

## Lesson 23

### RUNNING LATE

*Anna apologizes for being late to a meeting. Rich is angry that she's late, but their colleague Kyle suggests they stop discussing it and start the meeting.*

*Anna:* I'm sorry I'm late. I hope I didn't **hold up** the meeting.

*Rich:* We've all been here since 9 o'clock. We've been waiting here for half an hour!

*Anna:* I'm sorry to **keep you waiting**.

*Rich:* Anna, I'm **onto** you. You're always late!

*Anna:* I was meeting with a client **across town** and that meeting **ran over**.

*Rich:* **It's always one excuse after another with you**, Anna. We've all got busy schedules.

*Kyle:* Rich, don't **make a mountain out of a molehill**. Anna apologized for being late.

*Rich:* Next time you're **running late**, **give me a head's up**. I believe you have my phone number.

*Anna:* I didn't realize that being 20 minutes late was going to be such a **big deal**.

*Kyle:* I suggest we **get the ball rolling**. We're already **running behind**.

*Anna:* Good idea!

## IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

**across town** – on the other side of town

- The restaurant you suggested is **across town**. Can you recommend someplace closer?

**big deal** – a problem; an issue

- When Paul's pipes leaked and his kitchen flooded, it was a **big deal**.

**(to) get the ball rolling** – to get started

- Emily and Tracy came up with a great idea for a new business, but they're not sure how to **get the ball rolling**.

**(to) give someone a head's up** – to let someone know in advance

- Let me **give you a head's up**. Ben is going to be calling you later this week for some career advice.

**(to) hold up** – to delay

- If I'm not at your office at 11, please don't **hold up** the meeting. I'll come as soon as I can.

**It's always one excuse after another with you** – you never take the blame for things, instead you give an excuse

- Last night you couldn't clean up after dinner because you had homework. Tonight, you can't clean up because you have soccer practice. **It's always one excuse after another with you**.

**(to) keep someone waiting** – to be late for an appointment, causing the person you are meeting with to wait

- I'm a few minutes late. Sorry to **keep you waiting**.

**(to) make a mountain out of a molehill** – to make a big deal out of something small; to get upset about a small issue

- I already apologized for forgetting to deposit the check. Don't **make a mountain out of a molehill**.

**(to be) onto someone** – to be aware of someone’s behavior; to be suspicious of someone about something

- I know Bill spends half his day on job search websites. I’m **onto** him.

**(to) run behind** – to be behind schedule

- The hair stylist told me she was **running behind** because her previous client showed up 20 minutes late.

**(to) run late** – to be late; to start something later than scheduled

- I’m calling my boss to tell her I’m **running late** and won’t be in the office until 9:30.

**(to) run over** – to last longer than scheduled (referring to meetings, interviews, etc.)

- The meeting **ran over** by 15 minutes.

### **Practice the Expressions**

**Choose the most appropriate response to the following:**

- 1) Let’s get started with the presentations now instead of waiting for everybody to show up.
  - a) Yes, let’s hold up the meeting for everybody.
  - b) Good thinking. We should plan on running late today.
  - c) Good idea. It’s time to get the ball rolling.
- 2) Do you think it’ll take us 45 minutes to get to the restaurant?
  - a) Yes, it’s a big deal.
  - b) Yes, we’re running behind.
  - c) Yes, it’s across town.
- 3) This meeting was supposed to end at 3 and it’s already 3:30.
  - a) So we won’t be running behind today.
  - b) So we won’t be running over.
  - c) So we’ve already run over by half an hour.

- 4) Just to let you know, the company president will be dropping by our offices at 4:30 today.
  - a) Okay, thanks for giving me a head's up.
  - b) Okay, thanks for getting the ball rolling.
  - c) Okay, maybe he'll be running behind.
  
- 5) Julia showed up two hours late this morning, and she was wearing a very nice suit.
  - a) It's always one excuse after another with her.
  - b) I'm onto her. She's looking for another job.
  - c) Thanks for getting the ball rolling.
  
- 6) My meeting lasted an hour longer than I expected.
  - a) So you must be running behind now.
  - b) So you must be running over now.
  - c) So you must be getting the ball rolling now.
  
- 7) I'm upset. You had lunch with our boss, and you didn't invite me?
  - a) That's right. I'm onto you.
  - b) It's always one excuse after another with you.
  - c) Please don't make a mountain out of a molehill.
  
- 8) I'm calling to let you know I'll be a little late to our meeting.
  - a) Thanks for letting me know you're running late.
  - b) Thanks for getting the ball rolling.
  - c) Thanks for running over by 30 minutes.
  
- 9) Yesterday I was late because my car broke down. Today I was late because my alarm clock broke.
  - a) Don't make a mountain out of a molehill.
  - b) It's always one excuse after another with you.
  - c) I'm glad you gave me a head's up.
  
- 10) Finally! You're 25 minutes late for our meeting.
  - a) Sorry to keep you waiting.
  - b) Sorry you're running behind.
  - c) Sorry you're running over.





## Language Lens: For/Since

Since and for both introduce periods of time.

⇒ **Since refers to the time period when something began.** Use since when referring to a specific time period, time of day, or date:

- since 1995
- since 11 a.m. yesterday
- since last year
- since the Renaissance

*Examples with since:*

- We've been living in Chicago since 1996. (specific time = since)
  - I've been in Paris since last Monday, and I'm leaving tomorrow. (specific time = since)
  - Jen has been watching TV since 5 o'clock. (specific time = since)
- Note: You will never use since + ago. We've been running this business since last year. (NOT: since one year ago)

⇒ **For is used to express the duration (or length) of the activity.**

- for two years
- for an hour
- for decades

*Examples with for:*

- We have been living in Chicago for ten years. (duration = for)
- I'll be in Paris for a week. (duration = for)
- I'll be out of the office for several hours. (duration = for)

**Common expressions with since and for:**

- Joan has been studying Chinese **for ages**, and she still doesn't speak it well! (for ages = for a very long time)
- We'll be staying in this apartment **for the time being**. (for the time being = for now; for a while)
- **Since when** do you wear perfume to school? (since when = When did you start doing that?)
- **Ever since** you told me that Cindy likes to gossip, I haven't told her anything. (ever since = starting when; since the time when)

## Quick Quiz

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) Michelle has been studying Spanish \_\_\_\_ five years.  
a) since                      b) for
- 2) Roger has had the flu \_\_\_\_ last Wednesday and hasn't been able to go to work.  
a) since                      b) for
- 3) Paul will be studying at Harvard \_\_\_\_ another semester.  
a) since                      b) for
- 4) I haven't been to St. Petersburg \_\_\_\_ 2004.  
a) since                      b) for
- 5) Greg has worked at Dell \_\_\_\_ ten years.  
a) since                      b) for
- 6) Hank's Electronics has been in business \_\_\_\_ 1969.  
a) since                      b) for
- 7) Juan has lived in the United States \_\_\_\_ five years.  
a) since                      b) for
- 8) Bob has been in London \_\_\_\_ last Tuesday.  
a) since                      b) for
- 9) I'll be out of the office \_\_\_\_ 10 days.  
a) since                      b) for
- 10) \_\_\_\_ when did you start wearing jeans to work?  
a) Since                      b) For