CAPITOLO

3

A Day in My Life

"In winter I get up at night / And dress by yellow candle-light." — R. L. Stevenson, "Bed in Summer"

OBIETTIVI

1. I can talk about my daily routine and my school week using the present simple.
2. I can ask and answer questions with *do / does*, and give short answers.
3. I can say how often I do things with adverbs of frequency and expressions like *once a week*.
4. I can tell the time, say dates and use *at / on / in* with time expressions.
5. I can write an informal email to a pen friend about my typical day.
6. I can compare a school day in the UK, the US and Italy.

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Every day has a shape. The alarm rings, you get up, you go to school, you come home, you go to bed… and the next morning it all starts again. These repeated actions are your **routine**, and English has a special tense for them: the *present simple*. In this unit you will learn to describe your day, to ask other people about theirs and to say how often you do things. You will also learn to tell the time, to say dates and to choose between *at*, *on* and *in*. On the way you will meet Chloe, a swimmer who gets up before the sun, listen to Giulia and Sam comparing their school days, and visit schools in England, the United States and Italy.

3.1 Vocabulary: Days, Times and Routines

3.1.1 My daily routine

Most routine actions in English are not single verbs but **collocations**: fixed partnerships of words that native speakers always use together. In Italian you *fai colazione*, but in English you **have** breakfast; you can *take* the bus, but British speakers very often **catch** it (or *get* it); and you **do** your homework, never "make" it. Learn these combinations as single blocks of meaning, exactly as you see them in Tabella 3.1.

Tabella 3.1 Daily routine: verbs and collocations

Morning	At school	Afternoon and evening
wake up *(svegliarsi)*	get to school	finish school
get up *(alzarsi)*	start lessons	get home
have a shower / wash	have a break	do my homework
get dressed *(vestirsi)*	have lunch	go out with my friends
have breakfast	take a test	have dinner
brush my teeth	chat with my friends	watch TV / a series
leave home	go to the canteen	go to bed
catch the bus / walk to school	talk to the teacher	go to sleep *(addormentarsi)*

Notice the difference between **wake up** and **get up**. You *wake up* when you open your eyes and stop sleeping; you *get up* when you actually leave your bed. Many teenagers wake up at seven but get up at a quarter past! In the same way, *go to bed* is different from *go to sleep* (start sleeping).

DA RICORDARE

No article in these everyday phrases: *go to bed*, *go to school*, *get home*, *be at home*, *have breakfast / lunch / dinner*. And watch the verbs: **have** breakfast, a shower, a break · **do** homework · **catch** the bus · **get** up, dressed, home.

3.1.2 School subjects

Your **timetable** *(ita: orario scolastico)* is the table that shows your lessons for each day of the week. The names of **school subjects** are often similar in English and Italian, but the pronunciation can be very different, so check the stressed syllable.

Tabella 3.2 School subjects (stressed syllable in **bold**)

English · **I**talian	**Lat**in	**maths** (AmE *math*)	**his**tory
ge**og**raphy	**sci**ence	**phys**ics · **chem**istry	bi**ol**ogy
art · **mu**sic	PE (physical edu**ca**tion)	com**put**ing / ICT	RE (re**li**gious edu**ca**tion)

British students say *maths*, with a final *-s*; Americans say *math*. *PE* is the subject where you do sport and exercise, often in the school gym or on the sports field. *ICT* means *information and communication technology*, and many schools now call it *computing*. In Britain, two lessons of the same subject one after the other are called a **double lesson**: "We've got double maths on Thursday morning" is a sentence many students say with a sigh.

3.1.3 Days, months and seasons

The seven **days of the week** are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Saturday and Sunday together are the **weekend**; the other five days are **weekdays**. The twelve **months** are January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December. In English, days and months always start with a **capital letter**. The four **seasons** are spring, summer, autumn (AmE *fall*) and winter, and these are written with a small letter.

Some names are not pronounced as they are spelt. *Wednesday* has only two syllables, and its first *d* is silent: /ˈwenzdeɪ/. *Tuesday* is /ˈtjuːzdeɪ/ and *Thursday* is /ˈθɜːzdeɪ/: be careful to distinguish them, because they sound quite similar.

APPROFONDIMENTO

Gods in the calendar. Italian *martedì, mercoledì, giovedì* and *venerdì* are the days of the Roman gods Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus. The Anglo-Saxons used their own Germanic gods instead: *Tuesday* is the day of Tiw, a god of war like Mars; *Wednesday* is Woden's day; *Thursday* belongs to Thunor (Thor), the god of thunder, like Jupiter; *Friday* to the goddess Frigg. *Saturday* kept Saturn, and *Sunday* and *Monday* are the days of the Sun and the Moon. Also from Latin: *a.m.* and *p.m.* mean *ante meridiem* ("before midday") and *post meridiem* ("after midday"). *O'clock* is short for "of the clock".

3.1.4 Telling the time

There are two ways to tell the time in English. The **digital** way is easy: you simply say the numbers. 7:15 is "seven fifteen", 7:40 is "seven forty", and 7:05 is "seven oh five". The **traditional** way uses the clock face, as you can see in Figura 3.1. For minutes 1–30 we count the minutes **past** the hour; for minutes 31–59, the minutes **to** the next hour. Exact hours take **o'clock**: "It's seven o'clock", but never "It's seven fifteen o'clock". Fifteen minutes is *a quarter*, thirty minutes is *half*: so 7:15 is *(a) quarter past seven*, 7:30 is *half past seven*, and 7:45 is *(a) quarter to eight*.

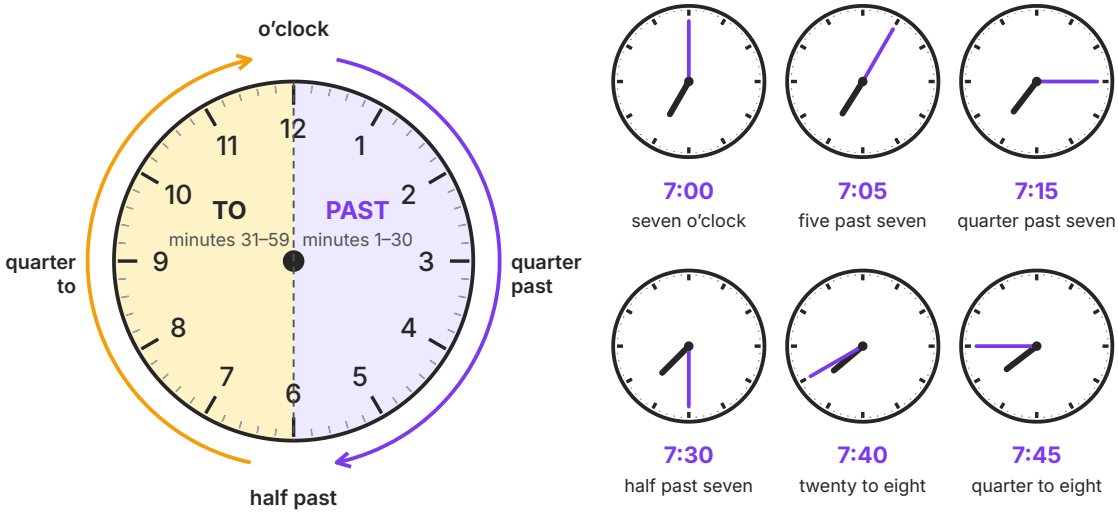


Figura 3.1 Telling the time. Left: in the right half of the clock (minutes 1–30) we say *past* the hour; in the left half (minutes 31–59) we say *to* the next hour. Right: six times between 7:00 and 7:45, with the hour hand and the minute hand (violet) in their correct positions.

