

On time and in time

At the end and in the end

A

On time and in time

On time = punctual, not late. If something happens **on time**, it happens at the time which was planned:

- ☐ The 11.45 train left **on time**. (= it left at 11.45)
- ☐ 'I'll meet you at 7.30.' 'OK, but please be **on time**.' (= don't be late, be there at 7.30)
- ☐ The conference was well-organised. Everything began and finished **on time**.

The opposite of **on time** is **late**:

- ☐ Be **on time**. Don't be late.

In time (for something / to do something) = soon enough:

- ☐ Will you be home **in time for dinner**? (= soon enough for dinner)
- ☐ I've sent Emma a birthday present. I hope it arrives **in time** (for her birthday). (= on or before her birthday)
- ☐ I'm in a hurry. I want to be home **in time to see** the game on television. (= soon enough to see the game)

The opposite of **in time** is **too late**:

- ☐ I got home **too late** to see the game on television.

You can say **just in time** (= almost too late):

- ☐ We got to the station **just in time** for our train.
- ☐ A child ran into the road in front of the car – I managed to stop **just in time**.

B

At the end and in the end

At the end (of something) = at the time when something ends. For example:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| at the end of the month | at the end of January | at the end of the game |
| at the end of the film | at the end of the course | at the end of the concert |

- ☐ I'm going away **at the end of January / at the end of the month**.
- ☐ **At the end of the concert**, there was great applause.
- ☐ The players shook hands **at the end of the game**.

You cannot say 'in the end of ...'. So you cannot say 'in the end of January' or 'in the end of the concert'.

The opposite of **at the end** (of ...) is **at the beginning** (of ...):

- ☐ I'm going away **at the beginning of January**. (*not* in the beginning)

In the end = finally.

We use **in the end** when we say what the final result of a situation was:

- ☐ We had a lot of problems with our car. We sold it **in the end**. (= finally we sold it)
- ☐ He got more and more angry. **In the end** he just walked out of the room.
- ☐ Alan couldn't decide where to go for his holidays. He didn't go anywhere **in the end**. (*not* at the end)

The opposite of **in the end** is usually **at first**:

- ☐ **At first** we didn't get on very well, but **in the end** we became good friends.

Source: Murphy, Raymond. English Grammar in Use: A Self-Study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Learners of English - with Answers. 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2004.