During vs While — Worksheet

30 exercises · Level B1–B2 · Answer key on the last page Free for classroom use

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Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Choose the correct option (a–d) for each gap or question. Check yourself with the answer key on the last page.

1. I woke up twice _____ the night because a dog was barking outside.
   a) during b) while c) when d) meanwhile

2. I had a great idea _____ I was walking to work.
   a) during b) meanwhile c) whereas d) while

3. She often listens to podcasts while _____ dinner.
   a) cook b) cooking c) to cook d) cooked

4. _____ my stay in Lisbon, I visited six museums.
   a) During b) While c) When d) Meanwhile

5. My sister told me all her news during _____.
   a) we drove home b) driving home c) drove home d) the drive home

6. Please don't talk to the driver while _____.
   a) the journey b) the trip c) the bus is moving d) the bus moving

7. My grandmother hurt her back _____ lifting a heavy box.
   a) during b) meanwhile c) for d) while

8. The lights went out three times _____ the storm last night.
   a) during b) while c) for d) when

9. I lost my sunglasses while _____ in the sea.
   a) the swim b) swimming c) my swim d) swim

10. _____ I'm away next week, could you water my plants?
    a) While b) During c) Meanwhile d) For

11. It rained _____ three days without a break.
    a) during b) while c) for d) since

12. My phone rang twice _____ the lecture, and everyone looked at me.
    a) for b) during c) while d) when

13. We booked a room by the lake _____ five nights.
    a) during b) while c) for d) since

14. I haven't seen Tom _____ a while. Is he all right?
    a) during b) since c) from d) for

15. I'll book the train tickets. _____, you can start packing.

a) While b) Meanwhile c) During d) Whereas

16. Dad was making breakfast. _____, the rest of us were still asleep.

a) While b) During c) Meanwhile d) When

17. _____ my sister loves horror films, I can't watch them at all.

a) During b) Meanwhile c) For d) While

18. Can you hold the ladder _____ I change the light bulb?

a) during b) while c) meanwhile d) for

19. I can never sleep _____ long flights, so I always take a book.

a) during b) while c) when d) meanwhile

20. I met my best friend _____ studying in Paris.

a) during b) meanwhile c) while d) for

21. I was ill _____ a week and missed two tests _____ that time.

a) during … for b) for … during c) for … for d) while … during

22. We didn't stop once _____ the journey, and the kids slept _____ we drove.

a) during … while b) while … during c) during … during d) while … while

23. Ana washed the car _____ I made lunch. _____, the kids played outside.

a) meanwhile … While b) during … Meanwhile c) while … While d) while … Meanwhile

24. _____ the week I work in an office, _____ my partner works from home.

a) While … during b) During … during c) During … while d) While … while

25. I studied _____ three hours _____ the kids were at school.

a) during … while b) for … while c) for … during d) while … during

26. Which sentence is correct?

a) I dropped my phone during I was dancing.
b) I dropped my phone meanwhile I was dancing.
c) I dropped my phone while I was dancing.
d) I dropped my phone while I dancing.

27. Which sentence is correct?

a) We waited for forty minutes at the airport.
b) We waited during forty minutes at the airport.
c) We waited while forty minutes at the airport.
d) We waited since forty minutes at the airport.

28. Which sentence is correct?

a) She cut her finger during peeling the potatoes.
b) She cut her finger during she was peeling the potatoes.
c) She cut her finger while she peeling the potatoes.
d) She cut her finger while peeling the potatoes.

29. Which is correct?

a) I went to the bank. While, Sam waited in the car.
b) I went to the bank. Meanwhile, Sam waited in the car.
c) Meanwhile I went to the bank, Sam waited in the car.
d) I went to the bank during Sam waited in the car.

30. Which sentence is correct?

a) Ben is very tidy, during his sister is really messy.
b) While Ben is very tidy, but his sister is really messy.
c) Ben is very tidy, while his sister is really messy.
d) Ben is very tidy, despite his sister is really messy.

Answer Key

During vs While · Explanations are shortened — the full interactive version is at gramvoy.com/exercises/during-vs-while/

1. a) during

The night is a noun, so during: it says when, inside that period, I woke up.

2. d) while

After the gap comes a subject and a verb, I was walking to work, so while.

3. b) cooking

She listens and she cooks — the same subject — so while can take an -ing form: while cooking (= while she is cooking).

4. a) During

My stay in Lisbon is a noun phrase, so During.

5. d) the drive home

During is a preposition, so a noun must follow it: the drive home.

6. c) the bus is moving

While is followed by a subject and a verb: the bus is moving.

7. d) while

The same person hurt her back and was lifting the box, so while + -ing: while lifting.

8. a) during

The storm is an event, and the lights went out at three moments inside it, so during.

9. b) swimming

I lost them and I was swimming — one subject — so while takes the -ing form: while swimming.

10. a) While

I'm away is a subject and a verb, so While; it is about the future but takes the present, like when.

11. c) for

Three days is a length of time — how long it rained — so for.

12. b) during

The phone rang at two moments inside an event, the lecture, so during.

13. c) for

Five nights says how long the booking lasts, so for.

14. d) for

Here a while is a noun meaning "a period of time", and it says how long, so for: for a while.

15. b) Meanwhile

The gap stands alone before a comma and links back to the sentence before, so the adverb Meanwhile (= at the same time).

16. c) Meanwhile

A new sentence begins, and the gap is followed by a comma, so the adverb Meanwhile: two things were going on at the same time.

17. d) While

The sentence contrasts two facts, so While in the sense of whereas or although.

18. b) while

I change the light bulb is a subject and a verb, and both things happen at the same time, so while.

19. a) during

Long flights is a noun — the kind of event when I can't sleep — so during.

20. c) while

Meeting my friend and studying have the same subject, I, so while + -ing: while studying (= while I was studying).

21. b) for … during

A week is a length — how long I was ill — so for.

22. a) during … while

The journey is a noun, so during; we drove is a subject and a verb, so while.

23. d) while … Meanwhile

I made lunch is a clause joined to the first one, so while.

24. c) During … while

The week is a noun, so During.

25. b) for … while

Three hours is a length, so for; the kids were at school is a subject and a verb, so while.

26. c) I dropped my phone while I was dancing.

I was dancing is a subject and a verb, so it needs while.

27. a) We waited for forty minutes at the airport.

Forty minutes is a length of time — how long we waited — so it takes for.

28. d) She cut her finger while peeling the potatoes.

With the same subject, while can take an -ing form: while peeling.

29. b) I went to the bank. Meanwhile, Sam waited in the car.

Meanwhile is an adverb: it starts the second sentence and means "at the same time".

30. c) Ben is very tidy, while his sister is really messy.

While can contrast two facts, like whereas: Ben is very tidy, while his sister is really messy.