With the traditional system we use the multiples of five: *five past*, *ten past*, *twenty-five to*, and so on. For other numbers we add the word *minutes*: 7:12 is "twelve minutes past seven", but most people prefer the digital form, "seven twelve". To ask the time, say **What time is it?** or **What's the time?**; the answer always starts with **It's...** Train timetables use the 24-hour clock (15:20), but in conversation British people normally use the 12-hour clock with *in the morning / afternoon / evening* or *a.m. / p.m.* 12:00 is *midday* or *noon*; 00:00 is *midnight*. In informal British English, *half seven* means 7:30. In American English, *quarter after seven* (7:15) and *ten of eight* (7:50) are common alternatives (AmE).

> **ERRORE FREQUENTE**
>
> Non tradurre l'ora parola per parola dall'italiano. *Sono le sette* non diventa "they are the seven": in inglese il soggetto è sempre *it*, al singolare, senza articolo.
>
> ✗ *It's seven and a quarter.* → ✓ *It's (a) quarter past seven.*
> ✗ *It's eight less a quarter.* → ✓ *It's (a) quarter to eight.*
> ✗ *They are the seven.* → ✓ *It's seven o'clock.*
> ✗ *at two of the afternoon* → ✓ *at two in the afternoon / at 2 p.m.*

3.1.5 Ordinal numbers and dates

Ordinal numbers tell us the position of something in a series: first, second, third. We use them for dates, floors, birthdays and school years. Most ordinals simply add *-th* to the number (*fourth, sixth, seventh, tenth*), but look carefully at the irregular ones in Tabella 3.3.

Tabella 3.3 Ordinal numbers (irregular forms in **bold**)

1st **first**	2nd **second**	3rd **third**	4th fourth	5th **fifth**
8th **eighth**	9th **ninth**	12th **twelfth**	20th **twentieth**	21st twenty-first
22nd twenty-second	23rd twenty-third	30th **thirtieth**	31st thirty-first	100th (one) hundredth

In compound numbers, only the last part becomes ordinal: 21st is *twenty-first*, 32nd is *thirty-second*. The two letters after the figure are the end of the word: 1**st** (fir**st**), 2**nd** (seco**nd**), 3**rd** (thi**rd**). So 11th, 12th, 13th (*eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth*) all end in *-th*.

In British English we write a date as **6 October 2026** (or 6/10/2026) and we say "the sixth of October" or "October the sixth". Americans write **October 6, 2026** (10/6/2026) and say "October sixth" (AmE). So 4/7 means 4 July in London, but April 4 in New York. To ask about dates, say **What's the date today?** or **When's your birthday?** — "It's on the twenty-second of March." For years, see Appendix D: 2026 is *twenty twenty-six*.

LEARNING TO LEARN

A vocabulary notebook. A new word disappears quickly if you meet it only once. Keep a notebook, or a deck of flashcards on your phone, and organise it by topic — *my day, school subjects, telling the time* — not in alphabetical order. For each word write the word and its pronunciation, a translation, and above all an **example sentence** with its collocation: *catch the bus*, not just *catch*. Then review: after one day, after a week, after a month. Every review makes the word easier to remember.

Try it. Start a page called *My day* with ten collocations from this section, each in a true sentence about you.

3.2 Reading: Up Before the Sun

Before you read. What time do you get up on weekdays? Do you know anybody who gets up very early? Why? Now read this article from a school magazine in the north of England. Chloe is a fictional student, but her routine is typical of young competitive swimmers.

Up Before the Sun

Most students at our school get up at about seven o'clock. Chloe Adams in Year 10 gets up at a quarter past five. Chloe is a swimmer, and she trains four mornings a week. We asked her about her day.

Chloe's **alarm** rings at 5:15 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. “I never press the snooze button,” she says. “I haven't got time!” She washes her face, puts on a **tracksuit** and has a banana and a glass of milk. Her dad drives her to the swimming pool, and she's in the water at six o'clock.

Training lasts an hour and a half. Chloe swims about four kilometres every session. “It's hard, but I love it. The pool is quiet, and I think about my day.” After training she eats a big breakfast: **porridge** *(ita: porridge, una crema calda di fiocchi d'avena)*, eggs and toast. Then she catches the bus to school. Lessons start at 8:45.

Does she feel tired in class? “Sometimes, especially on Thursdays, because we have double maths at nine! But usually I feel great in the morning. I'm often more tired in the evening.”

Chloe's favourite subjects are biology and PE. She doesn't like history very much, but she always does her homework. “I haven't got a lot of free time, so I'm very **organised**. I do my homework on the bus and at lunchtime.”

School finishes at 3:20. On Wednesdays Chloe has a second training session in the afternoon, and on Saturdays she often goes to competitions. She doesn't train on Sundays. “Sunday is my day. I get up at ten, I see my friends and I watch films with my brother.”

What about bedtime? “I go to bed at half past eight on weekdays. My friends think it's really early, but I need nearly nine hours of sleep. Sleep is part of training too!”

Is it easy? “No, it isn't. But I'm happy. Swimming is my **passion**.”

Language in context. When the subject is *Chloe*, *she* or *training*, the verb ends in **-s**: *gets up, trains, washes, catches, lasts*. With *I, we* or *my friends* there is no *-s*. After *doesn't* and *does* the verb has no *-s* either: *She doesn't like history. Does she feel tired?* Words like *never, usually, always* say how often. Section 3.3 explains all this.

3.2.1 A poem: *Bed in Summer*

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894), the Scottish author of *Treasure Island*, wrote this poem for *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885). A child talks about his daily routine — but in summer it isn't the routine he wants. Read it aloud: the lines go in pairs that **rhyme** *(ita: fanno rima)*, like *night* and *light*. *(candle-light: lume di candela; hopping: saltellare; grown-up: adulto)*

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

— R. L. Stevenson, “Bed in Summer”, *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885)

Language in context. The poem is in the present simple, because it describes a routine: *I get up, I have to go to bed*. *I should like* is an old-fashioned form of *I would like*.

