

# 99 There and it

## 1 There + be

Look at these examples.

*I really ought to phone home. ~ Well, **there's** a phone box round the corner.  
Could I make myself an omelette? ~ Of course. **There are** some eggs in the fridge.  
**There's** an important meeting at work that I have to go to.*

To talk about the existence of something, we use **there + be**. **Be** agrees with the following noun.

*There **is** a phone box. BUT There **are** some eggs.*

Here are some more examples.

***There's** a bus at ten to five. **There'll be** a meal waiting for us.  
**Is there** a toilet in the building? **Were there** any bargains in the sale?  
**There have been** some burglaries recently. **There might have been** an accident.*

We also use **there** with words like **a lot of**, **many**, **much**, **more**, **enough** and with numbers.

***There were a lot of** problems to discuss. **There's** too **much** noise in here.  
Will **there be enough** chairs? **There are** **thirty** days in April.*

## 2 Uses of it

We use **it** for a thing, an action, a situation or an idea.

*You've bought a new coat. **It's** very nice. (**it** = the coat)  
Skiing is an expensive hobby, isn't **it**?  
You have to fill in all these stupid forms. **It's** ridiculous.  
I find astrology fascinating. I'm really interested in **it**.*

We use **it** to mean 'the unknown person'.

*Did someone ring? ~ **It** was Vicky. She just called to say she's arrived safely.*

We use **it** for the time, the weather and distance.

***It's** half past five already. **It's** Sunday tomorrow.  
**It** was much warmer yesterday. **It's** fifty miles from here to Brighton.*

We also use **it** in structures with a to-infinitive or a that-clause (see also Unit 67.2).

***It** was nice **to meet your friends**.  
**It** would be a good idea **to book in advance**.  
**It's** important **to switch off the electricity**.  
**It's** a pity (**that**) **you can't come with us**.*

This is much more usual than, for example, *To meet your friends was nice.*

## 3 There or it?

We often use **there** when we mention something for the first time, like the picture in this example.

***There** was a picture on the wall. **It** was an abstract painting.*

We use **it** when we talk about the details. **It** means *the picture*.

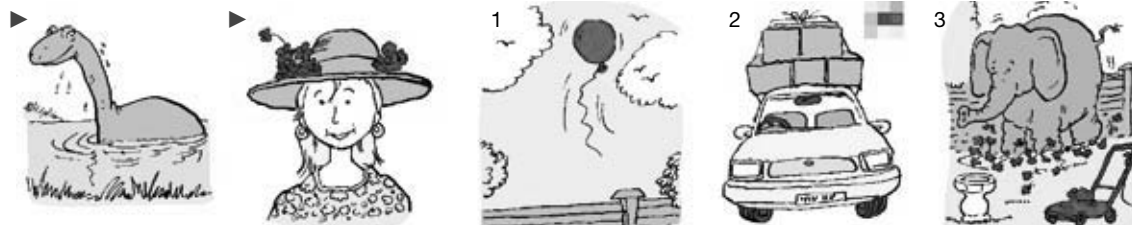
Here are some more examples.

***There's** a woman at the door. ~ Oh, **it's** Aunt Joan.  
**There** was a dog in the field. **It** was a big black one.  
**There's** a new one-way traffic system in the town centre. **It's** very confusing.*

# Practice

## A There + be (1)

Look at the pictures and comment on what you see. Use these words: *a balloon, some boxes, the car, a dinosaur, an elephant, some flowers, the garden, her hat, the sky, the water*



- ▶ There's a dinosaur in the water. ....
- ▶ There are some flowers on her hat. .... 2
- 1 ..... 3

## B There + be (1)

Put in *there* and a form of *be*, e.g. *is, are, was, have been* or *will be*.

- ▶ Victor: Are there ..... any restaurants here that open on a Sunday?
- Rachel: There's ..... a café in the High Street which is open for lunch.
- 1 Alan: ..... a train at twelve thirty, isn't there? Let's catch that one.
- Mark: OK. .... time to finish our discussion on the train.
- 2 Vicky: What's happened? Why ..... so many police cars here?
- Daniel: ..... a hold-up at the bank.
- 3 Tom: Last night ..... a party next door. I couldn't get to sleep.
- Melanie: ..... must ..... a lot of people there.

## C Uses of it (2)

Rewrite the sentences in brackets using *it*.

- ▶ We sometimes go surfing. (Surfing is really good fun.) *It's really good fun.* .....
- 1 I bought a shirt in the market. (The shirt was very cheap.) .....
- 2 Someone rang. (The caller was Vicky.) .....
- 3 Our heating is out of order. (The situation is a nuisance.) .....
- 4 I've left my coat at home. (The weather is very warm.) .....
- 5 Don't lose your credit card. (To keep it somewhere safe is important.) .....

## D There or it? (3)

Put in *there* or *it*.

- ▶ Is *it* ..... the fifteenth today? ~ No, the sixteenth.
- 1 The road is closed. ....'s been an accident.
- 2 Take a taxi. ....'s a long way to the station.
- 3 ..... was a motor bike outside. .... looked very expensive.
- 4 Will ..... be any delays because of the strike? ~ Well, ..... would be a good idea to ring the airline and check.
- 5 ..... was wet, and ..... was a cold east wind. .... was after midnight, and ..... were few people on the streets.