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An **adverbial phrase** is one or more words that modify the verb in a sentence. Adverbs and phrases of time and frequency tell us *when*, *how often* and *how long* something happens.



via <https://www.slideshare.net/RaquelCheneauxValz/adverbial-phrases-of-frequency>

Adverbial phrases of time

Time

These phrases can tell us **when**. They usually come at the **end** of the sentence:

- in 1995
- this week/month/year

- next week/month/year
 - last week/month/year
 - ten years ago
 - today, yesterday, tomorrow
- etc.

- *She was born **in 1980**.*
- *We arrived in the UK **last week**.*
- *He left China **ten days ago**.*
- *They are getting married **this month**.*
- *She's going to start university **next year**.*
- *I went to the cinema **yesterday**.*

Adverbs that tell us when can be placed at the *beginning* of the sentence to emphasize the time element.

- ***Yesterday** policemen arrested a man and a woman in connection with the murder.*
- ***Later** the kid ate some porridge.*

Duration

These phrases can tell us **how long**. These are phrases with the prepositions '**for**' and '**since**'.

We use:

for + period of time

- for two years
- for six months
- for two weeks
- for five minutes

since + point in time

- since 2015
- since last September
- since yesterday
- since 10.00

They usually come at the **end** of the sentence:

- *She has been studying maths **for two years**.*
- *We have known each other **for six months**.*
- *I have been working here **since 2015**.*
- *They have been in England **since last September**.*

We often use 'for' and 'since' with the [Present Perfect](#).

- *I've been reading **for two hours**.*

We can also use 'for' with other tenses:

- *My uncle was in the army **for thirty years**.*

Adverbial phrases of frequency

Like [adverbs of frequency](#), we use these phrases to say **how often** we do something.

Here are some adverbial phrases that express frequency. All of them usually go at the **end** and sometimes at the **beginning** of the sentence but not in the middle.

- every day/year/month...
- once a month/ a week/ a day ...
- twice a year / a week / a month ...
- four times a day / a month/ a week ...
- once in a while ...
- every now and again ...
- from time to time ...
- on Sundays ...

- *I go to the movies **once in a while**.*
- *She drinks coffee **every now and again**.*
- ***From time to time** I visit my grandmother.*
- *We have breakfast **every day**.*
- *She goes to the cinema **on Tuesdays**.*
- *She goes to the cinema **once a week**.*

Order of adverbs of time

If you need to use more than one adverb of time in a sentence, use them in this order:

1. how long 2. how often 3. when

- 1 + 2: I work (1) **for five hours** (2) **every day**.
- 2 + 3: The magazine will be published (2) **weekly** (3) **next year**.
- 1 + 3: I've been in China (1) **for two months** (3) **this year**.
- 1 + 2 + 3: She worked in a hospital (1) **for three days** (2) **every week** (3) **last year**.

Watch this video from My English Web to see the examples of these adverbial phrases in use:

See also:

[Position of Adverbs in a Sentence](#)

[Adverbs of Frequency](#)