Listening: routines, times and arrangements

English A2

What this topic teaches

A2 listening catches three kinds of time: the routine (*every day*), the clock (*at 7.15*), and the arrangement (*I am meeting her on Friday*). Each sounds different, and each changes what you must do next.

- Routines use the present simple with **frequency words** : always, usually, often, sometimes, never.
- Clock times come in two systems: the 24-hour and the friendly one (quarter past, half past, quarter to).
- Arrangements use the present continuous for the future: *I am meeting Ana on Friday.*
- Memory hook: **three clocks** on the wall: the always-clock, the now-clock, the Friday-clock.

Routines: the always-clock

A routine is a habit heard in the present simple. The frequency words ride in the middle: *I **usually** get up at seven.*

Frequency ladder	Example
always (100%)	She always walks to school.
usually (80%)	I usually drink tea.
often (60%)	We often play after class.
sometimes (30%)	He sometimes forgets his keys.
never (0%)	They never eat late.

- The frequency word sits BEFORE the main verb but AFTER be: *She is always late.*
- Listen for the -s on he/she/it verbs: *walks, drinks, plays* – the sound of routine.

■ A first try

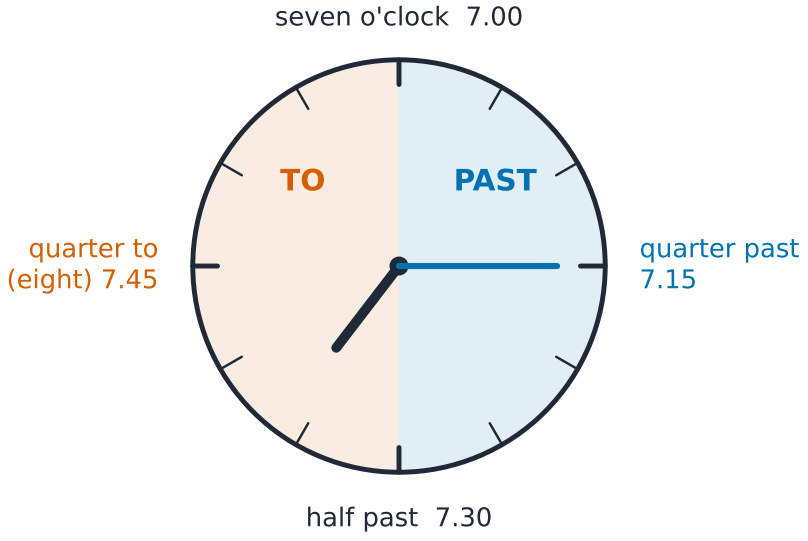
Catch the frequency.

- I usually study at night. (usually)
- He never drinks coffee. (never)
- She is often busy on Mondays. (often)

Clock times: the two systems

Times arrive in two dressings. Catch either one; both mean the same moment.

Digital style	Friendly style	Means
7.00	seven o'clock	7:00
7.15	quarter past seven	7:15
7.30	half past seven	7:30
7.45	quarter to eight	7:45



Right half of the clock: past this hour. Left half: to the next hour

- PAST means the minute hand has passed the hour; TO means it is climbing to the next.
- The trap pair: *quarter past seven* (7.15) and *quarter to seven* (6.45) are different days of your morning.

Arrangements: the Friday-clock

The present continuous can carry the future: *I am meeting Ana on Friday.* This is an **arrangement** : a plan with a time already fixed.

- The sound of the arrangement: am/is/are + verb-ing + a time word (on Friday, at 6, tomorrow).
- Compare the routine: *I meet Ana on Fridays* (every Friday) vs *I am meeting Ana on Friday* (this one).
- In listening, the time word tells you which clock you are on: *every* = routine; *on + day / at + time* once = arrangement.

■ **Listen and sort**

- We have lunch at noon every day. (routine)
- I am seeing the dentist on Tuesday. (arrangement)
- She usually cycles, but she is taking the bus tomorrow. (both, one sentence)

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- Do not hear every -ing as now: with a future time word, it is a plan.
- *on Friday* vs *on Fridays*: one Friday, or every Friday – the letter s is the whole calendar.
- 7.15 and 6.45 sound one word apart: past and to decide which hour.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. Place the frequency word: *She is always late* or *She always is late*? – ***She is always late.*** The frequency word comes after *be*.
2. Friendly style: 7.45? 3.30? – ***quarter to eight*** and ***half past three***.
3. Routine or arrangement: *They are visiting Grandma on Sunday.* – **An arrangement**: present continuous plus one fixed time.
4. The trap: *on Friday* vs *on Fridays*. – ***on Friday*** is one Friday (usually the next one); ***on Fridays*** is every Friday, a routine.

■ **Practice: listen and answer**

Teacher-read: your teacher reads the recording twice. Read the questions first.
"Hi, I'm Jun. On school days I usually get up at quarter to seven, and I always have noodles for breakfast. I never walk to school, because it's too far, so I take the bus at half past seven. But this Saturday is different: I'm meeting my cousin at the station at quarter past ten, and we're going to the science museum."

1. What time does Jun usually get up on school days?
2. What does he always have for breakfast?
3. How does he get to school, and at what time?
4. Is meeting his cousin a routine or an arrangement? When is it?
5. Where are they going?

Answers. 5 **6.45** – *quarter to seven*, not 7.15. 6 **Noodles.** 7 **By bus, at 7.30.** 8 **An arrangement** (*I'm meeting* + one time): **Saturday at 10.15**. 9 **To the science museum.**