**How long?** is used to ask questions about amounts or periods of time:

- 'How long have you been waiting?' 'Only for a minute or two.'
- 'How long have they been married?' 'Oh, for a very long time. More than 25 years.'
- 'How long will the concert last?' 'It should be over by ten o’clock, I think.'
- 'How long was your stay in Malaysia?' 'The project lasted for two years, but I was there for two and a half years.'
- 'How long have you been living in this house?' 'For 12 years now, ever since my mother died.'
- 'How much longer can you stay?' 'Not much longer. For another ten minutes perhaps. I have to be home before midnight.'

Note that this construction is often used with the prepositions for or since in the reply.

**How long...?** can also be used to ask about the measured length of something. Study the following:

- 'How long was the wedding dress?' 'It was very short, knee-length really.'
- 'I see you are growing your hair. **How long** do you want it to be?' 'Shoulder-length at least.'

**How long ...?** is also used to ask about the time required to do something:

- **How long** does it take to drive from Florence to Rome?

If you use the construction **How many times...?**, you are enquiring about the specific number of occasions something has happened. Most often a numeral adjective is found in the answer.

- 'How many times have you read that book?' 'At least ten times. I really like it.'
- 'How many times did you visit them last summer?' 'Almost every weekend.'
- 'How many times did the phone ring last night?' 'We must have had about twenty calls.'
- 'How many times have I told you not to play football in the garden?'

Note that the construction **How often...?** is more versatile and is used more frequently than **How many times...?**

When you use this construction, you are asking about how frequently something happens. Unlike **How many times...?** which usually refers to past occasions, **How often...?** is used to refer to past, present and future situations:

- 'How often do you plan to play tennis this summer?' 'As often as possible. Every day, if I can.'
- 'How often will you visit your mother in hospital?' 'I shall try to visit her at least once a week.'
- 'How often did you go to the cinema when you were young?' 'Every weekend, without fail. There was no television then.'
- 'How often do you go to the big supermarket to do your shopping?' 'Not very often. Perhaps once a month.'
- 'When you lived in London, **how often** did you go to the theatre?' 'We used to go three or four times a year – something like that.'
*How far ...?* is used to ask about the distance to a place:

- *'How far is it from Frascati to Rome ?' It’s 40 km away*

*How fast ...?* is used for speed-related questions :

- *How fast can your car go ?*