



SINCE 1828

when adverb

\ 'hwɛn , 'wɛn, (h)wən\

Definition of *when* (Entry 1 of 4)

- 1 : at what time
// when will you return
- 2 **a** : at or during which time
b : and then
- 3 : at a former and usually less prosperous time
// brag fondly of having known him when
 — Vance Packard

when conjunction

\ 'hwɛn , 'wɛn, (h)wən\

Definition of *when* (Entry 2 of 4)

- 1 **a** : at or during the time that : WHILE
// went fishing when he was a boy

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c : at any or every time that

// *when* he listens to music, he falls asleep

2 : in the event that : IF

// a contestant is disqualified *when* he disobeys the rules

3 a : considering that

// why use water at all *when* you can drown in it

— Stuart Chase

b : in spite of the fact that : ALTHOUGH

// quit politics *when* I might have had a great career in it

4 : the time or occasion at or in which

// tomorrow is *when* we must decide

// humor is *when* you laugh

— Earl Rovit

when pronoun

\ 'hwen , 'wen\

Definition of *when* (Entry 3 of 4)

: what or which time

// life-long homes for those ... who have lived here since *when*

— Kim Waller

when noun

\ 'hwen , 'wen\

Definition of *when* (Entry 4 of 4)

: the time in which something is done or comes about

// troubled his head very little about the hows and *whens* of life

— Laurence Sterne

Synonyms

More Example Sentences

Learn More about *when*

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Synonyms for *when*

Synonyms: Conjunction

as, so long as, while, whilst [*chiefly British*]



Examples of *when* in a Sentence

Adverb

// *When* did the American Civil War begin?

// The detective asked me *when* I last saw her.

// *When* is the next performance?

// It was a time *when* people didn't have to lock their doors.

// the happy days *when* we were together

// We're still waiting for the test results, *when* we'll decide our next move.

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Conjunction

// *When* he finally showed up, he was drunk.

// *When* I was in school, we didn't have computers.

// You can go *when* the bell rings.

// Call me *when* you get home.

// Things were better *when* he got a job.

// *When* he watches television, he falls asleep.

// She quit politics *when* she might have had a great career in it.

Pronoun

// He retired in 1998, since *when* he has been devoting his time to gardening.

// You need the report by *when*?



Recent Examples on the Web: Adverb

// In a year *when* sneaker maximalism is seemingly inescapable, the Killshot is a refreshing breath of simplicity.

— Tyler Watamanuk, *GQ*, "The Nike Killshot 2 Is Back at J.Crew," 7 May 2018

// Trump has inspired countless novice candidates across the country, who see no limit to their ability to win public office at a time *when* Americans are tired of politics as usual and have lost faith in government and other institutions.

— Christa Case Bryant, *The Christian Science Monitor*, "In West Virginia, GOP tries to tame forces of 'Trumpism'," 7 May 2018

// One happened to be in Parkland, *when* Gonzalez was in first grade.

— Danielle Paquette, *courant.com*, "People think she's a Parkland 'crisis actor.' It's terrifying.," 7 May 2018

// Earlier this season, the Enquirer wrote a story showing that Cincinnati's winning percentage increases *when* Walker is in the starting lineup.

— Charlie Hatch, *Cincinnati.com*, "Kenney Walker's 50-yard strike for FC Cincinnati named USL's April Goal of the Month," 7 May 2018

// The behavior only changed *when* the award was within grasp.

— Neil Senturia, *sandiegouniontribune.com*, "Do employee incentives and bonuses work?," 7 May 2018

// Ken thinks its heckling, *when* people are asking for his help.

— *EW.com*, "Ken Jeong jumps off stage mid-show to help audience member having seizure," 7 May 2018

// Orlando City's depth is real ... but there's catch Anyone else know *when* was the last time Chris Schuler played a full 90 minutes?

— Jordan Culver, *Pro Soccer USA*, "Orlando City enjoys record win streak, but tough tests loom," 7 May 2018

// One sign that things were amiss came Friday morning, *when* Haspel was due to have conducted a walk-through at the hearing room in the Hart Senate Office Building.

— *NBC News*, "Gina Haspel considered withdrawing as CIA nominee, sources say," 6 May 2018

Recent Examples on the Web: Noun

// The springy, lightweight nylon frames comfortably grip the head with sticky-*when-wet* pads at the nose and earpieces.

— *Outside Online*, "The Best Sunglasses of 2018," 15 May 2018

// Will's panned destruction of Trump -- as only the always-use-the-\$1,000-word-*when*-the-\$1-word-would-do wordsmith can -- will draw most of the attention.

— Chris Cillizza, *CNN*, "George Will just exposed Mike Pence's Faustian bargain," 10 May 2018

// Daniel could have said no when his flinty-*when-not-curmudgeonly* father, Jay, asked to audit the classics class Daniel was teaching at Bard College.

— Peter Lewis, *The Christian Science Monitor*, "'An Odyssey' is a father-son journey with Homer as guide," 20 Sep. 2017

// What the possibilities of technology offer — beyond the gig-*when-you-need-it* networks — are a chance to collectively rethink generations of regulations.

— Scott Canon, *kansascity*, "Digital Life: Tech in a nanny state or Ayn Rand wonderland," 29 May 2017

// The party guests are playing a freeze-*when-the-music-stops* game, but Joe is off in his own world, not paying attention.

— Neil Genzlinger, *New York Times*, "'The A Word' Places Autism Front and Center MARCH 30, 2016," 12 July 2016

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First Known Use of *when*

Adverb

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

Conjunction

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

Pronoun

14th century, in the meaning defined [above](#)

Noun

1616, in the meaning defined [above](#)

History and Etymology for *when*

Adverb

Middle English, from Old English *hwanne*, *hwenne*; akin to Old High German *hwanne* when, Old English *hwā* who — more at [WHO](#)

Conjunction

Middle English, from Old English *hwanne*, *hwenne*, from *hwanne*, *hwenne*, adverb

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Dictionary Entries near *when*

whelpless

whelve

whemmel

when

when all is said and done

whenas

whence

Statistics for *when*

Look-up Popularity

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when *adverb*