3.3 Grammar: Present Simple, Adverbs of Frequency, Prepositions of Time

3.3.1 Present simple: affirmative and uses

We use the **present simple** to talk about **habits and routines** (*I walk to school every day*), about **permanent situations** (*Sam lives in England*), and about **facts and general truths** (*The Earth goes round the Sun*; *Cats eat meat*). It also expresses likes and opinions: *I love music*. Figura 3.2 shows habits and states on a timeline.

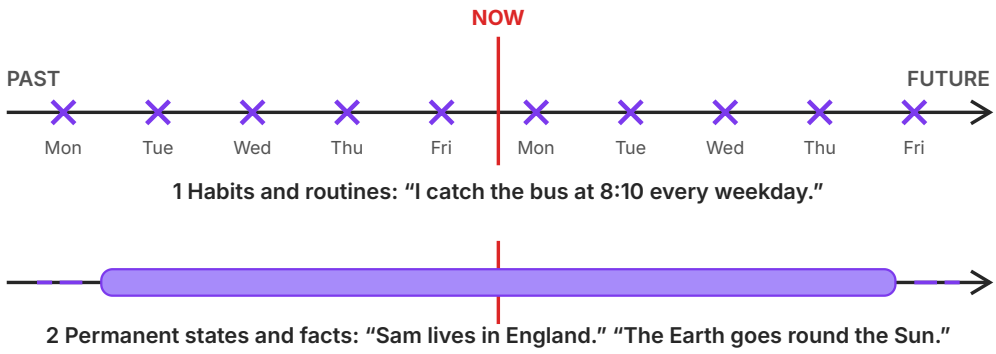


Figura 3.2 Timelines for the present simple. Top: a habit is a series of repeated, completed actions (×) that continues before and after NOW. Bottom: a permanent state or fact is true in the past, now and in the future.

The form is very simple: it is the base form of the verb (the infinitive without *to*) for all persons except the **third person singular** (*he, she, it*, or a singular noun such as *Chloe* or *my dad*), which adds **-s**.

Tabella 3.4 Present simple, affirmative: the verb *work*

Subject	Verb	Example
I / you / we / they	work	We work hard on Mondays.
he / she / it	work**s**	My mum works in a hospital.

Spelling. The third-person ending follows these rules:

- Most verbs add **-s**: *play → plays, get → gets, read → reads, like → likes*.
- Verbs ending in **-s, -ss, -sh, -ch, -x, -z** and the verbs **go** and **do** add **-es**: *wash → washes, catch → catches, fix → fixes, buzz → buzzes, go → goes, do → does*.
- Verbs ending in **consonant + -y** change *y* to **-ies**: *study → studies, fly → flies, carry → carries*. But verbs ending in **vowel + -y** just add *-s*: *play → plays, buy → buys, enjoy → enjoys*.
- **have** is irregular: *he has*.

Pronunciation. The *-s* ending has three sounds. It is /s/ after the voiceless sounds /p/ /t/ /k/ /f/ /θ/: *stops, gets, works, laughs*. It is /z/ after voiced sounds and vowels: *plays, reads, lives, swims, goes* /gəʊz/. It is an extra syllable, /ɪz/, after the hissing and buzzing sounds /s/ /z/ /ʃ/ /ʒ/ /tʃ/ /dʒ/: *washes* /ˈwɒʃɪz/, *watches* /ˈwɒtʃɪz/, *dances*, *changes*. Two very common verbs change their vowel: *does* /dʌz/ and *says* /sez/.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Il present simple: forma affermativa e usi. Il *present simple* (presente semplice) si forma con la forma base del verbo, cioè l'infinito senza *to*: *I play, you play, we play, they play*. L'unica forma diversa è la terza persona singolare (*he, she, it*), che aggiunge **-s** o **-es**: *she plays, he watches, it goes*. In italiano ogni persona ha la sua desinenza (*gioco, giochi, gioca…*); in inglese cambia solo la terza singolare, e proprio per questo la sua *-s* si dimentica facilmente.

Usi. Abitudini (*I get up at seven* = mi alzo alle sette), situazioni permanenti (*She lives in Leeds*) e verità generali. Attenzione: il presente italiano descrive anche ciò che accade *adesso* (*Che cosa fai? Studio.*); per questo l'inglese usa il *present continuous* (Unità 5).

3.3.2 Present simple: negatives, questions and short answers

To make negatives and questions in the present simple we need a helping verb, the **auxiliary do**, which becomes **does** in the third person singular. When we use *do / does*, the main verb goes back to its base form: the *-s* moves from the verb to the auxiliary.

Tabella 3.5 Present simple: the verb *play*

Affirmative	Negative	Questions	Short answers
I play	I do not (don't) play	Do I play?	Yes, I do. / No, I don't.
you play	you do not (don't) play	Do you play?	Yes, you do. / No, you don't.
he / she / it plays	he / she / it does not (doesn't) play	Does he / she / it play?	Yes, he does. / No, she doesn't.
we / you / they play	we / you / they do not (don't) play	Do we / you / they play?	Yes, we do. / No, they don't.

In speaking and in informal writing we normally use the contracted forms *don't* /dəʊnt/ and *doesn't* /ˈdʌznt/. **Short answers** repeat the auxiliary, not the main verb: *Do you like pizza? — Yes, I do* (not *Yes, I like*). With the verb *to be* we never use *do*: *Are you tired? — Yes, I am*; *Is Chloe a swimmer? — Yes, she is*.

Wh- questions follow the same order, with the **question word** at the beginning: **question word + do / does + subject + base verb**. *Where does Sam live? What do you have for breakfast? When do your lessons finish? Why does Chloe go to bed early?* We use **What time…?** to ask about the time of an action (*What time do you get up?*) and **How often…?** to ask about frequency (*How often does she train? — Five times a week.*).

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

From statement to question, step by step. Statement: *Chloe catches the bus at 7:50.*

1. Find the subject and the verb: *Chloe* (third person singular) + *catches*.
2. Choose the auxiliary: third person singular → **does**.
3. Put the verb back in the base form: *catches* → **catch**.
4. Yes/no question: **Does Chloe catch** the bus at 7:50? — *Yes, she does.*
5. Wh- question about the time: **What time does Chloe catch** the bus? — *At ten to eight.*
6. Negative: Chloe **doesn't catch** the bus at 7:50.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Forma negativa, interrogativa e risposte brevi. In italiano basta *non* per negare e l'intonazione per domandare (*Giochi a tennis?*). Il *present simple* inglese ha invece bisogno dell'**ausiliare** *do* (*does* alla terza singolare), che non si traduce.

