81 *how*

How much is it?

How fast does it go?

How do you open the doors?

1 *how*

The *wh-* word *how* can ask about a lot of different things. We use it to ask about

- the way we do something:
  How do *I open this bottle?* ***How do*** *we get to your house?* ***How do*** *you open the doors?*
- other things, eg:

health (*how* + *be*)	*How are you?*	*I'm fine, thanks.*
	How's your father now?	*He's feeling better, thanks.*
opinion (*how* + *be*)	*How's the soup?*	*It's delicious.*
	How was the party?	*It was great. I enjoyed it.*
news about a person's life	*How's it going?*	*Fine, everything's OK.*
	How did the exam go?	*Fantastic! I passed!*

2 *how* + adjective

We use *how* before adjectives to ask about age, measurements and size:
How old *is Tracey? She's seven. / She's seven* ***years old.***
How long *is the Nile? It's 6650 kilometres* ***long.***
How tall *is the CNN Tower? It's 553 metres* ***tall.***
How deep *is the swimming pool? It's two metres* ***deep.***
How big *is the village? Not very* ***big****, only about 4000 people live there.*

⚠ With exact measurements, we include the adjectives *tall, high, long, wide, deep* in the answer. Look at the word order:
✗ ~~*The CNN Tower is tall 553 metres.*~~ ✓ *The CNN Tower is* ***553 metres tall.***

⚠ The answer to a question asking *How old ... ?* is different:
✗ ~~*My daughter is seven old.*~~ ✗ ~~*My daughter is seven years.*~~
✓ *My daughter is* ***seven.*** ✓ *My daughter is* ***seven years old.***

3 Other common questions with *how*

We also use *how* to ask about:

length of time	*How long is the flight?*	*It's four hours.*
distance	*How far is the station from here?*	*It's half a mile.*
speed	*How fast does it go?*	*Very fast, 250 kilometres an hour!*
frequency	*How often should I take the medicine?*	*Twice a day.*
number	*How many people live on the island?*	*Three thousand.*
amount	*How much water is left?*	*Five bottles.*
price	*How much was the car?*	*It was really expensive!*

⚠ We don't use adverbs (e.g. *fast, often*) after measurements in answers:
✗ ~~*It goes at 250 kilometres an hour fast.*~~ ✓ *It goes at 250 kilometres an hour.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Practice

1 **Write questions for the answers. Use *how* + adjective and a place name from the box.**

0 *How high is Mount Everest?* ..... It is 8848 metres high.
1 ..... It is 6400 kilometres long.
2 ..... It is 300 metres tall.
3 ..... It is 150 metres wide.
4 ..... It is 1637 metres deep.
5 ..... It is nearly six hundred years old.

the Amazon River
Lake Baikal
the Eiffel Tower
~~Mount Everest~~
Machu Picchu
the Panama Canal

2 GRAMMAR IN USE **Complete this magazine interview. Use *how*, and add an adjective/adverb if necessary.**

GORDON LAWRENCE has worked on maglev trains for nearly 30 years. In this interview he talks to *Chris Anderson*.

CA Gordon, everyone has heard of maglev trains, but we don't know much about them. (0) *How fast* can a maglev train go?

GL They can go at nearly 600 kilometres an hour.

CA And (1) ..... does a maglev train actually work?

GL Well, it travels a few centimetres above the ground – it uses a new type of scientific technology.

CA (2) ..... are there in use now?

GL Well, there's only one system in use – in Shanghai, China. It goes from the city to the airport.

CA So (3) ..... is that?

GL Only about 30 kilometres.

CA And (4) ..... does that take?

GL The train does that in about seven minutes.

CA Oh, that's fast! (5) ..... do they leave?

GL There are four trains an hour.

CA I know it's new technology that quite a lot of countries are developing. (6) ..... is the development going now?

GL It's going well. There are lots of plans for more maglev trains across the world.

CA Really? (7) ..... does each train cost?

GL That's difficult to say. The Shanghai project cost over a billion US dollars.

3 **Write questions starting with *How*.**

I want to know ...

0 if you are well. *How are you?*
1 the price of this book. .....
2 the age of your baby. .....
3 the length of the flight. .....
4 the distance to the airport. .....
5 if your interview went well. .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS