for, during, while

We use **for** + a period of time to say how long something goes on:

      for **two hours**   for **a week**   for **ages**   for **a long time**

- We watched television **for two hours** last night.
- Diane is going away **for a week** next month.
- Where have you been? I've been waiting **for ages**.
- Are you going away **for the weekend**?

We use **during** + noun to say when something happens (*not* how long):

      during **the film**   during **our holiday**   during **the night**

- I fell asleep **during the film**.
- We met some really nice people **during our holiday**.
- The ground is wet. It must have rained **during the night**.

With 'time words' (for example: **the morning** / **the afternoon** / **the summer**), you can usually say **in** or **during**:

- It must have rained **in the night**. (*or* **during the night**)
- I'll phone you sometime **during the afternoon**. (*or* **in the afternoon**)

You **cannot** use **during** to say how long something goes on:

- It rained **for** three days without stopping. (*not* ~~during three days~~)

Compare **during** and **for**:

- I fell asleep **during the film**. I was asleep **for half an hour**.

Compare:

We use **during** + *noun*:   We use **while** + *subject + verb*:

- I fell asleep **during *the film***.
- I fell asleep **while *I was watching*** TV.

- We met a lot of interesting people **during *our holiday***.
- We met a lot of interesting people **while *we were on holiday***.

- Robert suddenly began to feel ill **during *the exam***.
- Robert suddenly began to feel ill **while *he was doing the exam***.

Some more examples of **while**:

- We saw Sanjay **while we were waiting** for the bus.
- **While you were** out, there was a phone call for you.
- Chris read a book **while I watched** television.

When you are talking about the future, use the **present** (*not* 'will') after **while**:

- I'll be in Liverpool next week. I hope to see Tom **while I'm** there. (**not** ~~while I will be there~~)
- What are you going to do **while you are** waiting? (**not** ~~while you will be waiting~~)