

Which of these are good timelines and which are not? Why?

1. **in 10 working days** – A good timeline because it specifies the number as well as the fact that only working days are being counted.
2. **as soon as possible** – Not a good timeline because this is an undefined quantity of time. ‘Soon’ doesn’t mean the same to everyone. It can be used when you’re not in a hurry, but it’s better to be more specific otherwise.
3. **by this Friday** – A good timeline. However, some people may want more information: any time before Friday, or by the end of the day, Friday?
4. **at your earliest convenience** – Not a good timeline if you would like the reader to respond quickly. It’s good to use when you’re not in a hurry.
5. **by 10 January** – A good timeline because it’s very specific.
6. **by the end of this week** – A good timeline. However, it could be more specific by saying which day.
7. **in due course** – Not a good timeline because this phrase doesn’t mention a deadline at all.