

Difference Between ‘When’, ‘While’, ‘During’ and ‘For’

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Conjunctions like ‘when’, ‘while’, ‘during’ and ‘for’ are used to indicate a period of time, circumstance, or a certain situation which is taking place. These words always give an idea regarding a specific time period. These are called Time Conjunctions as they are often used to connect an action or an event to a point in time.

Difference between		
During	For	While
To state <i>when</i> something happens	To state <i>how long</i> something happens	To talk about two things that are happening at the same time
During + noun	For + length of time	While + subject + verb
E.g. The children were quiet during the class.	E.g. I was studying for four hours.	E.g. She paused while he sipped his coffee.

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Let’s see the appropriate usage of these words briefly :-

1. When

‘When’ is used to mention about an activity which takes place ‘during a specific period of time’ i.e. to connect two events happening at the same time. When is used to say a longer action which was interrupted by a shorter action. It is also used to denote a specific time age or period of life.

Examples:

- I like to visit gardens, when I am on a holiday.
- He was sleeping when I reached home.
- When did you talk to her?
- When I was a child, we lived in Dubai.

2. While

Often people are confused between while and when and use them interchangeably. It is important to know the difference between them. ‘While’ is also used to indicate a period of time and often shows contrast (whereas). However, while cannot be used to denote a specific time – age or period of life.

Examples:

- She listens to songs while cooking.
- Arjun had to deal with his failure while his friend succeeded.

He was sleeping while I was studying.

3. During

During is mainly used to refer something which is happening over or throughout a period of time.

Examples:

During school days, my cousins often come to stay with us at our home.

Students are not allowed to use cell phones during class.

I met Shahrukh Khan during my visit to London.

Was this during your dark period?

4. For

For is used to put in a reason in a sentence. It is not used at the beginning of a sentence and is often used in the middle or at the end of a sentence. For is known as a coordinating conjunction and is used regularly.

Examples:

Ram will be in the USA for next three years.

I have been studying for eight hours.

The above explanation will help you to clarify your confusion and give you an idea on appropriate usage of time conjunctions 'When', 'While', 'During' and 'For'. You can browse through other related blog articles which would definitely help improve your [English grammar](#) and Communication Skills.

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- By Chander Madan

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