Negativa: soggetto + *don't / doesn't* + forma base (*She doesn't play*). **Forma interrogativa:** (parola interrogativa +) *Do / Does* + soggetto + forma base (*Does she play? Where do you live?*). La *-s* compare **una sola volta**, sull'ausiliare. **Risposte brevi:** rispondere solo *Yes* o *No* suona brusco; si ripete l'ausiliare: *Yes, I do. / No, he doesn't.* Il verbo *to be* non usa mai *do*: *Is he Italian? — Yes, he is.*

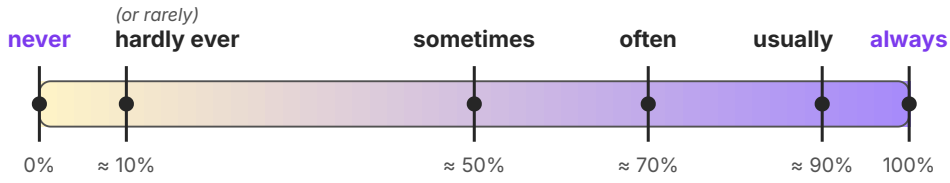
ERRORE FREQUENTE

Gli errori più comuni con il *present simple*:

✗ *She work in a bank.* → ✓ *She works in a bank.* (manca la *-s*)
✗ *He doesn't plays tennis.* → ✓ *He doesn't play tennis.* (dopo *doesn't*, forma base)
✗ *Does she likes music?* → ✓ *Does she like music?*
✗ *Where you live?* → ✓ *Where do you live?* (manca l'ausiliare)
✗ *Do you are tired?* → ✓ *Are you tired?* (*to be* non vuole *do*)

3.3.3 Adverbs and expressions of frequency

Adverbs of frequency tell us how often something happens. Figura 3.3 shows them on a scale from *never* (0%) to *always* (100%). *Hardly ever* and *rarely* mean “almost never”.



Example: I usually walk to school, but I sometimes take the bus. I'm never late!

Percentages are approximate: they show the order, not exact values.

Figura 3.3 The frequency scale, from *never* (0%) to *always* (100%). The percentages are only approximate: what matters is the order of the adverbs.

Their position in the sentence is important:

- **before the main verb**: *I **usually** walk to school. She **never** eats meat. We **often** play volleyball.*
- **after the verb *be***: *I'm **always** hungry after training. He is **never** late.*
- in negatives and questions, **after the subject and before the main verb**: *I don't **usually** watch TV. Do you **always** have breakfast?*

Sometimes and *usually* can also go at the beginning of the sentence, for emphasis: ***Sometimes** I take the bus.* To ask about frequency in general, use **ever**: *Do you **ever** go to bed after midnight? — No, never!*

For more precise information we use **expressions of frequency**, which normally go at the **end** of the sentence: *once a week*, *twice a month*, *three times a year*, *every day*, *on Mondays*. **Once** means "one time", **twice** "two times"; then *three times, four times...*: *Chloe trains five times a week.*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Avverbi di frequenza. *Always* (sempre), *usually* (di solito), *often* (spesso), *sometimes* (a volte), *hardly ever* (quasi mai), *never* (mai) vanno **prima del verbo principale** ma **dopo *to be***.

✗ *I go always to school by bike.* → ✓ *I always go to school by bike.*
✗ *She always is happy.* → ✓ *She is always happy.*
✗ *I don't never eat fish.* → ✓ *I never eat fish.* In inglese standard c'è **una sola negazione** per frase: *never* è già negativo, quindi il verbo resta affermativo (diversamente dall'italiano *non mangio mai*).

Espressioni come *once a week* (una volta alla settimana) vanno di solito **alla fine** della frase; *a* traduce "alla / al": *three times a year* = tre volte all'anno.

3.3.4 Prepositions of time: at, on, in

Three short **prepositions of time** cover most situations. Think of them as three sizes of time (Figura 3.4): **in** for long periods, **on** for days, and **at** for precise points.

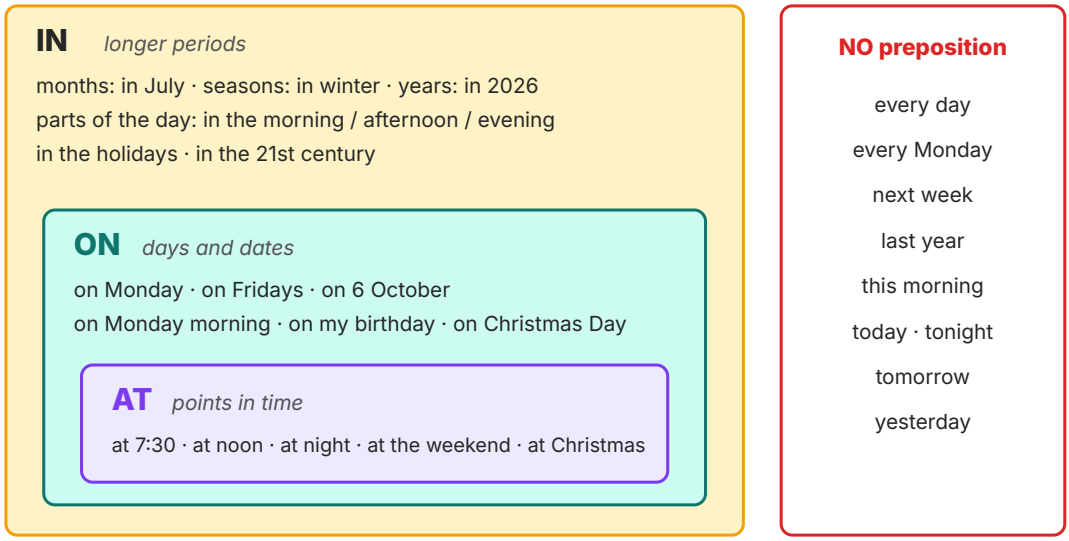


Figura 3.4 Prepositions of time. *In* is for the longest periods, *on* for days and dates, *at* for precise points in time. On the right: expressions with *every, next, last, this* and words like *today* and *tomorrow* take no preposition.

- **at** + clock times (*at 7:30, at half past four*), *at midday / noon, at midnight, at night, at lunchtime, at the weekend* (AmE *on the weekend*), *at Christmas, at Easter*;
- **on** + days and dates (*on Friday, on Fridays, on 6 October, on my birthday, on Christmas Day*), and a day + part of the day (*on Monday morning, on Saturday night*);
- **in** + months, seasons, years and centuries (*in March, in summer, in 2026, in the 21st century*) and parts of the day (*in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening*, but *at night*).

We use **no preposition** before *every, next, last, this* and before *today, tonight, tomorrow, yesterday*: *I see my grandparents **every** Sunday. We've got a test **next** Monday. What are you doing **tonight**?* Note also *on Fridays* (plural), which means "every Friday": *We have PE on Fridays.*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Preposizioni di tempo. L'italiano usa *a*, *di* o nessuna preposizione (*lunedì*, *a luglio*, *di mattina*); l'inglese ha regole precise. **At**: ore e momenti precisi (*at 8:00*, *at night*). **On**: giorni e date (*on Monday*, *on 25 December*). **In**: mesi, stagioni, anni e parti della giornata (*in July*, *in 2026*, *in the morning*).

