

Finding the Lost Symbol: By and until

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By the time you've finished *The Lost Symbol*, you'll know Washington, DC, inside out. Dan Brown's latest thriller plays in my hometown; I can actually see the Capitol from the roof of my house. That's where the action starts, when Brown's hero, Professor Langdon, finds the bloody hand of his mentor beneath the Capitol Rotunda and goes off on an all-night mission to find him, following signs and symbols pointing to a secret Masonic conspiracy.

Why did Brown choose Washington and the Capitol for his thriller? It all goes back to George Washington, the first president of the United States. He was a prominent Mason. Masons had first appeared in Britain in the early 1400s as members of craft guilds. Their "secrets" included how to square a corner and build a cathedral. By the 1600s, non-stoneworking gentlemen had begun joining, and Masonry became fashionable. The Masons encouraged free thought and religious tolerance. George Washington, Ben Franklin, nine signers of the Declaration of Independence and 13 signers of the Constitution were Masons. So in September 1793, Washington put on a Masonic apron and helped lay the cornerstone of the Capitol, both as the president of the country, and as a Mason.

This week let's practise organizing a day of sightseeing in Washington, DC, in the footsteps of Professor Langdon. Take a virtual tour first, if you like. And then make arrangements using those very helpful, yet often confused, prepositions of time, by and until. Next page, please.

Anne Hodgson

Sophie and Annette want to go on a *Lost Symbol* tour of Washington, DC, next weekend. They'll be arriving in Washington on Friday night, and will be staying with their friend John. The three of them are making a conference call to organize things. As they all have slightly different interests, they won't be doing everything together. Help them arrange meeting points by selecting by or until:

- until = continue until a certain time
- by = happen by a given deadline
- I'll be busy until 10. = I'll be done after 10.
- I'll be done by 10:15. = I'll be done at or before 10:15.
- The tour goes until 10. = The tour will be over at 10.
- I'll be free by 10:15 at the latest. = I'll be ready no later than 10:15.
- Can you wait until 10.15? I'll be at the door by then.

1. Annette: "Sophie, can you lend me *The Lost Symbol* _____ the end of the week? I want to finish it before we get to Washington."

2. Sophie: "Sure, but I'm not quite finished yet. I should be finished _____ tomorrow, though."

3. Annette: "We have a lot of things to arrange before we leave. Almost all of the tours have to be booked _____ Friday at the latest."

4. Sophie: "Can't it wait _____ we get there?"

5. John: "Actually, Annette's right: the tours need to be booked in advance. I've already booked a tour of the Capitol for the three of us for 8:30 on Saturday morning. But I didn't want to arrange anything else _____ we talked about it."

6. Annette: "OK, so how long will the Capitol tour take?"

John: "Just over an hour, so we should be done _____ about 10."

7. Sophie: "The Capitol is across the street from the Library of Congress, isn't it? That's supposed to be gorgeous. Can we go there and stay _____ lunchtime?"

8. John: "I'd really like that. I see that there's a tour starting at 10:30 a.m. They ask people to arrive 15 minutes early, so we'd have to be there _____ 10:15. No problem."

9. Annette: "Oh, I'd really prefer to go to the Botanic Garden after the Capital tour. Is that OK with you? Do you know whether it will be open _____ 10?"

10. John: "Yes. In fact, it opens at 10, and it's just a short walk from the Capitol. You'll be alone _____ noon, though, Annette. We can all meet in front of the Botanic Garden at 12. OK?"

11. Annette: "That's fine with me. And after lunch, can we go to the House of the Temple? They must be sick of Dan Brown tourists _____ now, but I really want to see it."

12. John: "No problem. I'll order tickets for you. But you'll be on your own _____ evening, because I'll have to leave you after lunch to get some work done."

13. Sophie: "OK. Well, we can always go to the National Gallery after we're done at the Masonic Temple."

John: "Good idea. Don't miss the museum café. Just make sure that you're back at the Library of Congress _____ 7:30. There's a great string quartet playing at 8, and we need to be there half an hour early to pick up the tickets."

14. Annette: "Super! I mean, if we're still standing _____ then, we'll probably be dead on our feet. OK, Sophie, let's get some beauty sleep!"