



APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS

Unit A2-3B

How often do you...? — the honest version

Daily routines at work

UNIT A2-3B

How often do you...? — the honest version

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

“Show me your calendar for two weeks, and I'll tell you what you actually care about.”

— A useful management proverb

Objectives

- Ask and answer specific questions with 'how often' + present simple about workload, meetings and follow-ups.
- Understand a longer listening where two colleagues honestly compare their weekly rhythms — including what they wish were different.
- Write a short discursive paragraph (80–100 words) contrasting frequency in your team versus one you know from outside.

Class Book

Warm-up · Frequency reality check

Solo · about you · 4 min

Answer each question with a specific frequency (never / rarely / sometimes / often / usually / always) AND one honest sentence of context.

- How often do you leave a meeting thinking 'that could have been an email'?
- How often do you actually block time in your calendar for deep work — and defend it when someone tries to move it?
- How often do you get to Friday without touching the ONE task you promised yourself on Monday?

Lead-in · Odd one out (with a twist)

Odd one out · MCQ · 5 min

In each line, three words belong together and one is the odd one — but you must also say WHY, in one sentence, using an adverb of frequency.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Reading · Three colleagues, three completely different weeks

10 min

In the same open-plan office in Lisbon, three colleagues run their weeks in radically different ways — and, honestly, all three ways work. What matters isn't which style is 'right'; it's whether the person is aware of their own pattern.

Ana is famously organised. She writes her to-do list on Sunday evening — not Monday morning — and she almost never forgets a meeting. She reviews her calendar every day, colour-codes it, and blocks ninety-minute focus periods before opening email. The downside? Ana finds it very hard to say yes to last-minute requests, and colleagues sometimes call her 'unapproachable' behind her back, even though she's simply protecting her time.

Tomás is the opposite. He rarely plans in advance and he often walks into Monday's stand-up without notes. In theory, that sounds chaotic — but he's a genuinely fast thinker, and he usually solves problems in real time that Ana wouldn't have predicted on Sunday. The cost is that Tomás regularly forgets small follow-ups: a promised email, a shared document, a name he was supposed to introduce. His teammates say he's brilliant on the day and unreliable the week after.

Sofia works from home two days a week and from the office three. She usually starts at 8 and finishes at 5, and she hardly ever takes a proper lunch break — she'll eat at her desk while replying to messages. She's the person everyone thanks in retrospectives, because she quietly clears the small things nobody else wants to do. The problem is that Sofia rarely takes credit, so her workload keeps growing invisibly. Her manager has started asking her, every Friday, 'What did you do this week that no one saw?'

Comprehension check

1. According to the text, what is the real point about the three colleagues' different styles?

- ☐ **A.** Ana's style is the correct one.
- ☐ **B.** Tomás's improvisation is superior.
- ☐ **C.** All three styles work — what matters is being aware of your own pattern.

2. What is the hidden downside of Ana's protection of her time?

- ☐ **A.** She misses deadlines.
- ☐ **B.** Colleagues sometimes see her as unapproachable.
- ☐ **C.** She works too many hours.

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3. According to the text, when is Tomás at his best, and when is he weakest?

- ☐ **A.** Best on the day; weakest with follow-ups the week after.
- ☐ **B.** Best with follow-ups; weakest under pressure.
- ☐ **C.** Best on Mondays; weakest on Fridays.

4. Why does Sofia's manager ask her 'What did you do this week that no one saw?' every Friday?

- ☐ **A.** Because Sofia doesn't do enough visible work.
- ☐ **B.** Because Sofia's workload grows invisibly and she rarely takes credit.
- ☐ **C.** Because the company requires a Friday report.

True / False / Not Given

Choose 'Not Given' when the text simply doesn't say.

1. Ana prepares her weekly plan before Monday morning.

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

2. Tomás is the youngest of the three colleagues.

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

3. Sofia takes a full lunch break every day.

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

4. All three colleagues work in the same office in Lisbon.

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

5. Ana has been the team's manager for five years.

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

React to the text (discursive)

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

1. Which of the three — Ana, Tomás or Sofia — is closest to your own working style? Where does the resemblance break down?

2. The text says 'what matters isn't which style is right; it's whether the person is aware of their own pattern.' Do you agree, or does one style clearly beat the others in your industry? Give a real example.

3. Sofia's manager asks her every Friday: 'What did you do this week that no one saw?' Would that question help YOU, or would it feel intrusive? Why?