Attenzione: *il lunedì* nel senso di "ogni lunedì" si traduce *on Mondays*, senza articolo e con il plurale. E con *every, next, last, this* non si mette nessuna preposizione: *next week* (la settimana prossima), *last year* (l'anno scorso), *this morning* (stamattina).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *in Monday* / ✗ *at Monday* → ✓ *on Monday*
✗ *on the morning* → ✓ *in the morning* (ma ✓ *on Monday morning*)
✗ *on next week* / ✗ *the next week* (nel senso di "la settimana prossima") → ✓ *next week*
✗ *in july*, ✗ *on sunday* → ✓ *in July*, ✓ *on Sunday*: giorni e mesi vogliono la **maiuscola**, anche se in italiano si scrivono con la minuscola. Le stagioni no: ✓ *in spring*.

3.4 Listening and Speaking: Routines and the Time

Giulia, a first-year student at a liceo scientifico in Italy, has a video call with Sam, her exchange partner in England. Listen while two classmates read their conversation aloud, then read it. What is different about their school days?

Tabella 3.6 Listening script — Two school days

Sam	Hi, Giulia! Is the sound OK?
Giulia	Yes, it's fine. Hi, Sam! What time is it there?
Sam	It's twenty past five. And in Italy?
Giulia	It's twenty past six. You're one hour behind us.
Sam	Right! So, tell me about your school day. What time do you start?
Giulia	At eight o'clock. I leave home at half past seven and I walk to school. It takes about twenty minutes.
Sam	Eight o'clock! That's early. We start at a quarter to nine. And what time do you finish?
Giulia	It depends on the day. On Mondays and Wednesdays I finish at two, and on the other days at one.
Sam	At one? Lucky you! What do you do in the afternoon?
Giulia	I have lunch at home with my family, and then I do my homework. I usually study for two or three hours. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I go to volleyball practice.
Sam	Do you have lessons on Saturdays?
Giulia	No, I don't. Some schools in Italy have lessons on Saturday, but mine doesn't. What about you? Does your school have a canteen?
Sam	Yes, it does. I sometimes have a hot lunch there, but I usually take a packed lunch: a sandwich, an apple and a drink.
Giulia	And how often do you wear your uniform?
Sam	Every day! Black trousers, a white shirt, a tie and a blue jumper. I hate the tie.
Giulia	We don't wear a uniform. I wear jeans and a sweatshirt most days.
Sam	That sounds great. Oh, look, it's half past five: dinner time here! Talk on Sunday?
Giulia	Sure! Bye, Sam!

Sam's school has a **canteen** *(ita: mensa)*, but he usually brings a **packed lunch** from home. A **uniform** is the set of clothes that all students in a school wear. Notice how the friends keep the conversation going: they ask a question back (*What about you?*) and react (*Lucky you!*).

Here is a second, very short scene. Giulia is at a bus stop in Bristol, during the exchange.

Tabella 3.7 Listening script — At the bus stop

Giulia	Excuse me, have you got the time, please?
Woman	Yes, it's ten to four.
Giulia	Thank you. And how often does the number 38 come?
Woman	Every ten minutes, more or less.
Giulia	Great, thanks a lot.
Woman	You're welcome.

DA RICORDARE

Have you got the time? = What time is it? *(Che ore sono?)*
Have you got time? = Are you free? *(Hai tempo?)*
One small word, *the*, changes the whole question. Start with *Excuse me* when you ask a stranger, and end with *please*.

Tabella 3.8 Useful language — Routines and the time

Function	Asking	Answering / reacting
Asking the time	What time is it? / What's the time? / Excuse me, have you got the time?	It's half past three. / It's about ten to four. / Sorry, I haven't got a watch.
Asking about times of routines	What time do you get up? / When does school start?	At seven o'clock. / At a quarter to nine.
Asking about frequency	How often do you...? / Do you ever...?	Every day. / Twice a week. / Not very often. / Never!
Asking about a typical day	What do you usually do after school? / What's your typical day like?	I usually... then I... / It depends on the day.
Agreeing (see Unit 2)	I get up early. / I don't like Mondays.	Me too! / So do I. · Me neither. / Neither do I.
Keeping the conversation going	What about you? / And you?	Really? / Lucky you! / That's early! / That sounds great.

In Unit 2 you met *Me too* and *Me neither*. With present simple verbs, the short replies use the auxiliary: **So do I** agrees with a positive sentence (*I love Fridays.* — *So do I.*) and **Neither do I** with a negative one (*I don't like Mondays.* — *Neither do I.*).

COLLEGAMENTI

Geography: one hour behind. Why is it 5:20 for Sam and 6:20 for Giulia? The Earth turns 360° in 24 hours, so the world is divided into **time zones** of about 15° of longitude each. Today longitude is counted from the **prime meridian** (0°) at Greenwich, in London, the line chosen by an international conference in Washington in 1884. In winter the UK uses Greenwich Mean Time and Italy is one hour ahead. Both countries move their clocks forward on the same Sunday in March and back on the same Sunday in October, so the difference is one hour all year.

Speaking. Work in pairs.

1. **Role play.** Student A is Italian; Student B is a British exchange student. Compare your school days: times, lunch, uniform, Saturday lessons. Use *What about you?* and react.
2. **Find someone who…** Ask *Do you ever…?* questions around the class (… go to bed after midnight / … walk to school) and answer with short answers.

3.5 Writing: An Email to a Pen Friend

A **pen friend** (AmE *pen pal*) is a friend in another country that you write to. Today most pen friends write emails or messages, not letters, but the name is the same. Read Sam's email to Giulia, written before the exchange.

Tabella 3.9 Model text — An informal email

To: Giulia
Subject: My typical day

Hi Giulia,

Thanks for your email! Your school sounds really interesting. You ask about my typical day, so here it is.

On weekdays I get up at seven o'clock. I have a shower, get dressed (yes, in my uniform!) and have cereal and toast for breakfast. Then I leave home at a quarter past eight and I catch the bus at the end of my road.

Lessons start at 8:45 and finish at 3:15. We have five lessons a day, and each lesson is an hour long. My favourite day is Friday, because we have PE and art. I don't like Mondays: double maths!

After school I usually play football in the park with my friends, and on Tuesdays I go to my guitar lesson. We have dinner at about half past five. After that I do my homework and chat with my friends online. I go to bed at about half past ten.

At the weekend I get up late, and on Sundays we often visit my grandparents.

What about you? What do you do at the weekend?

Write soon!
Sam

Structure. An informal email has a clear shape. It begins with a **greeting**: *Hi Giulia,* or *Hello Giulia,* or *Dear Giulia,* followed by a comma. The **opening** line is friendly (*Thanks for your email!*, *How are you?*). The **body** has one paragraph per topic (morning, school, after school, weekend), in time order, with sequencing words like *then* and *after that*. Before the end, Sam asks a **question**, so Giulia has something to answer. The email finishes with a **closing** phrase (*Write soon!*, *Bye for now*, *Take care*, *Best wishes*, or *Love* for close friends and family) and the writer's first name.

