

# Time Clauses in English

## Adverbial clauses of time

Time clauses answer the question: **When?**  
and can be introduced by the following conjunctions:

- **when**
- **after**
- **as**
- **as long as**
- **as soon as**
- **before**
- **hardly ... when**
- **by the time (that)**
- **directly**
- **during the time (that)**
- **immediately**
- **the moment (that)**
- **now (that)**
- **once**
- **since**
- **until / till**
- **when**
- **whenever**
- **while**

# Remember!

We do not use a future form, or a conditional tense, in a time clause.

Study the following examples.

Pay attention to the tense used after the words in red.

I will phone you **when** I get home from work.

**Before** I go, I'd like to talk to you.

I'm going to swim a lot **while** I'm on holiday.

We'll go out **when** it stops snowing.

What do you want to be **when** you grow up?

I look after the children **while** she goes to Paris.

**As soon as** we get the tickets, we'll send them to you.

Let me stay here **till** he comes to bed.

**The present perfect tense** can be used after the following words: when, after, until, as soon as.  
**If you use the present perfect, one action must be completed before the other!**

**When I've called** Tom, we can have supper.  
( First I will call Tom and *after that* we can have supper. )

**When you've had your supper**, come and see me.  
( You cannot say: ~~When you will have had your supper.~~ )

He won't be getting married **until he've saved enough money.**

**Do not use present perfect  
if the two actions happen together!**

**When I call Tom, I'll ask him about the journey.**  
( We cannot say: ~~When I've called~~ )

We can use either **the present simple** or **the present perfect** in the following situations.

I'll come **as soon as I finish.** *or*  
I'll come **as soon as I've finished.**

You'll feel better **after you have something to eat.** *or*  
You'll feel better **after you've had something to eat.**

We use a comma  
when the adverbial clause comes first:

- I felt very tired **when** I got up this morning.
- **After** he got a new job, he changed completely.
- He broke his leg **as** he was playing football.
- **Once** you've seen an elephant, you've seen them all.
- We'll go out **when** it stops raining.
- **When** you are in Paris, come and see me.
- What do you want to be **when** you grow up.



When the time clause refers to the future we normally use

**the simple present** where we might expect **the future**  
**the present perfect** where we might expect **the future perfect**

after the following words:

**after as soon as before by the time directly**  
**immediately the moment till until when**

The present perfect is often used after  
**once** and **now that**:

**Once** we have built the house, we can move in.

**Now that** we have built the house, we can move in.

We use '**when**', '**whenever**', '**every time**' or '**each time**' if we want to say that something always happened or happens in particular circumstances.

**When** he talks about politics, he does sound like a fanatic.

**Whenever** he had a cold, he drank a lot of juice.

**Every time** I go to the dentist, I panic.

We do not normally use the future time in time clauses, although *will* can be used after *when* in noun clauses.

The boss wants to know **when** we **will** be placing an order?

# Thank you for your attention!

Visit our website: [www.focus.olsztyn.pl](http://www.focus.olsztyn.pl)

Follow us on Twitter: [@focus\\_school](https://twitter.com/@focus_school)

Find us on Facebook as well.

The exercises on Time Clauses:

[time clauses](#)