Vocabulary · Calendars, meetings and time pressure

8 min

Roles

Term	Meaning
schedule (verb / noun)	to plan something for a specific time; the plan itself
agenda	the list of topics for a meeting
appointment	a fixed time to meet someone specific
recurring meeting	a meeting that repeats (weekly, monthly)
1:1 (one-to-one)	a regular meeting between a manager and a direct report
retrospective	a meeting to review what worked and what didn't

Smalltalk

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Term	Meaning
running late	arriving after the agreed time
on time	not late, not early
ahead of schedule / behind schedule	earlier / later than the plan
a free slot	an open time in your calendar
back-to-back	with no gap in between
a hard stop	a time you absolutely cannot go past

Practice

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

- Let's ___ the review for Thursday afternoon — I've got a ___ at 4.
- Can you send the ___ before we meet? I don't want a 'let's discuss whatever comes up' session.
- I'm ___ meetings from 9 to 3 — I'll reply after that.
- I've got a ___ at 5 today — school pickup.
- Our ___ every second Friday reviews the sprint honestly — what worked, what didn't.
- My ___ with my manager is thirty minutes every Tuesday.
- Sorry, I'm ___ — I'll be there in five minutes.
- We're two days ___ on the migration, thanks to the extra tester.

Collocations · calendar verbs + noun

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

Term	Meaning
book	a slot
cancel	a recurring meeting
push	a deadline
free up	the afternoon
stick to	the schedule
reschedule	the 1:1

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Odd one out

Which word or phrase doesn't fit the group?

1. 1:1 · stand-up · retrospective · lunch break

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

2. on time · ahead of schedule · behind schedule · in the rain

- ☐ A. on time
- ☐ B. ahead of schedule
- ☐ C. behind schedule
- ☐ D. in the rain

3. at · on · in · and

- ☐ A. at
- ☐ B. on
- ☐ C. in
- ☐ D. and

Grammar · 'How often...?' + prepositions of time (at / on / in) + present simple

12 min

1. 'How often...?' — the frequency question

Structure: How often + do/does + subject + base verb?

• How often do you have 1:1s with your manager? · How often does the team run a retrospective?

Common answers: 'Every Tuesday.' · 'Once a fortnight.' · 'Rarely — maybe twice a year.'

2. Prepositions of time — at / on / in

AT + clock times, meal times, weekend/night (BrE): at 9am · at lunch · at the weekend · at night.

ON + days and dates: on Monday · on the 3rd of April · on my birthday.

IN + months, years, seasons, parts of the day: in June · in 2025 · in summer · in the morning.

3. 'Every' — no preposition

'Every' takes NO preposition: every day · every Monday · every two weeks · every quarter.

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~~X~~ on every Monday · ✓ every Monday.

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Exercise A — Fill the preposition (at / on / in / —)

Complete each sentence with the correct preposition, or a dash (—) when no preposition is needed.

1. The stand-up is ___ 9:30 ___ weekdays.

2. We do a retrospective ___ every second Friday.

3. She always takes her holiday ___ August.

4. I'll send the deck ___ the morning ___ Monday.

5. The office is closed ___ the weekend.

6. We launched the product ___ 2024, ___ Q4.

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Exercise B — Write a 'How often...?' question

Write the natural 'How often...?' question that fits the answer.

1. A: ____? B: Twice a week — Tuesdays and Thursdays.

2. A: ____? B: Every second Friday.

3. A: ____? B: Almost never — maybe once a quarter, if it's urgent.

4. A: ____? B: Every Tuesday morning, 30 minutes.

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Exercise C — Present simple: negatives and Wh- questions

Rewrite each sentence as instructed.

1. Make negative: 'We schedule status meetings every day.'

2. Make question: 'She has a hard stop at 5.' → (What time...?)

3. Make question: 'They cancel the Monday meeting when it's a bank holiday.' → (When...?)

4. Make negative: 'Ana attends every optional workshop.'

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Exercise D — Reality check (write your own true answers)

Answer each question truthfully with a full sentence. Use an adverb of frequency AND at least one specific time expression.

1. How often do you sit in a meeting that could have been an email?
2. How often do you take a proper lunch break away from your desk?
3. How often does your team run a retrospective, and do you find it useful?

Describe the picture



Look at the picture. Write 5–6 sentences using 'how often' + adverbs of frequency + prepositions of time. Describe what each person probably does in a normal week — not just what you see, but the pattern you can guess.

Target language: Every Monday, she probably... · He rarely / hardly ever... · At 9am on weekdays... · How often does she...? · In the mornings, she usually...

Listening · Ana and Tomás compare their weeks over coffee

10 min

Two colleagues — Ana (organised planner) and Tomás (last-minute improviser) — grab a coffee on Wednesday afternoon and honestly compare how their weeks actually look. Natural pace, two voices.

Before you listen

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- When two colleagues with very different styles talk honestly, what usually surprises the listener?
- Which specific detail would tell you more about someone's real week than their job title?

