



APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS

Unit A2-3A

normal Monday — the invisible engine of the week

Daily routines at work

Student Edition · Classbook + Workbook

UNIT A2-3A

A normal Monday — the invisible engine of the week

Daily routines at work · A2+ · 50-60 min · Business English



“A boring Monday is not a failure — it's a well-designed one.”

— Rule of the productive office

Objectives

- Describe your working week in 5-6 sentences using adverbs of frequency in the correct position.
- Use present simple confidently for facts, negatives and Wh-questions about routines and workload.
- Talk beyond 'I check email' — name ONE thing that makes your Monday specifically different from other days.

Class Book

Warm-up · The shape of your Monday

Solo · about you · 4 min

Answer in your head, then say the answer out loud in ONE sentence — no notes.

- What time does your workday actually start — not officially, but really?

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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- Which day of the week is quietly your busiest? Why?
 - Name ONE thing you do every Monday before 10am that would surprise a new colleague.
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Lead-in · Sort the Monday habits

Categorise · put in groups · 5 min

Here are 10 real Monday habits from working professionals. Sort them into 'quietly productive' and 'quietly damaging'. Then compare with a partner — is any habit on BOTH lists depending on the person?

Reading · Rita's Monday, in her own words

10 min

Rita runs a small product team at a software company in Porto — nine engineers, one designer, and one very patient product owner. She's been in the job for four years, and she jokes that she's built her whole career around one belief: 'Boring Mondays make interesting weeks.'

Her Monday doesn't start on Monday. She uses the last hour of Friday to close the week — writing three lines about what shipped, what's stuck and what she plans to attack first on Monday morning. It usually takes twenty minutes; sometimes less. Without it, she says, Monday morning becomes an hour of 'where were we?' before anyone does anything real.

She rarely checks work email before nine, and she almost never opens Slack in the morning. Between nine and ten she goes through the three hardest items on her list — usually the ones she was avoiding on Friday afternoon. 'If I don't touch them by ten, they own the whole week,' she says.

At ten there's a twenty-minute team stand-up. No laptops, no slides — just voices. Each person says what they're blocked on, and Rita's job, she insists, is mostly to remove blockers, not to add opinions. After the stand-up, the team goes quiet until lunch. She never eats at her desk; she walks around the block with a colleague if she can. 'Fifteen minutes outside gives me the second half of the day for free.'

The afternoon is less protected. There are usually one or two meetings, some 1:1s, and always someone knocking with a small crisis. She often finishes at six; occasionally she stays until seven when a release is close, but almost never later than that. 'If I'm still at my desk at eight,' she says, 'it means I planned the day badly, not that I worked hard.'

Comprehension check

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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1. According to the text, when does Rita's Monday actually begin?
 - ☐ A. On Monday morning, at 9am.
 - ☐ B. On Friday afternoon, when she closes the previous week.
 - ☐ C. On Sunday night, before bed.
 2. Why does Rita tackle the three hardest tasks between 9 and 10?
 - ☐ A. Because email is closed at that time.
 - ☐ B. Because she believes ignoring them lets them 'own' the whole week.
 - ☐ C. Because her boss requires it.
 3. What does Rita see as her main job in the stand-up?
 - ☐ A. To share her own opinions on every task.
 - ☐ B. To assign new tasks to the team.
 - ☐ C. To remove blockers, not add opinions.
 4. What does Rita's rule 'not later than eight' really say about her attitude to work?
 - ☐ A. Long hours are a badge of honour.
 - ☐ B. Working late usually means the day was badly planned, not that the person is dedicated.
 - ☐ C. The office closes at eight.

True / False / Not Given

Read again and choose the correct option — 'Not Given' is the honest answer when the text simply doesn't say.

1. Rita has been in her current role for more than three years.
 - ☐ A. True
 - ☐ B. False
 - ☐ C. Not Given
2. Rita checks Slack the moment she opens her laptop on Monday.
 - ☐ A. True
 - ☐ B. False
 - ☐ C. Not Given
3. Rita's team uses slides during the Monday stand-up.
 - ☐ A. True
 - ☐ B. False
 - ☐ C. Not Given

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

4. Everyone on Rita's team works from the office on Mondays.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False
- ☐ C. Not Given

5. Rita usually walks outside during her lunch break.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False
- ☐ C. Not Given

React to the text (discursive)

Choose TWO questions and answer each in 3-4 full sentences. Use adverbs of frequency and at least one specific detail from your own week.

1. Rita says 'Boring Mondays make interesting weeks.' Do you agree, or is a good Monday something else in your job? Give a real example.

2. Which of Rita's habits — the Friday close-down, the 9-10 focus block, or the walking lunch — is most transferable to YOUR job, and which is impossible? Why?

3. Rewrite Rita's philosophy — 'If I'm still at my desk at 8, I planned the day badly' — for your industry. Would it survive intact, or does it need adjusting?

