

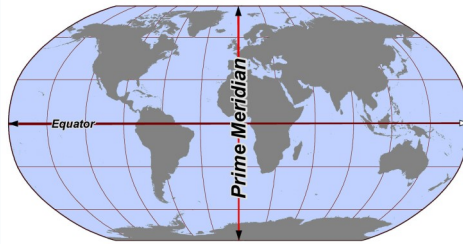
GREENWICH MEAN TIME

What is Greenwich Mean Time?

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) sets the standard time for the entire world. It is calculated at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England. The Royal Observatory is the official timekeeper for the planet. Everyone else in the world sets their clocks and watches to match GMT.

What is the Prime Meridian? What does it have to do with GMT?

The Prime Meridian is an imaginary line that runs north-south around the globe. It represents zero degrees longitude on the globe. All other lines of longitude are calculated from the Prime Meridian. The Prime Meridian runs through the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. So Greenwich is the starting point for both time and distance in the world.



When did the world start using GMT?

The U.S. government held a big meeting in 1884 with representatives from countries all over the world. The representatives decided to adopt GMT as the world's universal time. The United States adopted GMT right away, and eventually every country in the world agreed to adopt it too.



Why did we need to have a universal time?

The railroads needed to have schedules to run their trains. The people who used the trains wanted to know when the trains would arrive and depart from each stop along the rail line. Also, schedules for the trains were important to keep them from crashing into one another. To create a schedule, though, the railroads needed everyone to be on the same time, and to have their clocks and watches coordinated.