

Adverbs of Frequency

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Quick and Handy Grammar Review

ADVERBS OF FREQUENCY

A. Introduction to Adverbs

An **adverb** is a word that describes a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a complete sentence.

#	Example	Explanation
1	They always walk to school.	The adverb <i>always</i> describes the verb <i>walk</i> .
2	My motorcycle is really fast.	The adverb <i>really</i> describes the adjective <i>fast</i> .
3	My teacher speaks very quickly .	The adverb <i>very</i> describes the adverb <i>quickly</i> , and <i>quickly</i> describes the verb <i>speaks</i> .
4	I like the rain, actually .	The adverb <i>actually</i> describes the whole sentence.

B. Adverbs of Frequency

Adverbs of frequency (also known as *frequency adverbs* or *adverbs of time*) answer the question **how often**.

Frequency	Adverb
100%	always
95%	almost always
80%	usually, often, frequently
50%	sometimes, occasionally
20%	not very often, seldom
10%	rarely
5%	almost never
0%	never

Examples:

- He goes shopping.
How often does he go shopping?
He **sometimes** goes shopping.
- My sister eats breakfast.
How often does she eat breakfast?
She **usually** eats breakfast.

Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

C. Patterns

Adverbs of frequency have three sentence patterns in English.

Pattern	Notes	Examples	
		Sentence	Explanation
Adv + V	Adverbs of frequency are usually placed before the verb they describe.	She never studies.	<i>Never</i> describes how often she <i>studies</i> .
		My friend usually plays baseball with us.	<i>Usually</i> describes how often my friend <i>plays baseball</i> .
		I always watch TV before bed.	<i>Always</i> describes how often I <i>watch TV</i> before bed.
BE + Adv	With the verb <i>to be</i> (<i>is, am, are, was, were, will be, etc.</i>), adverbs of frequency come after the Be verb. In this position, the adverb usually describes an adjective.	My brother is always hungry.	<i>Always</i> describes how often he is <i>hungry</i> .
		You are almost never late.	<i>Almost never</i> describes how often you are <i>late</i> .
		Her children are often tired.	<i>Often</i> describes how often her children are <i>tired</i> .
V + Adv + V	When the verb has two or more parts, the most common spot for an adverb of frequency is after the first part of the main verb.	I <u>have</u> never <u>been</u> to Europe.	<i>Never</i> describes how often I <i>have been</i> to Europe.
		Older books <u>are</u> usually <u>found</u> at the back of the library.	<i>Usually</i> describes how often the books <i>are found</i> at the back of the library.
		She <u>has</u> never <u>been</u> <u>told</u> to keep quiet.	<i>Never</i> describes how often she <i>has been told</i> to keep quiet.

Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

D. Exceptions

Exception #1

Because they're so common, some frequency adverbs can be moved around in the sentence and assume other adverb positions. *Sometimes*, *often*, and *usually* fall into this category. These examples are all correct and have the same meaning:

- **Sometimes** he is late.
- He is **sometimes** late.
- He is late **sometimes**.

Exception #2

The position of *not very often* is an exception to the normal rule. Add *not* to the auxiliary verb *do* (before the main verb) and place *very often* at the end of the sentence.

- She **doesn't** go to parties **very often**.

E. Notes

Note #1

Though usually used with the *simple present* tense, it is possible to discuss frequency using other tenses. For example, we can say:

- I **always ate** breakfast when I was a child. (*simple past*)
- I **will never eat** broccoli when I grow up. (*simple future*)
- He **is always reading**. (*present progressive*)
- She **has never cried** during a movie. (*present perfect*)

Note #2

Most adverbs of frequency are very common in English, but *seldom*, *occasionally*, and *frequently* are more formal and less commonly used.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ We frequently visit our grandparents. (<i>formal</i>) | ✓ ✓ We often/usually visit our grandparents. (<i>more common</i>) |
| ✓ They seldom drink coffee. (<i>formal</i>) | ✓ ✓ They don't drink coffee very often . (<i>more common</i>) |

Exercise 1

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Write one adverb in each blank that matches the percentage below the blank. Note that the adverb in number 8 is divided up. Look back at the chart on page 2 if you need to.

Ex. My parents usually drink coffee in the morning.
(80%)

1. My brother _____ drives to school.
(50%)

2. They _____ walk their dog after dinner.
(80%)

3. She is _____ sad.
(5%)

4. Melissa _____ practices the piano after school.
(80%)

5. My neighbor goes swimming in his pool _____ .
(50%)

6. Daniela _____ texts me.
(10%)

7. Chris is _____ bored.
(0%)

8. He does _____ forget his homework _____ .
(20%)

9. Your cat _____ wants to sit on me.
(100%)

10. She has _____ seen the ocean.
(0%)

Exercise 2

PATTERNS

Rewrite the sentences in the correct order.
There may be more than one correct adverb position.

Ex. tests / difficult / English / are / often

English tests are often difficult.

