for a coffee with your teacher.  
Try to use each time expression above in your conversation.**

In...  
(minutes/hours)

before

when

after



## Rebecca's day

### My daily schedule.

I woke up to my alarm beeping. It was 8:30am and I had to get out of bed. I was hoping to get to the gym before work, but at this rate I wasn't going to make it. I got dressed and brushed my teeth in a hurry.

I picked up a coffee and a roll from the bakery downstairs and ran to make the bus. Frustratingly, I missed it and decided to cycle to work instead.

After arriving at work I only had 10 minutes before the staff meeting at 9.30. It was only enough time to get changed into my work uniform. I made it just in time...



**Continue Rebecca's day by finishing off her story. Try to use as many time expressions as you can.**



## My day

**Write an outline of your standard day at work.  
Use the sections in the boxes below to provide you with a rough outline.**

arriving at work

projects

meetings

before lunch

late afternoon

leaving work

A vertical notepad with a spiral binding on the left side. It has several horizontal lines for writing, providing a space to outline the day at work.





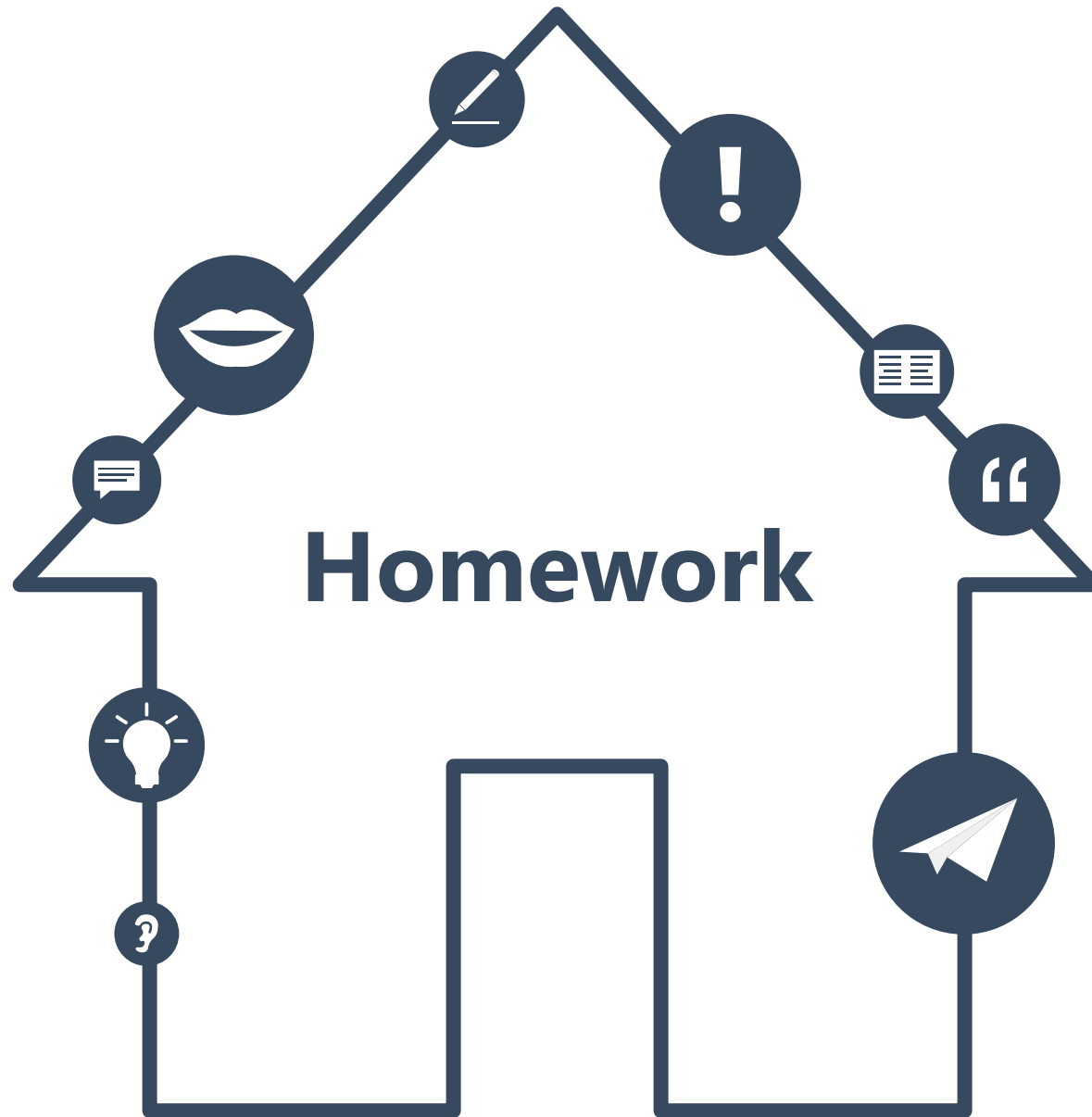
## My commute

**How do you get to work? How long does it take? The journey to and from work is called your *commute*.**

**Write a short description of your commute to and from work here.**

Do you enjoy your daily commute?







## Vocabulary review

Create flashcards to help you memorise the useful expressions related to time.






## Categorise

**Think of all of the time expressions you have learnt so far. Separate them into two lists: early and late.**

early in the day

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late in the day

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