Register. The style is informal: Sam uses contractions (*don't*), exclamation marks and a joke in brackets. In a formal email, for example to a teacher, you would write *Dear Mr Brown*, avoid contractions and finish with *Kind regards* or *Best regards*.

Checklist. ☐ Greeting + comma ☐ A friendly opening line ☐ One paragraph per topic, in time order ☐ Present simple with *-s* in the third person ☐ Three adverbs or expressions of frequency ☐ Correct *at / on / in* ☐ A question ☐ A closing phrase and your name.

Writing task. A new pen friend from Ireland wants to know about your life in Italy. Write an email (100–130 words) about your typical weekday: when you get up, how you get to school, your lessons and favourite subjects, what you do in the afternoon and in the evening. Ask your pen friend two questions about their day. Use the checklist above.

3.6 Culture: A School Day in the UK, the US and Italy

In **England**, students start secondary school at 11, in Year 7. At 14 or 15, like Chloe and Sam, they are in Year 10, the first of two years of study for the **GCSEs** (General Certificate of Secondary Education), exams that students normally take at the end of Year 11, at 16. Many then stay two more years, in the *sixth form*, and take **A levels** at 18; others go to a college or start an apprenticeship, because young people in England must stay in education or training until 18. Scotland has its own system and exams.

The school day in England usually starts at about 8:45 or 9:00 and finishes at about 3:00 or 3:30. Most state schools ask students to wear a uniform, often with a tie. The day begins with registration, when the form tutor checks who is present. At lunch, students eat a hot meal in the canteen or a packed lunch. The school year is divided into three **terms** (autumn, spring and summer), with a short holiday called *half term* in the middle of each one.

In the **United States**, the school years are called *grades*. A 14-year-old is usually in 9th grade, the first year of high school, which ends after 12th grade with a high school diploma. Each state organises its own schools, but some things are typical: many students travel on the yellow school bus, have lunch in the *cafeteria* and keep their books in a *locker*. Most public schools have no uniform, but they have a *dress code*, a list of rules about clothes.

In **Italy**, students start the *scuola secondaria di secondo grado* at 14 and study for five years, until the *esame di maturità* at about 19. Lessons are usually in the morning, few secondary schools have a canteen, and uniforms are not common. Figura 3.5 compares the three systems by age.

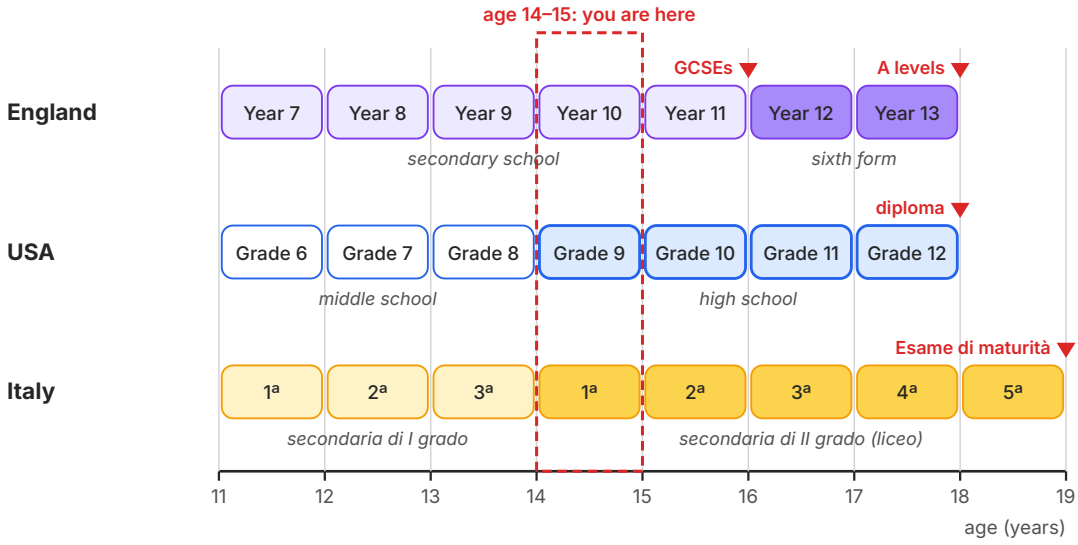


Figura 3.5 Secondary school in England, the USA and Italy. Each box is one school year, placed at the usual age of students at the start of that year. Red triangles mark the main final exams or qualifications: GCSEs and A levels in England, the high school diploma in the USA, the *esame di maturità* in Italy. In the USA, the organisation of middle school varies between states.

Compare with Italy. Look at Figura 3.5 and at the texts in this unit. At what age do students in the three countries finish secondary school? Which system has the longest school day? Would you like to wear a uniform? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a long school day with lunch at school, and of a short school day with the afternoon at home.

SINTESI

- Routines use collocations: *get up, have breakfast, catch the bus, do homework, go to bed* (no article).
- Telling the time: *past* for minutes 1–30, *to* for 31–59; *o'clock* only for exact hours; *It's…* (never *They are…*).
- Days and months take a capital letter; seasons don't. BrE dates: *6 October*, said "the sixth of October".
- Ordinals: *first, second, third, fifth, eighth, ninth, twelfth, twentieth* are irregular; 21st = *twenty-first*.
- The present simple expresses habits, routines, permanent states and general truths.
- Third person singular: *-s*, *-es* (after *s, sh, ch, x, z*; *goes, does*), *-ies* (consonant + *y*); *has*.
- The *-s* ending sounds /s/, /z/ or /ɪz/.
- Negatives and questions use the auxiliary *do / does* + base form: *She doesn't play. Does she play? — Yes, she does.*
- Adverbs of frequency go before the main verb and after *be*; only one negative: *I never eat fish*.
- Expressions of frequency go at the end: *once a week, twice a day, every Monday*.
- *at* + clock times, *on* + days and dates, *in* + months, seasons, years, parts of the day; no preposition with *every, next, last, this*.
- An informal email: greeting, opening, paragraphs in time order, a question, closing.

ESERCIZI

Vocabulary

1. ● Match the verbs (1–6) with the words (a–f) to make daily routine phrases. 1 get · 2 have · 3 brush · 4 catch · 5 do · 6 go — a your teeth · b to bed · c up · d the bus · e breakfast · f your homework

2. ● Find the odd one out. a maths · history · geography · Tuesday — b spring · autumn · August · winter — c first · third · seven · twelfth — d breakfast · lunch · dinner · homework — e often · never · usually · early

3. ● It's 7:45. What's the time?

   A. It's quarter to eight.

   B. It's quarter past seven.

   C. It's seven and three quarters.

   D. It's eight less a quarter.

4. ● In a British school, PE is the subject where you...
   - **A.** study the past.
   - **B.** learn about computers.
   - **C.** do sport and exercise.
   - **D.** paint and draw.

