

A Short History of Time Keeping

by **GPF Staff** - November 1, 2019

Before the late 19th century, time keeping was chaotic and disorderly. There was no standard system used across the world to track time; instead, every community would keep time by setting the town clock to noon when the sun reached its peak each day.

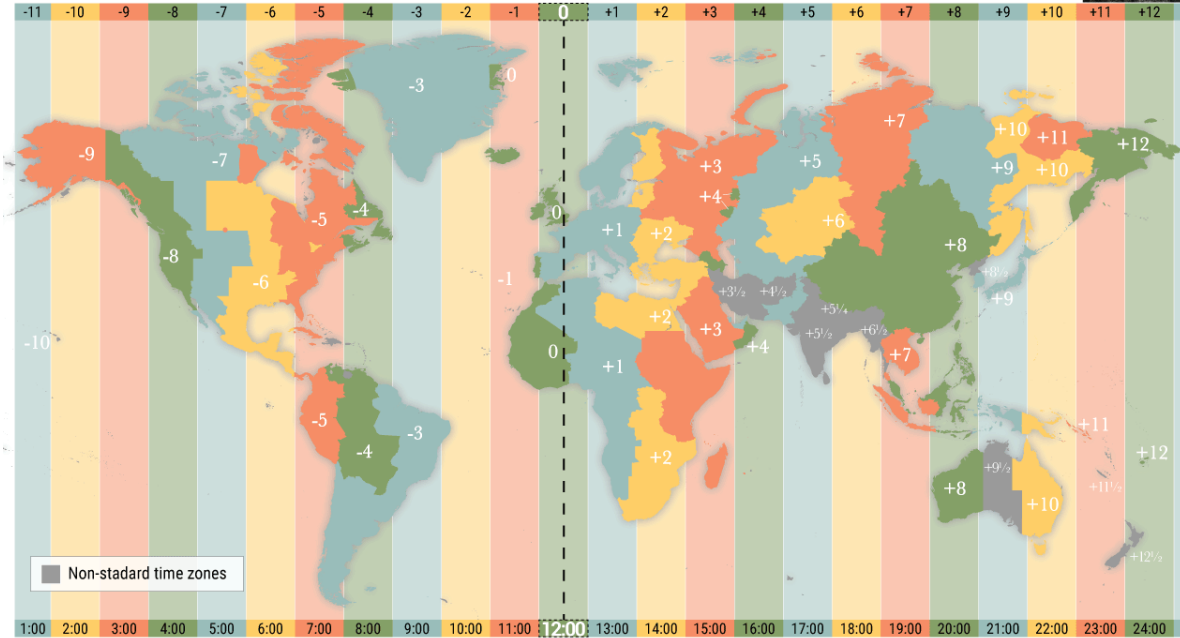


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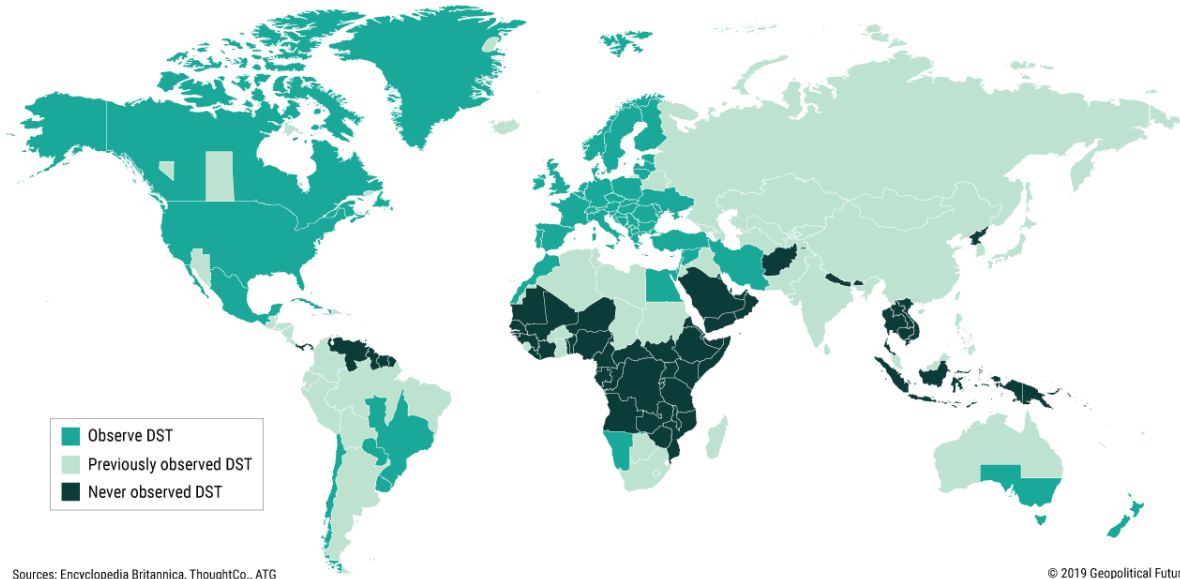


With the introduction of rail travel, however, a standardized system of time keeping was needed so trains could run efficiently and passengers could all use the same schedules.

The system we use today is based on the system developed by Sir Sandford Fleming in 1878. He proposed that the world be divided into 24 time zones, each spaced 15 degrees of longitude (or one hour) apart. At the International Prime Meridian Conference in 1884, the prime meridian – or point at which longitude is defined to be zero – was chosen to be Greenwich, England. Countries adopted the global clock system in different ways. With the passage of the Standard Time Act of 1918, the U.S. Congress set the official time zones for the entire United States.



The Standard Time Act also officially implemented daylight saving time in the U.S. Only roughly 70 countries around the world observe daylight saving time.



Sources: Encyclopedia Britannica, ThoughtCo., ATG

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