

# ABA Measurement Quick Reference

A quick guide to common ABA measurement systems and when to use them

## Continuous Measurement

### Count (Frequency)

The number of times a behavior occurs.

### Rate

The number of responses per unit of time.

### Duration

The amount of time a behavior lasts from onset to offset.

### Latency

The amount of time from a specified stimulus or event to the onset of a response.

### Interresponse Time (IRT)

The amount of time between two successive responses.



## Discontinuous Measurement

### Partial-Interval Recording

Record whether the behavior occurred at any time during the interval.

### Whole-Interval Recording

Record whether the behavior occurred for the entire interval.

### Momentary Time Sampling (MTS)

Record whether the behavior is occurring at the moment the interval ends.

#### WHEN IS THE INTERVAL SCORED '+'?

|                |                                                                                    |                                             |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Partial</b> |  | → Behavior occurs at any time               |
| <b>Whole</b>   |  | → Behavior occurs for the entire interval   |
| <b>MTS</b>     |  | → Behavior is occurring at the check moment |

Remember: Partial interval tends to overestimate duration; whole interval tends to underestimate duration.

## Other Useful Measures

### Percentage

A proportion expressed out of 100, often calculated as responses meeting a criterion divided by total opportunities  $\times 100$ .

### Trials to Criterion

The number of response opportunities needed to reach a specified criterion.

## When Should I Use Each?

|                                                        |                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Need the total number of occurrences?                  | → <b>Count (Frequency)</b>                        |
| Need occurrences standardized by time?                 | → <b>Rate</b>                                     |
| How long did it last?                                  | → <b>Duration</b>                                 |
| How long before it started?                            | → <b>Latency</b>                                  |
| How much time occurred between responses?              | → <b>Interresponse Time (IRT)</b>                 |
| Want to sample behavior across intervals?              | → <b>Partial Interval, Whole Interval, or MTS</b> |
| Want to report a proportion of opportunities?          | → <b>Percentage</b>                               |
| How many opportunities were needed to reach criterion? | → <b>Trials to Criterion</b>                      |

## Quick Distinctions

### COUNT vs. RATE

Rate = count per unit of time.  
Frequency / count does not account for time unless rate is calculated.

### DURATION vs. LATENCY

Duration = how long it lasts.  
Latency = how long it takes for the behavior to begin.

### ANY • ALL • INSTANT

Partial = any point in the interval.  
Whole = the entire interval.  
MTS = only at the interval's end.

Looking for more BCBA study resources? Explore more at: [PassPointABA.com](https://PassPointABA.com)

Use this guide for quick review of common ABA measurement systems and to identify areas for deeper study and practice.

Key references: BACB 6th Edition Test Content Outline; Cooper, Heron, & Heward, Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd ed.).