

Adverbs of frequency

Level: Intermediate

Target age: Adults and teenagers

Time needed: 30 minutes

Summary: Adverbs of frequency such as *always* and *sometimes* are a familiar teaching point. But there are plenty of other commonly-used adverbial phrases expressing frequency, and like many lexical phrases, these tend to have fixed stress patterns. This lesson practises some of these phrases with a particular focus on their stress patterns.

Warmer

1. Ask the class to shout out adverbs of frequency they know, and write them up on the board. The following might be included: *always, never, sometimes, frequently, rarely, occasionally, often*.
2. Underline the words *always, never, often, sometimes* and *rarely*. Ask the class how many syllables these words have (two), and which syllable is stressed (the first).
3. Ask them how many syllables there are in the words *frequently* and *occasionally*, and which syllable is stressed (*frequently* has three syllables, with the stress on the first; *occasionally* has four or five syllables, depending how carefully it's pronounced, with stress on the second in any case).
4. Explain that in the following activity, students are going to practise some longer adverbs of frequency and their stress patterns.

Activity 1

Hand out the worksheet and draw the students' attention to Activity 1. The students' task is to match the phrases on the left with the words on the right to make adverbial phrases of frequency. They should complete this activity individually before checking in pairs and then as a whole class.

Key:

1. *all the time*
2. *whenever I get the chance*
3. *from time to time*
4. *now and then*
5. *every now and then*
6. *not very often*
7. *once in a while*
8. *pretty often*

9. *hardly ever*

10. *as often as I can*

(Note: 'Whenever I get the time' is also possible.)

Activity 2

Draw the students' attention to Activity 2. Explain that these expressions mean the same as some of the phrases from Activity 1. Learners should complete this activity in pairs and then check as a class.

Key:

always: all the time

frequently: pretty often

sometimes: from time to time, now and then, every now and then

rarely: not very often, once in a while, hardly ever

The remaining phrases, 'whenever I get the chance' and 'as often as I can', don't have a fixed frequency meaning, but depend on the speaker's circumstances.

Activity 3

Tell students they are going to listen to a conversation between two people and they will hear various adverbial phrases of frequency. They should listen and match each adverbial phrase with its correct stress pattern. O represents a stressed syllable, and o represents an unstressed syllable. Play the listening through twice, if necessary.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. <i>all the time</i> | OoO |
| 2. <i>whenever I get the chance</i> | oOooOoO |
| 3. <i>from time to time</i> | oOoO |
| 4. <i>now and then</i> | OoO |
| 5. <i>every now and then</i> | Ooooo |
| 6. <i>not very often</i> | OooOo |
| 7. <i>once in a while</i> | OooO |
| 8. <i>pretty often</i> | OoOo |
| 9. <i>hardly ever</i> | OoOo |
| 10. <i>as often as I can</i> | oOooo |

Audioscript:

1. A: How often do you listen to the radio?
B: All the time, when I'm at work, when I'm at home, when I'm in the car ...
2. A: How often do you speak Welsh?
B: Whenever I get the chance, but there aren't many people that speak it round here.
3. A: Do you go to the cinema very often?
B: No. I do from time to time, but I usually watch films on TV.

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4. A: *How often do you go swimming nowadays?*
B: *Now and then, but not as much as I used to.*
5. A: *What do you do in the evenings?*
B: *Well, we go into town every now and then, but usually we just stay at home or go to the village pub.*
6. A: *Do you still see your old neighbours?*
B: *No, not very often, not since they moved away.*
7. A: *Do you read a lot?*
B: *No ... I read a novel once in a while, but somehow I don't seem to have much time for reading these days.*
8. A: *How often do you manage to see your mother?*
B: *Pretty often ... sometimes we go over at the weekend, or she comes and stays for a couple of days.*
9. A: *How often do you watch TV?*
B: *Hardly ever ... there's never anything worth watching.*
10. A: *Do you work in the garden much?*
B: *As often as I can, yes.*

Activity 4

Students should now work in pairs and make short dialogues, using the adverbial phrases of frequency to answer the questions. Remind students to pay attention to the stress and rhythm. This activity could simply be done as a pairwork activity or it could be expanded into a questionnaire, depending on time.

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Worksheet

Activity 1

Match the phrases on the left with the words on the right to make adverbial phrases of frequency.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 1. all the | chance |
| 2. whenever I get the | then |
| 3. from time to | then |
| 4. now and | while |
| 5. every now and | ever |
| 6. not very | can |
| 7. once in a | time |
| 8. pretty | time |
| 9. hardly | often |
| 10. as often as I | often |

Activity 2

Which of the expressions above mean the same as the following?

- always _____
frequently _____
sometimes _____
rarely _____

Activity 3



Listen and match the phrases with the stress patterns. Then check your answers and practise saying the phrases.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| 1. all the time | OoOo |
| 2. whenever I get the chance | OoO |
| 3. from time to time | oOooOoO |
| 4. now and then | OooO |
| 5. every now and then | OooooO |
| 6. not very often | oOoO |
| 7. once in a while | oOooooO |
| 8. pretty often | OoOo |
| 9. hardly ever | OoO |
| 10. as often as I can | OooOo |

Activity 4

Work in pairs and ask and answer the questions using the adverbial phrases of frequency. Remember to pay attention to stress and rhythm. Continue with your own questions.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. How often do you speak English? | 4. How often do you watch a film in English? |
| 2. How often do you use a dictionary? | 5. How often do you dream in English? |
| 3. How often do you read a newspaper or magazine in English? | 6. How often do you write something in English? |
| | 7. How often do you think in English? |