Vocabulary · Work rhythms and workload

8 min

Roles

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Term	Meaning
workload	the total amount of work you have to do in a given time
back-to-back meetings	meetings with no gap in between
deep work / focus block	a protected period of concentrated, uninterrupted work
stand-up	a short, daily team meeting, usually done standing up
blocker	something stopping you from making progress
hand-over	passing tasks or information to someone taking over

Smalltalk

Term	Meaning
early bird / night owl	someone who works best early / late
on autopilot	doing something without really thinking
catch up on	do the work you fell behind on
wrap up	finish something off cleanly
off the clock	outside working hours
a light / heavy week	a week with little / a lot of work

Practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists above.

1. My ___ this week is manageable — three deliverables and no fires.
2. I've got ___ ___ ___ meetings from 10 to 4 — no lunch.
3. I need a two-hour ___ ___ tomorrow morning to finish the deck.
4. In our team the daily ___ ___ ___ is at 9:30, twenty minutes maximum.
5. The main ___ on the release is legal — they haven't signed off yet.
6. Before my holiday I did a two-hour ___ with the colleague covering my accounts.
7. I'll deal with that Monday morning — I'm ___ ___ ___ now.
8. It's a ___ week — I'm mostly catching up on admin.

Collocations · high-frequency verb + noun

Match each verb with the noun that naturally follows in a workplace context.

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Term	Meaning
book	a focus block
clear	your inbox
meet	a deadline
raise	a blocker
run	a stand-up
hand over	an account

Odd one out

Which word doesn't fit the group?

1. blocker · deadline · workload · sandwich

- ☐ A. blocker
- ☐ B. deadline
- ☐ C. workload
- ☐ D. sandwich

2. stand-up · 1:1 · retrospective · umbrella

- ☐ A. stand-up
- ☐ B. 1:1
- ☐ C. retrospective
- ☐ D. umbrella

3. wrap up · catch up · hand over · fall down

- ☐ A. wrap up
- ☐ B. catch up
- ☐ C. hand over
- ☐ D. fall down

Grammar · Adverbs of frequency + present simple (positive, negative, questions)

12 min

1. Adverbs of frequency — position

always (100%) · usually / often (~80%) · sometimes (~50%) · rarely / hardly ever (~10%) · never (0%).

Position: BEFORE the main verb, AFTER 'to be' and auxiliaries.

• I always check email first. · She is never late. · We have often finished by six.

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2. Present simple — negatives and questions

Negative: don't / doesn't + base verb. · Rita doesn't check email before nine.

Yes-no: Do you usually work from home on Mondays? · Does the team run a Monday stand-up?

Wh-: How often do you have back-to-back meetings? · What time do you usually wrap up?

3. 'Hardly ever' and 'almost never' — softer than 'never'

'Hardly ever' and 'almost never' mean very rarely, but they leave the door open. Useful when 'never' would be too strong.

- I hardly ever answer email at weekends. · She almost never stays past seven.

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Exercise A — Put the adverb in the correct position

Rewrite the sentence with the adverb in brackets in the correct position.

1. She checks Slack in the morning. (rarely)

2. We have a stand-up at 10. (always)

3. He is late for the Monday meeting. (never)

4. They finish before six. (hardly ever)

5. I take a proper lunch break. (usually)

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Exercise B — Positive → negative

Rewrite each sentence in the negative, keeping the adverb of frequency where possible.

1. Rita usually starts with email.

2. We often stay past seven.

3. He always eats at his desk.

4. The team runs a slide-based stand-up.

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Exercise C — Write the question

Write the Wh- or yes-no question that fits the answer given.

1. A: ____? B: About once a month, when a release is close.

2. A: ____? B: Yes, we always run a stand-up at 10 — no laptops.

3. A: ____? B: Around 6pm, usually.

4. A: ____? B: Because if I don't touch them by 10, they own the week.

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Exercise D — 'Hardly ever' or 'always'? Choose what's true FOR YOU

Complete each sentence with the adverb that reflects your reality — then be ready to justify it in one sentence.

1. I ___ (adverb) answer work email before 9am.
2. My team ___ (adverb) has back-to-back meetings on Mondays.
3. I ___ (adverb) take a proper lunch break away from my desk.

Describe the picture



Look at the picture. Write 5–6 sentences using adverbs of frequency and present simple. Describe what you see AND what usually happens on a working Monday in this kind of setup.

Target language: On a normal Monday, she usually... · There is / There are... · She rarely / hardly ever... · She always starts with... · By ten, she has usually...

Listening · A Monday-morning voice note from Rita to her mentor

10 min

Rita records a two-minute voice note to her mentor Ana. She's had a rough Friday and she's using the voice note to reset her plan for the week. One voice, natural pace.

Before you listen

- When you have to reset your week, what do you name first — the biggest task, or the person you need to talk to?