Gist

1. What is the general topic of the conversation?

2. What is the tone between them?

3. By the end, what do they agree on?

Detail

1. How often does Ana say she plans her week in advance?

2. What does Tomás admit he 'almost never' does, and what's the cost?

3. What specific experiment do they agree to try next week?

Listen and complete

Complete each line with ONE, TWO or THREE words.

1. Honestly? ___ ___ evening, about twenty minutes, with tea.

2. You're going to laugh at me, but I ___ ___ write follow-ups down.

3. The follow-ups — that's ___ ___ ___.

4. For one week I'll leave ___ ___ unplanned every day.

5. Shall we ___ it for a week and compare?

Useful phrases from the conversation

Match each phrase to what it does in the dialogue.

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Term	Meaning
Honestly? Every Sunday evening.	answering 'how often' with a specific time
You're going to laugh at me, but...	signalling a slightly embarrassing admission
The follow-ups — that's where I fall down.	naming a specific weakness
Fair enough — I do the opposite.	conceding a point and pivoting
Shall we try it for a week and compare?	proposing a small experiment

Speaking · Interview your partner honestly

8 min

Prepare four honest 'How often...?' questions about your partner's work week. Include at least one uncomfortable question. Interview for 60 seconds, then swap.

Writing · Compare two teams (discursive)

8 min (or homework)

Write 80–100 words comparing YOUR team's weekly rhythm to a team you know from outside (a friend's team, a client, a former job). Use 'how often', at least three adverbs of frequency and two prepositions of time. Finish with ONE honest sentence: which team's rhythm you would rather live with, and why.

Workbook

How often do you...? — Workbook

1. Vocabulary in context

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

1. Sorry, something urgent came up — could we ___ our call for tomorrow?
2. I try not to ___ myself: two meetings at the same time is a disaster.

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3. This week is really ___ — I have almost no free slots.
-
4. Meetings often ___ by 10-15 minutes, which delays everything else.
-
5. I always ___ Friday afternoon to plan the following week.
-
6. Our two calendars ___ on Wednesday — can one of us move?
-

2. Prepositions of time & frequency questions

Complete with the correct preposition (at / on / in) or the correct question form.

1. The board meeting is ___ 9.30 ___ Monday morning ___ March.
-
2. We have team drinks ___ the last Friday ___ every month.
-
3. ___ often ___ you review your KPIs?
-
4. ___ many one-to-ones ___ your manager ___ you have a month?
-
5. I don't usually work ___ weekends, but ___ the moment I am.
-
6. She'll get back to you ___ the end of the day.
-

3. Which sentence is more natural at work?

Choose the more professional / natural option.

1. Politely proposing a new time for a call.
- ☐ A. Would 3pm on Thursday work for you?
 - ☐ B. 3pm Thursday, ok?
 - ☐ C. Can be 3pm Thursday?
2. Asking about someone's weekly routine.
- ☐ A. How often you go office?
 - ☐ B. How often do you go into the office?
 - ☐ C. You go often to office?
3. Saying you rarely check email after work.
- ☐ A. I hardly ever check my email in the evenings.
 - ☐ B. I never no check email evening.
 - ☐ C. In evening I no email.

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4. Asking a colleague to move a meeting.

- ☐ A. Could we possibly push our meeting to 4?
- ☐ B. Push meeting to 4 possible?
- ☐ C. Can move to 4?

5. Saying two meetings overlap.

- ☐ A. My two meetings are clashing at 11.
- ☐ B. My two meetings are same hour.
- ☐ C. I have double at 11.

4. Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. How often you have one-to-ones with your boss?

2. The kick-off meeting is on 9 o'clock.

3. I go three times to the office for a week.

4. We have never meetings on Fridays afternoon.

5. The workshop is in Monday in the morning.

5. Listening — a scheduling call

Two colleagues, Elif and Bruno, try to find a time for a 45-minute meeting this week. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

1. Why can't they meet on Tuesday afternoon?

2. What time do they finally agree on, and on which day?

3. What does Bruno promise to do BEFORE the meeting?

4. Who suggests moving the meeting off-site, and why is the idea rejected?

6. Writing — a scheduling email (80-100 words)

Write a short, polite email to a colleague. You need a 30-minute call this week. Propose TWO possible time slots, explain briefly why the call is important, and offer to send an agenda in advance.

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7. Reading & discursive reflection

Re-read the classbook text about three colleagues with very different weekly routines. Then write a short discursive answer (100–130 words).

1. Which of the three routines is closest to yours, and which is furthest? What are the main advantages and disadvantages of the routine that is furthest from yours? Justify with concrete examples.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class
