

## VOCABULARY EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

### HOW LONG ?

When you want to know about the **duration** (length of time) of an activity, use **how long?**

#### Examples:

- **How long** is your class?  
My class is **forty-five minutes long**.
- **How long** was the arbitration?  
It was **four days long**.

#### Pattern One -

<b>number</b>	+	<b>plural time unit</b>	+	<b>long</b>
↓		↓		↓
thirty		minutes		long
twenty		minutes		long
four		weeks		long
six		days		long
two		months		long

#### Pattern Two -

<b>all</b>	+	<b>singular time unit</b>	+	<b>long</b>
↓		↓		↓
all		day		long
all		night		long
all		year		long
all		week		long

#### Examples:

- **How long** were your computers down?  
They were down **all morning long**. It was terrible!
- **How long** will Joe be out of the office?  
He'll be out **all week long**. He won't be back until next Monday.

## HOW OFTEN ?

When you want to know about the **frequency** (repeated times) of an activity, use **how often?**

### Examples:

- **How often** does he fly to New York?  
He flies there **once a month**.<sup>1</sup>
- **How often** do you play tennis?  
I usually play **twice a week**.<sup>2</sup>
- **How often** do you go camping?  
I try to go **three times a year**.

### Pattern One -

<b>unit of frequency</b>	+	<b>a</b>	+	<b>singular time period</b>
↓		↓		↓
once		a		week
twice		a		year
three times		a		day
four times		a		week
six times		a		year
several times		a		month

Sometimes an activity takes place in an **alternating** pattern.

For example, you may play tennis on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but *not* play on Tuesday and Thursday.

Use the following pattern to express **alternating patterns of frequency**.

### Pattern Two -

<b>every other</b>	+	<b>SINGULAR</b>	<b>time unit</b>
↓		↓	
every other		week	
every other		day	
every other		year	
every other		weekend	

### Examples:

- **How often** do you visit your wife's family?  
We usually see them **every other weekend**.
- **How often** do they have elections?  
They have them **every other year**.

<sup>1</sup> **Once** means *one time*.

<sup>2</sup> **Twice** means *two times*.

Finally, many activities take place on a regular frequency that does not meet the other two patterns.

**Examples:**

- The President of the United States is elected **every four years**.
- Publicly held companies must publish their interim earnings statement **every ninety days** in the U.S.

The above activities/events take place in fixed, established patterns of frequency.

To express frequency of repeated action such as the above, use the following pattern:

<b>Pattern Three -</b>	<b>every</b>	+	<b>number</b>	+	<b>PLURAL time unit</b>
	↓		↓		↓
	every		four		days
	every		eight		hours
	every		two		minutes
	every		thirty		days
	every		sixty		seconds

**Examples:**

- They change shifts in that hospital **every eight hours**.
- **HOW OFTEN** do you review your employees' job performance?  
**Every six months.**

**Summary Example**

- **How often** do you get paid?  
We get paid
  - **every fifteen days**
  - **twice a month**
  - **every other week**

**TWO NICE EXPRESSIONS TO KNOW**

When action occurs or events take place *sometimes*, but without any particular regularity – two very FLUENT ways to answer the question “HOW OFTEN?” are:

- **every now and then**
- **every so often**

Both the above expressions mean "*sometimes*."

Place all the expressions explained in this worksheet at the END of your sentence.