5. ●● Write the times in words, the traditional British way. a 9:10 · b 11:30 · c 4:45 · d 6:55 · e 12:20 · f 3:35

6. ●● Write the ordinal numbers in words, then say the dates the British way. a 1st · b 2nd · c 3rd · d 12th · e 20th · f 31st · g 25/12 · h 4/7

7. ●● Complete the sentences with the words in the box: *break · canteen · subjects · term · timetable · uniform*. a My favourite _____ are science and art. b We have a twenty-minute _____ at 10:45. c Check the _____ to see your lessons on Thursday. d I have lunch in the school _____ . e In my school we wear a _____ : a blue jumper and a tie. f In England, the summer _____ starts in April.

Grammar

8. ● Write the third person singular (*he / she / it*). a watch · b study · c play · d go · e fix · f have · g fly · h finish

9. ● Pronunciation. Put the verbs in the correct group: /s/, /z/ or /ɪz/. *likes · plays · washes · gets · reads · dances · sleeps · lives · changes*

10. ● Complete with the present simple of the verbs in brackets. a Chloe _____ (train) four mornings a week. b My parents _____ (not / work) on Sundays. c _____ your brother _____ (go) to your school? d We _____ (have) lunch at one o'clock. e The bus _____ (not / stop) near my house. f What time _____ the film _____ (start)?

11. ● _____ Sam wear a uniform at school?
    - **A.** Do
    - **B.** Does
    - **C.** Is
    - **D.** Are

12. ● My sister _____ coffee.
    - **A.** don't drink
    - **B.** doesn't drinks
    - **C.** not drinks
    - **D.** doesn't drink

13. ●● Complete the short answers. a Do you like maths? — Yes, _____ . b Does Giulia walk to school? — Yes, _____ . c Do your friends play volleyball? — No, _____ . d Does the lesson start at nine? — No, _____ . e Is Sam British? — Yes, _____ .

14. ●● Rewrite each sentence in the negative and then as a yes/no question. a Sam gets up at seven. b They study Latin. c The shop opens at nine.

15. ●● Put the adverb in brackets in the correct position. a I am late for school. (never) b We have pizza on Fridays. (usually) c My dad is tired in the evening. (often) d Does she walk to school? (always) e They don't watch TV in the morning. (usually)

16. ●● Complete with *at*, *on*, *in* or – (no preposition). a _____ seven o'clock · b _____ Monday morning · c _____ August · d _____ the weekend · e _____ next Friday · f _____ 2026 · g _____ the afternoon · h _____ 6 October · i _____ every day · j _____ night

17. ●● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence. a ✗ She go to the gym on Tuesdays. b ✗ Do he live in London? c ✗ I don't never eat breakfast. d ✗ Where you have lunch? e ✗ We have English in Monday. f ✗ My brother doesn't plays tennis.

18. ●●● Write questions for the answers. The words in **bold** are the answer. a I get up at **half past six**. b Chloe trains **five times a week**. c Sam lives **in England**. d They go to school **by bus**. e My favourite subject is **geography**.

19. ●●● Translate into English. a Mia sorella non fa mai colazione. b A che ora finisce la scuola il venerdì? c Vado in piscina due volte alla settimana.

Reading and Listening

20. ● Read *Up Before the Sun* again. True (T), false (F) or doesn't say (DS)? a Chloe gets up at 5:15 every day. b Her dad takes her to the pool by car. c She swims about four kilometres in each session. d Chloe's favourite subject is history. e Chloe has got a sister. f Chloe trains on Wednesday afternoons.

21. ●● Answer the questions about the article. a How long is a training session? b What does Chloe eat after training? c Why is Thursday morning difficult for her? d Where does she do her homework? e What does she do on Sundays?

22. ●● Find words in the article that mean: a a device that wakes you up; b comfortable clothes for sport; c a hot breakfast food made with oats; d well planned, good at managing your time; e something that you love doing very much.

23. ● Read the listening script *Two school days* (Tabella 3.6). True or false? a It is 5:20 in England. b Giulia's lessons start at eight o'clock. c Giulia finishes school at two every day. d Sam usually has a hot lunch in the canteen. e Giulia wears a uniform.

24. ●● Complete the sentences about the dialogue with one to three words. a Italy is _____ hour ahead of the UK. b It takes Giulia about _____ to walk to school. c On Tuesdays and Thursdays Giulia goes to _____ . d Sam hates the _____ of his uniform.

25. ●● Read the poem *Bed in Summer*. a In winter, is it light or dark when the child gets up? How do you know? b What is the problem in summer? c Find two things that the child can see or hear from his bed. d Find three pairs of rhyming words. e Write two sentences about your bedtime in winter and in summer.

Writing and Speaking

26. ● Complete the sentences about yourself. a On weekdays I get up at... b I never... c Once a week I... d My favourite day is... because...

27. ●● Write a short email (60–80 words) to Sam about your typical Sunday. Use at least three adverbs or expressions of frequency, and finish with a question.

28. ●● Speaking. In pairs, ask and answer five questions with *How often...?* and *What time...?* about weekday routines. Then report two answers to the class in the third person.

29. ●●● Speaking. Compare your weekday with Chloe's day. Talk for about one minute: "Chloe gets up at a quarter past five, but I..."

Towards B1

30. ●● Read the text and choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each gap.
Tom is a baker in a small town in Wales. He (1) ___ up at three o'clock (2) ___ the morning, when everybody is asleep. He (3) ___ eats breakfast at home: he has a coffee at the bakery. The shop opens (4) ___ six o'clock, and Tom works until midday. In the afternoon he (5) ___ sleeps for two hours.
(1) A get · B gets · C getting · D is get
(2) A in · B at · C on · D of
(3) A doesn't · B don't · C never · D not
(4) A in · B on · C to · D at
(5) A usually · B is usually · C does usually · D usual

31. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap.
Sam's lessons start (1) ___ a quarter to nine. He (2) ___ like Mondays because he has double maths. "(3) ___ often do you play football?" "Almost every day!" He usually goes to (4) ___ at half past ten, but (5) ___ Saturdays he goes to bed later.

32. ●●● Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Use one to three words. a Paolo is never late for school. → Paolo _____ on time for school. b What time is it? → What's _____ ? c We have PE on Tuesdays and Fridays. → We have PE _____ a week. d My sister doesn't eat meat. → My sister _____ meat. e Lessons start at 8:00 and finish at 13:00. → Lessons _____ five hours.

33. ●● Your English friend wants to have a video call with you this week. Write a message (35–45 words). Say which day and what time are good for you, explain why the other days are difficult, and ask your friend a question about their week.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- MUR — R. Murphy, *Essential Grammar in Use*: the units on the present simple, *do / does*, adverbs of frequency and *at / on / in*, with extra practice.
- SWA — M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: entries on telling the time, dates and the position of adverbs.
- ROA — P. Roach, *English Phonetics and Phonology*: the pronunciation of the *-s* ending.
- OAL — *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*: look up the collocations of *have, do, get* and *catch*.
- CED — D. Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*: the origin of the names of the days of the week.

