

Punctuality & Lateness

People & Society

Introduction: **Ask and answer the questions as a group.**

1. Do you consider yourself to be a punctual person?
2. Do you often find yourself apologising for being late?
3. How do you feel when you are waiting for someone who is late?
4. Have you ever been late for a really important event? What happened?
5. What strategies do you use to help you to be on time more often?
6. Have you ever heard of 'chronic lateness'?

Reading: **Skim the text and then talk about it as a group.**

A. "I'm running late!" While we've all had to send this text while running to some meeting or appointment once in a while, chronic lateness is something else. It's a persistent pattern of being late for appointments, meetings, or events. Some individuals might see it as being overly optimistic, but for many—those who are hardly ever on time, if ever—chronic lateness has deeper consequences.

B. So why don't people who are late all the time just leave the house a little bit earlier? Why is it that they're always short of time? As creatures of habit, our routines can become deeply ingrained in our minds. Breaking the habit of chronic lateness takes time and effort because it involves rewiring these mental pathways. It's not something that can be achieved overnight. In fact, we must remind ourselves time and time again not to be naïve and to actively work not just on leaving the house a little earlier but starting the whole process of getting ready a little earlier.

C. Similar to addiction, chronic lateness can be tough to shake off. One approach is to develop new habits that will stand the test of time. It's essential to start small and repeat successful strategies before applying them to larger goals. To embark on a new journey of being (mostly) punctual, you can break down larger tasks into smaller ones, set reminders and alarms, and avoid multitasking when getting yourself ready.

D. On the other hand, it's important to recognise that being pressed for time now and then is inevitable. Some people find it helpful to be self-compassionate and aim for progress rather than 100% punctuality. Setting unattainable goals can lead to frustration and discourage people from trying. Life is unpredictable, and unexpected events can sometimes cause us to run behind schedule. It's crucial not to beat ourselves up.

E. In conclusion, chronic lateness can be a tough habit to break, but with time, effort, and self-compassion, new habits can be forged that promote punctuality. It is an achievable goal. These new mental pathways will help us to be punctual more often and reduce the impact of chronic lateness on our lives. Will we be successful? Well, only time will tell.

Matching Headings: **Match headings 1-5 with paragraphs A-E above.**

1. Do not strive for perfection.
2. Small steps, not leaps and bounds.
3. Change is difficult but not impossible.
4. Kick the habit, shift the mindset.
5. A positive outlook or a genuine problem?



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Grammar Focus: Read the paragraph again and identify the expressions with 'time'. Then, follow the instructions below.

In some English exams, you will be asked to do an activity called 'key word transformations'. In this activity, you will need to rewrite a sentence using a given word, keeping the same meaning as the original sentence. Depending on the exam, you will typically be able to use 2-6 words. The given word must not be altered in any way.

example: A. I'm sorry, I'm not going to arrive on time!

key word: RUNNING

B. I'm sorry, I'm running late!

1. A. Tiffany is almost always late.

key word: HARDLY

B. Tiffany is _____.

2. A. I haven't got long to complete my project and I'm worried I won't finish it.

key word: SHORT

B. I'm worried I won't finish my project, I'm _____.

3. A. I've told you repeatedly that I don't know where it is.

key word: TIME

B. I've told you _____ that I don't know where it is.

4. A. The architecture of the ancient Roman Colosseum has endured the years.

key word: TEST

B. The architecture of the ancient Roman Colosseum has _____.

5. A. Because of my busy schedule, I'm feeling really rushed today.

key word: PRESSED

B. I'm feeling _____ today because I have meetings all day.

6. A. I guess the future will reveal whether I'll be able to achieve my goals.

key word: TELL

B. I don't know if I'll be able to achieve my goals, but _____.

Speaking: Answer this question for each of the following situations:
What time would you arrive?

1. You're invited to a work colleague's party at 7pm, but you don't want to be the first one there.
2. Your friend's landing at the airport at 12 noon and you've agreed to pick them up.
3. You've got a job interview for a new company at 10am in their central offices.
4. You're going to see a huge international singer in concert. The concert starts at 8pm.
5. You're going to the cinema to see a film that officially starts at 6pm.