1. she / never / swimming / goes

2. is / friendly / he / always

3. shower / sing / I / often / in / the

4. sister / my / angry / gets / never / almost

5. movies / he / sometimes / likes / scary

6. delicious / almost / mother / your / food / always / cooks

7. often / don't / call / other / each / very / they

8. classmates / come / class / my / usually / time / on / to

9. we / go / vacation / on / in / always / summer / the

10. doesn't / she / do / homework / very / her / often

Exercise 3

INTERVIEW YOUR PARTNER

A. Ask Questions

Ask your partner the following questions.
Write his or her answers using adverbs of frequency.

Ex. How often do you check your email?

He rarely checks his email. _____

1. How often do you wear running shoes?

2. How often do you eat junk food?

3. How often do you go to the dentist?

4. How often do you go to bed before 10:00 pm?

5. How often do you go camping?

B. Write Questions

Now write three more questions with
“how often,” and then write your partner’s answers.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Exercise 5

CLASS SURVEY

Walk around your class and ask your classmates the questions below. Try to talk to as many of your classmates as you can. You only need to write the adverb of frequency, but use complete sentences when you are speaking.

Example

Robyn: Tara, how often do you do your homework?

Tara: I always do my homework.

Robyn writes Tara's name and the adverb of frequency always in the chart.

#	How often do you...	Name	Adverb of Frequency
1	do your homework?		
2	go out for dinner?		
3	go to the movies?		
4	read books?		
5	study English?		
6	play sports?		
7	text your friends?		
8	call your family?		
9	brush your teeth?		
10	sleep in?		

Exercise 6

QUIZ

Circle the correct answer.

1. The bus arrives on time.
(10%)
a) sometimes
 b) rarely
c) always
2. Our teacher gives us homework.
(95%)
a) almost always
b) never
c) always
3. He is on time for class.
(5%)
a) almost never
b) sometimes
c) often
4. She doesn't read books .
(20%)
a) usually
b) seldom
c) (not) very often
5. My friend cries during movies .
(50%)
a) sometimes
b) often
c) almost always
6. They are tired on Mondays.
(80%)
a) usually
b) always
c) rarely
7. My parents go on vacation to Hawaii.
(80%)
a) very often
b) often
c) never
8. I babysit my younger cousins.
(50%)
a) rarely
b) always
c) sometimes
9. She brushes her teeth before bed.
(100%)
a) almost never
b) almost always
c) always
10. She is nervous before a presentation.
(80%)
a) usually
b) rarely
c) sometimes
11. I get hungry before lunch.
(95%)
a) always
b) almost never
c) almost always
12. He goes skiing. He prefers snowboarding.
(0%)
a) not very often
b) never
c) always

Answer Key

Exercise 1

1. sometimes / occasionally
2. usually / often / frequently
3. almost never
4. usually / often / frequently
5. sometimes / occasionally
6. rarely
7. never
8. not, very often
9. always
10. never

Exercise 2

1. She never goes swimming.
2. He is always friendly.
3. I often sing in the shower. /
Often, I sing in the shower. /
I sing in the shower often.
4. My sister almost never gets angry.
5. He sometimes likes scary movies. /
Sometimes he likes scary movies. /
He likes scary movies sometimes.
6. Your mother almost always cooks delicious food.
7. They don't call each other very often.
8. My classmates usually come to class on time. /
Usually, my classmates come to class on time. /
My classmates come to class on time, usually.
9. We always go on vacation in the summer.
10. She doesn't do her homework very often.

Exercise 3

Answers will vary. Monitor your students for correct spoken and written sentences.

Exercise 4

Answers will vary.

Exercise 5

Answers will vary. If your students can handle it, have them ask a follow-up question.

John: How often do you go to the movies?

Mary: I don't go to the movies very often.

John: Why not?

Mary: Because it's too expensive.

You may want to follow up by having students report on their findings. (E.g., John: Mary doesn't go to the movies very often because it's too expensive.)

Exercise 6

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. a | 7. b | 9. c | 11. c |
| 2. a | 4. c | 6. a | 8. c | 10. a | 12. b |

Extra Practice

Optional activity. Cut up the premade question cards (Part A), or have students make their own using the blank cards (Part B), or both. Cards can be used for a variety of activities. One suggestion is to put students in groups and have a student choose a question card and answer using an adverb of frequency in a complete sentence. If that student answers correctly, he or she gets a point. The student with the most points wins.

SPELLING NOTES:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Neighbor*, *Color*, *Jewelry*, and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Neighbour*, *Colour*, *Jewellery*, and *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun).

Extra Practice

HOW OFTEN?

A. Question Cards

How often do you exercise?	How often do you play tennis?
How often do you go snowboarding?	How often do you go shopping?
How often do you walk your dog?	How often do you go to the movies?
How often do you cook dinner?	How often do you watch TV?
How often do you buy flowers for someone?	How often do you listen to music?
How often do you make a mistake?	How often do you play an instrument?
How often do you go skiing?	How often do you do laundry?
How often do you arrive early to class?	How often do you talk on the phone?
How often do you arrive late to class?	How often do you wear bright colors?
How often do you do your homework?	How often do you wear jewelry?
How often do you speak in English?	How often do you go hiking?
How often do you look up a word in your dictionary?	How often do you go swimming?
How often do you drink tea?	How often do you text your friends or family?

