

# Time Zones

What time is it in London, England, when U.S. kids on the East Coast are getting up for school? To figure that out, it helps to understand time zones.

**Suppose you live in Miami, Florida, and get up at 7 a.m. for school. What time is it in London?**

Our map gives you the answer—if you know how to use it. The map shows the world's 24 time zones, which begin at the prime meridian, 0° longitude. (See the dotted line on the map.)

The prime meridian passes through Greenwich (a part of London). So its time zone became known as Greenwich Mean Time. Today's time system is called Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

When you travel east from the prime meridian, you need to set your watch forward by one hour for each time zone you enter. When traveling west, you must set your watch back one hour for each time zone.



Reading a time-zone map isn't as hard as it may seem. Look at the color bars at the top and bottom of the map. Each top bar shows the time in that zone when it is 12 noon in London. Each bottom bar tells you how many hours to add or subtract from UTC to calculate the time for that zone. So when it is 7 a.m. in Miami, it is 12 noon in London.

## Bends in the Rule

The day of the week changes when you cross the international

date line, located at 180° longitude in the Pacific Ocean. The date just west of the line is one day later than the date just east of the line.

Time zones can be irregular. Some countries, like Iran, observe a time zone that is half an hour different from the standard time zone.

And look at China. It stretches across four time zones, but its government insists that all clocks in China read the same time as in the capital, Beijing!