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- In a voice note (not a written message), which detail usually leaks out that you wouldn't put in writing?

Gist

1. What is the overall reason Rita is recording this voice note?

2. What is Rita's general attitude in the recording?

3. Who is the recording for, and why does that matter?

Detail

1. What is the ONE task Rita says she wants to attack between 9 and 10 on Monday?

2. Why doesn't Rita want to move the Monday stand-up, even though Friday was chaotic?

3. What specific thing does Rita ask Ana for at the end of the voice note?

Listen and complete

Complete each line with ONE, TWO or THREE words.

1. Just a quick one, Ana — ____ straight away.

2. Honestly, Friday ____ from me.

3. The one I've been quietly ____.

4. I don't want to move the ____ — the team needs it more than I do.

5. Would ____ on Wednesday work — walking call, nothing formal?

Useful phrases from Rita's voice note

Match each phrase to what it does inside the message.

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Term	Meaning
Just a quick one, Ana — no need to reply straight away.	opening a voice note with low pressure
Honestly, Friday got away from me.	admitting the week didn't go to plan
So here's what I want to try on Monday.	signalling a plan is coming next
The one I've been quietly avoiding.	naming the task you know you dodged
Would fifteen minutes on Wednesday work?	making a specific, small ask

Speaking · Reset your own week out loud

8 min

Prepare a 60-second 'Monday reset' about YOUR week. Structure: (1) one honest thing that went badly last week; (2) the ONE task you'll attack first on Monday and why; (3) one small ask to a colleague or mentor.

Writing · Your Monday, honestly (discursive)

8 min (or homework)

Write 80–100 words about YOUR real Monday — not the ideal version. Include: (1) two adverbs of frequency in the correct position; (2) one specific detail (a number, a time, a name); (3) one honest sentence about what usually goes wrong. Finish with ONE thing you'll try differently next Monday.

Workbook

A normal Monday — Workbook

1. Vocabulary in context

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the box. Two items are extra.

1. Every Monday I ___ the week with a quick 15-minute team stand-up.

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2. After the weekend I need to ___ emails before I can start real work.
 3. My ___ is heavy at the moment — I'm working late almost every day.
 4. On Tuesdays I have ___ meetings from 9 to 1, with no breaks.
 5. I try to ___ my team leader every Monday morning to align priorities.
 6. When everything feels urgent, you have to ___ and choose two or three key tasks.
-

2. Adverbs of frequency & present simple

Rewrite the sentence putting the adverb / frequency phrase in the correct position.

1. (usually) She checks Slack before she opens her inbox.
 2. (hardly ever) I take a proper lunch break on Mondays.
 3. (once a week) We have a one-to-one with our manager.
 4. (rarely) He is available before 10am.
 5. (three times a month) They travel to the head office.
 6. (almost never) I answer work messages after 8pm.
-

3. Which sentence is more natural at work?

Choose the more professional / natural option.

1. You want to say your Monday is very busy.
 - ☐ A. My Monday is very full on.
 - ☐ B. My Monday is pretty packed.
 - ☐ C. My Monday has a lot.
2. You want to ask a colleague about their weekly routine.
 - ☐ A. How is your week normally?
 - ☐ B. What does a typical week look like for you?
 - ☐ C. How your week is?
3. You want to say you deal with emails first.
 - ☐ A. First of all, I go through my inbox.
 - ☐ B. First of all, I do my emails.
 - ☐ C. In first, I check emails.

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4. You want to say your afternoon is calmer.

- ☐ A. My afternoon is more calm.
- ☐ B. The afternoon tends to be quieter.
- ☐ C. In afternoon is quiet.

5. You want to soften a strong statement.

- ☐ A. I never do overtime.
- ☐ B. I try not to do overtime if I can avoid it.
- ☐ C. Overtime, no.

4. Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. She is always arriving late on Mondays.

2. I no take a lunch break usually.

3. How often you check your email?

4. He works from home two times for week.

5. We have every Monday a team meeting.

5. Listening — Rita's Monday voice note

Rita, a project coordinator, sends a short voice message to her manager on Monday morning. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

1. What are the THREE main tasks Rita mentions for today?

2. Which task is she most worried about, and why?

3. What does she ask her manager to do?

4. How would you describe her tone?

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6. Writing — describe your typical Monday (90–110 words)

Write a short professional description of YOUR typical Monday at work. Include: (a) how you start the day, (b) two or three key tasks, (c) one thing that is often difficult, (d) one small habit that helps you. Use at least *THREE* adverbs of frequency (*usually, often, rarely, almost never, etc.*).

7. Reading & discursive reflection

Re-read the classbook text about Rita's Monday. Then write a short discursive answer (100–130 words).

1. In your opinion, is Rita's Monday routine sustainable in the long term? Justify your answer with **TWO** reasons, and suggest **ONE** concrete change she could make.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class