Glossario del capitolo

Adverb of frequency
avverbio di frequenza — always, usually, often, sometimes, hardly ever, never

Auxiliary do / does
ausiliare do / does — helping verb for present simple negatives and questions: *Does he play?*

Catch the bus
prendere l'autobus — to get on a bus to travel somewhere

Double lesson
due ore consecutive della stessa materia — We've got double maths on Thursday

GCSEs
esami di fine scuola dell'obbligo in Inghilterra — exams students in England normally take at 16

Get dressed
vestirsi — to put on your clothes

Get up
alzarsi — to leave your bed: *I get up at seven*

Hardly ever
quasi mai — almost never: *I hardly ever eat sweets*

O'clock
in punto — used only with exact hours: *It's seven o'clock*

Once / twice a week
una volta / due volte alla settimana — expressions of frequency, at the end of the sentence

Ordinal number
numero ordinale — first, second, third, twelfth, twenty-first...

Packed lunch
pranzo al sacco — food you bring from home to eat at school

Pen friend
amico di penna — a friend in another country you write to (AmE pen pal)

Present simple
presente semplice — tense for habits, routines, permanent states and facts: *She lives in York*

Quarter past / quarter to
e un quarto / meno un quarto — 7:15 = quarter past seven; 7:45 = quarter to eight

Routine
routine, abitudini quotidiane — the things you do every day, usually in the same order

Term
trimestre (periodo scolastico) — one of the three parts of the British school year

Timetable
orario — a table showing your lessons, or the times of trains and buses

Wake up
svegliarsi — to stop sleeping and open your eyes

Weekday
giorno feriale — any day from Monday to Friday

Soluzioni

1. 1 c (get up) · 2 e (have breakfast) · 3 a (brush your teeth) · 4 d (catch the bus) · 5 f (do your homework) · 6 b (go to bed).

2. a Tuesday (a day, not a subject) · b August (a month, not a season) · c seven (not an ordinal number) · d homework (not a meal) · e early (not an adverb of frequency).

3. A. *C e D sono calchi dall'italiano.*

4. C.

5. a ten past nine · b half past eleven · c (a) quarter to five · d five to seven · e twenty past twelve · f twenty-five to four.

6. a first · b second · c third · d twelfth · e twentieth · f thirty-first · g the twenty-fifth of December (or December the twenty-fifth) · h the fourth of July (or July the fourth). *In inglese britannico il giorno precede il mese: 4/7 = 4 luglio.*

7. a subjects · b break · c timetable · d canteen · e uniform · f term.

8. a watches · b studies · c plays · d goes · e fixes · f has · g flies · h finishes.

9. /s/: likes, gets, sleeps · /z/: plays, reads, lives · /ɪz/: washes, dances, changes.

10. a trains · b don't work (do not work) · c Does … go · d have · e doesn't stop (does not stop) · f does … start.

11. B (Does). *Soggetto alla terza persona singolare, verbo principale wear.*

12. D (doesn't drink). *Dopo doesn't la forma base, senza -s.*

13. a I do · b she does · c they don't · d it doesn't · e he is.

14. a Sam doesn't get up at seven. / Does Sam get up at seven? · b They don't study Latin. / Do they study Latin? · c The shop doesn't open at nine. / Does the shop open at nine? (Full forms *does not / do not* also correct.)

15. a I am never late for school. · b We usually have pizza on Fridays. (Also correct: Usually we have pizza on Fridays.) · c My dad is often tired in the evening. · d Does she always walk to school? · e They don't usually watch TV in the morning.

16. a at · b on · c in · d at (AmE on) · e – · f in · g in · h on · i – · j at.

17. a She goes to the gym on Tuesdays. · b Does he live in London? · c I never eat breakfast. (or I don't ever eat breakfast.) · d Where do you have lunch? · e We have English on Monday(s). · f My brother doesn't play tennis.

18. a What time do you get up? · b How often does Chloe train? · c Where does Sam live? · d How do they go (get) to school? · e What is (What's) your favourite subject?

19. a My sister never has breakfast. (also: never eats breakfast) · b What time does school finish on Fridays? (also: on Friday; does school end) · c I go to the swimming pool twice a week. (also: I go swimming twice a week.)

20. a F (only four mornings a week; on Sundays she gets up at ten) · b T (her dad drives her) · c T · d F (biology and PE; she doesn't like history very much) · e DS (the article mentions only a brother) · f T.

21. a An hour and a half. · b Porridge, eggs and toast. · c Because she has double maths at nine. · d On the bus and at lunchtime. · e She gets up at ten, sees her friends and watches films with her brother.

22. a alarm · b tracksuit · c porridge · d organised · e passion.

23. a T · b T · c F (at two on Mondays and Wednesdays, at one on the other days) · d F (he usually takes a packed lunch; he only sometimes has a hot lunch) · e F (she wears jeans and a sweatshirt).

24. a one · b twenty minutes · c volleyball practice · d tie.

25. a Dark: he gets up "at night" and dresses by candle-light. · b He has to go to bed when it is still day (still light). · c The birds hopping on the tree; the grown-up people's feet in the street. · d Any three: night / light, way / day, see / tree, feet / street, you / blue, play / day. · e Open answer, e.g. *In winter I go to bed at ten. In summer I usually go to bed at eleven, because it's light until late.*

26. Open answers. Model: a On weekdays I get up at a quarter to seven. b I never drink coffee. c Once a week I go to my piano lesson. d My favourite day is Saturday because I don't have lessons and I see my friends.

27. Model answer (75 words): *Hi Sam, Thanks for your email! On Sundays I usually get up at about ten. I have a big breakfast with my family and then I often go for a walk in the park with my mum. We always have lunch at my grandparents' house. In the afternoon I sometimes play volleyball with my friends, and in the evening I do my homework. What about you? What do you do on Sundays? Write soon! Giulia*

28. Open answers. Model exchange: "What time do you get up?" "At seven." "How often do you go to the gym?" "Twice a week." Report: "Luca gets up at seven and goes to the gym twice a week." *Controllare la -s della terza persona nel resoconto.*

29. Open answer. Traccia: "Chloe gets up at a quarter past five, but I get up at seven. She swims before school; I don't do any sport in the morning. She has a big breakfast after training, and I have breakfast at home at half past seven. Lessons start at 8:45 for her and at eight for me. She goes to bed at half past eight; I usually go to bed at about ten..." Use *but*, adverbs of frequency and correct third-person forms.

30. (1) B gets · (2) A in · (3) C never · (4) D at · (5) A usually.

31. (1) at · (2) doesn't · (3) How · (4) bed (also: sleep) · (5) on.

32. a is always (also: always arrives) · b the time · c twice · d never eats (also: doesn't ever eat) · e last.

33. Model answer (41 words): *Hi Emma! Thursday at six is good for me. On Monday and Wednesday I finish school at two and I've got a lot of homework, and on Tuesday I go to volleyball. What do you usually do on Thursday evenings? Giulia*