

How long/far/often . . . ?

- 1 We use **How long ...?** to ask about a period of time:

How long have you been waiting? ~ About twenty minutes.

How long will the journey take? ~ Three hours.

We use **from ... to** or **from ... until** to talk about a period of time:

She was a student from 1995 to 2000.

Tomorrow I'm working from 8.30 until 6.

- 2 We use **How far ...?** to ask about the distance from one place to another. We can use **from** and **to** with the places we are asking about:

How far is it from Amsterdam to Paris?

~ 475 kilometres.

How far are the shops from here? ~ Not far.

- 3 We use **How often ...?** to ask about the number of times something happens. We can use phrases like **every day**, **once a week**, etc. in the answer:

How often do the buses run? ~ Every hour.

How often do you play squash? ~ Twice a week.

- 4 We can use **How much ...?** to ask about the price of something:

How much is a return ticket to Florence?

How much did you pay for this car?

- 5 We use **How much ...?** with an uncountable noun to ask about the amount of something. An uncountable noun cannot be plural because it describes something that cannot be counted (e.g. **bread**, **work**, **weather**, **money**, **music**, **meat**, **milk**, **cheese**).

How much bread is there in the cupboard?

How much work have you done today?

- 6 We use **How many ...?** with a plural noun to ask about numbers:

How many students are in your class?

~ Fifteen.

How many people went to the party? ~ Ten.

- 7 We use **How old ...?** to ask about someone's age:

How old are you? ~ I'm 19.

Note that we say:

I am 19, OR: 19. (NOT I have 19.)

We can also say: *I'm 19 years old.* But we cannot say: *I'm 19 years.*

Practice

- A Complete the questions using **How long**, **How old**, **How often**, etc. Put the verbs into the correct tense.

QUESTIONS

- (How/you/stay/in New Zealand?)

How long did you stay in New Zealand?

- 1 (How/he/read/a newspaper?)

.....

- 2 (How/a single room/cost?)

.....

- 3 (How/be/you when you went to live in Australia?)

.....

- 4 (How/exams/you/going to take?)

.....

- 5 (How/the course/last?)

.....

- 6 (How/be/it from here to the nearest bus stop?)

.....

ANSWERS

~ I stayed there for six months.

~ He reads one every day.

~ It costs £50 a night.

~ I was 15 when I went there.

~ I'm going to take three exams.

~ It will last for two years.

~ It's about 200 metres.

B Make each question using the words in brackets (), and *How old*, *How much*, *How many*, etc. Put the verbs into the correct tense.

- A: *How old is your husband* (your husband/be)?
B: He is 34. He'll be 35 next month.
- 1 A: (languages/you/speak)?
B: I speak three – English, French and Chinese.
- 2 A: (it/be) from here to the airport?
B: It's about 25 kilometres.
- 3 A: (the meal/cost)?
B: I can't remember, but it wasn't very expensive.
- 4 A: (you/stay) there?
B: I stayed there from June until October.
- 5 A: (the postman/come)?
B: He comes twice a day.
- 6 A: (cheese/you/buy)?
B: I bought half a kilo.

C Complete each of these sentences by putting one word into each gap.

- It was my birthday last week. I *am* 21.
- 1 The programme lasts 8.30 10 o'clock.
- 2 There is a train to the centre thirty minutes in the morning.
- 3 How money have you got?
- 4 How far is it here the city centre?
- 5 My grandfather is seventy
- 6 How countries have you visited?

D Complete the conversation by putting in Bob's questions. Start with *How ...* each time.

- Anne: I'm doing a course in computing.
- Bob: Oh really. (►) *How long have you been doing it?*
- Anne: I've been doing it for about a month. It's at the local college.
- Bob: (1) ?
- Anne: I go there twice a week.
- Bob: (2) ?
- Anne: The lessons last for three hours, from two o'clock until five.
- Bob: (3) ?
- Anne: I study at home every evening.
- Bob: (4) ?
- Anne: There are about twenty-five people in my class.
- Bob: (5) ?
- Anne: They're all about the same age as me.
- Bob: (6) ?
- Anne: It's not far from my home.
- Bob: (7) ?
- Anne: It doesn't cost anything. My company is paying.