

Commonly confused time expressions

These time expressions are often confused.

We use **during** to say when something happens. We use **for** to say how long something lasts.

I was ill for two weeks **during** May.

Here **during** shows when the event occurred and **for** shows how long it lasted.

I have been working for this company for five years. (NOT ... **during** five years.)

I received four raises **during** the five years that I worked for them.

For

For should not be confused with **since**. **Since** is also used to show duration but it indicates the starting point. **Since** is mainly used with present perfect and past perfect tenses.

I've been living in this street for a long time – **since** 1985.

We haven't seen him **since** he moved to California.

Until

Both **until** and **till** are used to suggest that an action, event or state continues up to a particular point in time and then stops.

I waited for him **until** / **till** 5 o'clock.

Will you wait here **until**/ **till** I come back?

As I had no umbrella I waited **until** the rain was over.

Complete the following sentences using an appropriate time expression.

1. He had quite a few strange experiences his stay in Iraq.

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a) during

b) in

2. I have been waiting for you 9 am.

a) since

b) for

3. She was ill several months before she died.

a) for

b) since

4. I will try to phone you the conference.

a) during

b) in

5. You can't go home you have finished that report.

a) until

b) since

6. I usually work from eight five.

a) to

b) until

c) Either could be used here

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Answers

1. during
2. since
3. for
4. during
5. until
6. Either could be used here