

A Broken Heart

a song by Alan Smith Robertson

<https://youtu.be/Z2ZFTeRQ89w>

Pre-listening activities

Put the adverbs of frequency below into the correct order, from most frequent to least frequent. Some of the adverbs have the same or very similar meanings.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Always | • <u>Always</u> (most frequent) |
| • Constantly | • _____ |
| • Hardly ever | • _____ |
| • Never | • _____ |
| • Now and then | • _____ / _____ |
| • Occasionally | • _____ / _____ |
| • Often | • _____ / _____ |
| • Once in a while | • _____ / _____ |
| • Rarely | • _____ / _____ |
| • Sometimes | • _____ |
| • Usually | • <u>Never</u> (least frequent) |

Do you know your partner well? How often do you think your partner does certain activities? Use the adverbs of frequency in the first exercise.

- Watch TV in the evening
- Pick up and look at his/her smartphone
- Study English at the weekend
- Wash the dishes / Wash the clothes
- Read in bed
- Go out with friends on Saturday
- Think of an ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend
- Arrive late for school (be late for school)

For example: - I think that you often watch TV in the evening

- No. Sometimes I watch TV after school, but I usually study in the evening

You're going to listen to a song called "A Broken Heart". What do you think it will be about?

Why do relationships end?

Listen to the song and write the adverbs or expressions of frequency that you hear.

VERSE 1 _____, although she would smile,
it _____ meant she was thinking of him.
Though _____ we talked, more _____ than not,
I didn't really hear what she had to say.

CHORUS _____,
since we're apart,
I wonder how to mend a broken heart.

VERSE 2 I was _____ there when she needed me,
and _____ I was out drinking with friends.
I was _____ the one who was out having fun,
yet she _____ complained about being ignored.

VERSE 3 _____ she sits under our tree,
_____ to see if I come back to her.
By now she should know that I'm not coming home.
In fact now I _____ think about her.

Post-listening activities

In the last chorus there is one slight difference. Did you notice it? Check the lyrics below

But now and then,
Since we're apart,
I wonder how to mend ____ broken heart

How does this change the meaning of the song?

How do you feel about the narrator? Is he a good person? How do you feel about the woman?

A Broken Heart

a song by Alan Smith Robertson, designed to practice “adverbs of frequency”

<https://youtu.be/Z2ZFTeRQ89w>

Teacher's answer sheet. Length: approximately 25 - 30 minutes

Pre-listening activities

Put the adverbs of frequency below into the correct order, from most frequent to least frequent. Some of the adverbs have the same or very similar meanings.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| ○ Always | • <i>Always</i> (most frequent) |
| ○ Constantly | • <i>Constantly</i> |
| ○ Hardly ever | • <i>Usually</i> |
| ○ Never | • <i>Often</i> |
| ○ Now and then | • <i>Sometimes / Occasionally</i> |
| ○ Occasionally | • <i>Once in a while / Now and then</i> |
| ○ Often | • <i>Rarely / Hardly ever</i> |
| ○ Once in a while | • <i>Never</i> (least frequent) |
| ○ Rarely | |
| ○ Sometimes | |
| ○ Usually | |

Do you know your partner well? How often do you think your partner does certain activities? Use the adverbs of frequency in the first exercise.

- Watch TV in the evening
- Pick up and look at his/her smartphone
- Study English at the weekend
- Wash the dishes / Wash the clothes
- Read in bed
- Go out with friends on Saturday
- Think of an ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend
- Arrive late for school (be late for school)

For example: - I think that you often watch TV in the evening

- No. Sometimes I watch TV after school, but I usually study in the evening

Try to encourage the students to use adverbs of frequency; so if a student says “I am late for school every day” you can respond “so you are always late for school” or if a student says “I wash the dishes three times a week” you can respond “so sometimes you wash the dishes”

You're going to listen to a song called “A Broken Heart”. What do you think it will be about?

Obviously it's about a person with a broken heart after a relationship ended.

Why do relationships end?

There are many reasons, but the main reason given in the song is that there was little or no communication between the two people.

Listen to the song and write the adverbs or expressions of frequency that you hear.
Give the students time to fill in the gaps, and if necessary, listen twice.

VERSE 1 *Once in a while*, although she would smile,
it *usually* meant she was thinking of him.
Though *sometimes* we talked, more *often* than not,
I didn't really hear what she had to say.

CHORUS *Now and then*,
since we're apart,
I wonder how to mend a broken heart.

VERSE 2 I was *never* there when she needed me,
and *constantly* I was out drinking with friends.
I was *always* the one who was out having fun,
yet she *rarely* complained about being ignored.

VERSE 3 *Occasionally* she sits under our tree,
Often to see if I come back to her.
By now she should know that I'm not coming home.
In fact now I *hardly ever* think about her.

Post-listening activities

In the last chorus there is one slight difference. Did you notice it? Check the lyrics below

But now and then,
since we're apart,
I wonder how to mend HER broken heart

How does this change the meaning of the song?

The first time we hear the chorus, we think that it is the singer's heart that needs to be mended; we think that the singer is sad because the relationship is over.

But after we hear the last verse and the last chorus we realise it is the woman's heart that needs to be mended; it is the woman who is sad and the singer "hardly ever" thinks about her.

How do you feel about the narrator? Is he a good person? How do you feel about the woman?

On the one hand, he realises that he has made the woman suffer and he wants to fix the situation, but on the other hand, he was not a very good boyfriend.

Some students may feel sorry for the woman, others might pity her because she is still waiting for the narrator to return.