whenever, *adv. and conj.*

**Pronunciation:** /ˈhwerə(r)/

**Forms:** (In early use as two words.) Also poet. whene'er /ˈhwɛnə(r)/.

**Etymology:** < WHEN *adv.* + EVER *n.* (see below).

**I.** As relative adverb or conjunction: cf. WHEN *adv.* 4.

1. [EVER *adv.* 8e.] At any time when; every time that, as often as. In a qualifying (conditional) clause, the meaning becomes: At whatever time, no matter when. Also with the idea of time weakened or lost (cf. WHEN *adv.* 8): In any or every case in which. Also as adv. with loss of relative force: at whatever time (*colloq.*)

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*c1380*   Wyclif *Sel. Wks.* III. 354  As þe popis clerkis feynen þat þei done miraclis whanne evere þei syngen, moo and more woundirful þan ever dide Crist or his apostlis.

*c1440*   *Generydes* 1245  Ser, on to hir loggyng, When euer it please yow, I shall be your gyde.

*c1449*   R. Pecock *Repressor* (1860) 2  Whanne euer he takith vpon him for to..correpte his Cristen neiþbour.

1509   *Reg. Privy Seal Scot.* I. 293/2  Landis..that stall happin to cum in the Kingis hands..throu the said Henrys deceis quhenever it stall happein.

1594   Shakespeare *Titus Andronicus* IV. ii. 15  When euer you haue neede, You may be armed and appointed well.

1667   Milton *Paradise Lost* X. 771  His doom is fair, That dust I am, and shall to dust returne: O welcom hour whenever!

1678   *Young Man's Calling* p. xiv,  So might you welcom your death with pleasant smiles when ere it comes.

1766   O. Goldsmith *Vicar of Wakefield* II. xi. 179  You may at a minute's warning send them over England whenever your honour thinks fit.

1842   Dickens *Amer. Notes* II. i. 11  Whenever an Englishman would cry 'All right!' an American cries 'Go ahead!'

1865   J. Ruskin *Sesame & Lilies* I. 54  Roguery and lying..are instantly to be flogged out of the way whenever discovered.

1891   F. W. Farrar *Darkness & Dawn* I. xiv. 116  She still had access to the Emperor whenever she desired.

1917   H. James *Ivory Tower* in *Amer. Novels* III. v. 221,  I said to myself..three weeks ago, or whenever, that it wasn't for that I was going to come over.

1921   *Oxf. Mag.* 28 Jan. 163/1  When the official story..is published, whenever that may be, minor details..will require correction.
1982  J. D. MACDONALD  *Cinnamon Skin*  xi. 107  Maybe we can leave it that you can come over to Lauderdale whenever.

2.  [EVER  adv. 8c.] At the very time or moment when; as soon as.
(Now only in Sc. and Irish use.)

1655  tr. C. Sorel  *Comical Hist. Francion*  viii. 7  He gave me a good supper last night when ever I came within his doors.
1800  *Monthly Mag.*  9  323/2  We will go to our dinner whenever the clock strikes two.
1839  A. URE  *Dict. Arts*  589  One-third of the mixture is introduced at first; whenever this is melted, the second third is thrown in.
1875  A. WILSON  *Abode of Snow*  xxxviii. 360  And whenever my tent was set up I went to sleep in spite of the wind.

II.

3.  As interrogative adverb, an emphatic extension of *when*.
(Properly two words, and usually so written: see EVER adv. 8d) Now colloq.

1713  J. ADDISON  *Cato*  1. i.  When-e're did Juba, or did Portius, show A Virtue that has cast me at a Distance?
1923  *N.E.D.* at *Whenever*,  *Mod.*  When ever I did I say that? I waited and waited, and wondered when ever he would come.

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