

2. Temporal expressions

The MWEs related to time are fairly common and functionally diverse. We use them to express logical relations (*at the same time*, 53.6 per million) describe experiences (*have a good time*, 11.5 per million) or emphasise recurring patterns (*time and again*, 3 per million), to name just a few. This thematic box presents commonly used MWEs within their functional or structural categories (such as complex linkers, idioms, collocations and light verb constructions) ordered by frequency per million words. These groupings show how these MWEs cluster around three key lexical items – *time*, *year* and *day*.

Time

<i>Item</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency per million</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency per million</i>
at the same time	<i>linker</i>	53.6	take the time	<i>lvc</i>	2.4
long time	<i>collocation</i>	51.1	while at the same time	<i>linker</i>	2.4
spend time	<i>collocation</i>	29.9	once upon a time	<i>idiom</i>	2.2
at the time of	<i>linker</i>	19.8	in times of	<i>linker</i>	2.2
have time	<i>lvc</i>	18.1	in no time (at all)	<i>idiom</i>	2.2
have a time	<i>lvc</i>	13.2	time and again	<i>and/or</i>	2.1
good time	<i>collocation</i>	11.5	space and time	<i>and/or</i>	2.1
take time	<i>lvc</i>	10.5	time and money	<i>and/or</i>	2.1
in the meantime	<i>linker</i>	9.3	during this time	<i>linker</i>	2.0
waste time	<i>collocation</i>	8.3	time will tell	<i>idiom</i>	1.9
from time to time	<i>idiom</i>	7.9	time and place	<i>and/or</i>	1.5
Sunday Times	<i>term</i>	7.0	time and effort	<i>and/or</i>	1.5
real time	<i>term</i>	6.9	a full-time job	<i>idiom</i>	1.5
time period	<i>term</i>	6.2	at the best of times	<i>idiom</i>	1.4
right time	<i>collocation</i>	5.8	make time	<i>lvc</i>	1.4
short time	<i>collocation</i>	5.8	time and time again	<i>and/or</i>	1.3
full time	<i>term</i>	5.6	by the time of	<i>linker</i>	1.3
need time	<i>collocation</i>	5.5	once in a lifetime/ once-in-a-life-time	<i>idiom</i>	1.0
whole time	<i>collocation</i>	5.4	call time on sth	<i>idiom</i>	1.0
only time	<i>collocation</i>	5.4	before one's time	<i>idiom</i>	1.0
New York Times	<i>term</i>	5.2	have no time for sb/sth	<i>idiom</i>	1.0
have the time	<i>lvc</i>	4.4	around the time of	<i>linker</i>	1.0
other times	<i>collocation</i>	4.2	time and energy	<i>and/or</i>	0.9
just in (the nick of) time	<i>idiom</i>	4.1	it's high time	<i>idiom</i>	0.8
arrive time	<i>collocation</i>	3.8	time and resources	<i>and/or</i>	0.7
time and space	<i>and/or</i>	3.5	have the time of one's life	<i>idiom</i>	0.7
for the time being	<i>idiom</i>	3.5	give sb a hard time	<i>idiom</i>	0.7
at one time	<i>linker</i>	3.3	make up for lost time	<i>idiom</i>	0.7
take a time	<i>lvc</i>	3.1			
be only a matter of time	<i>idiom</i>	2.6			

<i>Item</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency per million</i>
be in the right place at the right time	<i>idiom</i>	0.6
(a) race against time/the clock	<i>idiom</i>	0.6
change/keep up/move with the times	<i>idiom</i>	0.5
like old times	<i>simile</i>	0.4
like a lifetime	<i>simile</i>	0.4
like the right time	<i>simile</i>	0.2

Year

<i>Item</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency per million</i>
financial year	<i>term</i>	33.7
recent years	<i>collocation</i>	23.9
new year	<i>collocation</i>	21.9
past year	<i>collocation</i>	10.1
previous year	<i>collocation</i>	9.8
spend years	<i>collocation</i>	8.4
full year	<i>collocation</i>	7.2
current year	<i>collocation</i>	4.9
following year	<i>collocation</i>	4.8
full-year results	<i>collocation</i>	4.1
early years	<i>collocation</i>	4.0
years and years	<i>and/or</i>	2.8
have a year	<i>lvc</i>	2.3
take years	<i>lvc</i>	1.9
like years	<i>simile</i>	0.2

Day

<i>Item</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency per million</i>
other day	<i>collocation</i>	20.5
day to day	<i>idiom</i>	9.7
Christmas Day	<i>term</i>	7.9
early days	<i>collocation</i>	7.7
have a day	<i>lvc</i>	6.3
at the end of the day	<i>linker</i>	6.2
Boxing Day	<i>term</i>	5.6
spend day	<i>collocation</i>	5.6
good day	<i>collocation</i>	5.3
old days	<i>collocation</i>	4.5
following day	<i>collocation</i>	4.4
spend days	<i>collocation</i>	4.1
to this day	<i>linker</i>	3.9
big day	<i>collocation</i>	3.5
day and night	<i>and/or</i>	2.1
day and age	<i>and/or</i>	1.3
to be early days	<i>idiom</i>	1.3
in this day and age	<i>idiom</i>	1.3
call it a day	<i>idiom</i>	1.2
save the day	<i>idiom</i>	1.1
night and day	<i>and/or</i>	1.0
the good old days	<i>idiom</i>	0.8
be the order of the day	<i>idiom</i>	0.7
see the light of day	<i>idiom</i>	0.6
make sb's day	<i>idiom</i>	0.6
day or night	<i>and/or</i>	0.6
days and nights	<i>and/or</i>	0.6
have seen better days	<i>idiom</i>	0.5
days and weeks	<i>and/or</i>	0.5
like the old days	<i>simile</i>	0.4