

Adverbs



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Adverbs describe verbs and modify adjectives and other adverbs. Adverbs, unlike adjectives, do not modify nouns. Adverbs can also modify phrases, clauses, and sentences. Adverbs answer one of the following questions: *When? Where? Why? How? Under what conditions? and To what extent?*

Example: The teacher had to speak **loudly** to be heard over the children. (*Loudly* modifies the verb speak.)
The children were **really** bad during the movie. (*Really* modifies the adjective bad.)
John approached the wounded dog **very** slowly. (*Very* modifies the adverb slowly.)
Clearly, Sarah did not understand the directions. (*Clearly* modifies the sentence.)
The box is **still** below the stairs. (*Still* modifies the phrase “below the stairs.”)

Types of Adverbs

Adverbs of Time

An adverb of time answers the question *When?* Adverbs of time include: *after, always, before, during, early, later, never, now, often, rarely, recently, sometimes, soon, then, today, tomorrow, usually, yesterday, etc.*

Example: John will attend the soccer game **after** he finishes his homework. (**After** answers the question: When will John attend the soccer game?)

Adverbs of Manner

An adverb of manner answers the question *How?* Adverbs of manner include: *badly, beautifully, better, bravely, cheerfully, fast, hard, quickly, slowly, inadequately, healthy, well, etc.*

Example: Sarah **slowly** walked over the rocky beach. (**Slowly** answers the question: How did Sarah walk?)

Adverbs of Place

An adverb of place answers the question *Where?* Adverbs of place include: *above, away, below, down, here, inside, near, outside, there, up, etc.*

Example: Susan placed the boxes **above** the file cabinet. (**Above** answers the question: Where did Susan place the boxes?)

Adverbs of Degree

An adverb of degree answers the question *How much?* It describes the strength and intensity at which something happens. Adverbs of degree include: *almost, completely, enough, entirely, extremely, hardly, just, little, much, nearly, quite, rather, very, too, etc.*

Example: John worked **very** hard to complete his part of the project. (**Very** answers the question: How hard did John work?)

Adverbs of Frequency

An adverb of frequency answers the question *How often?* Adverbs of frequency include: *always, never, usually, frequently, occasionally, rarely, seldom, sometimes, etc.*

Example: Bob **always** forgets to check his email before class begins. (**Before** answers the question: How often does Bob forget to check his email?)

Interrogative Adverbs

An interrogative adverb introduces a question. Interrogative adverbs are usually placed at the beginning of the sentence. Interrogative adverbs include: *how, when, why, and where*.

Example: **When** will John's plane arrive from Atlanta?

Conjunctive Adverbs

Conjunctive adverbs serve as transitional words, joining and relating independent clauses. Conjunctive adverbs include: *accordingly, also, alternatively, certainly, consequently, finally, nevertheless, moreover, previously, therefore*, etc. For a list of more conjunctive adverbs, refer to the Writing Center's handout *Common Conjunctions*.

Example: We plan to leave early in the morning; **therefore**, we will go to bed early.

Forming Adverbs

Adding -ly to the end

Many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to an adjective.

Example: clear/clearly hard/hardly

Irregular Adverbs

Some adverbs do not use the *-ly* ending. These adverbs do not have a particular form. Following is a list of some of the most common irregular adverbs: *already, also, always, here, never, not, now, often, quite, seldom, soon, still, then, there, too, very well*.

Adverb Placement

Adverbs are flexible in their placement; therefore, they can be placed just about anywhere within the sentence.

At the beginning of a sentence or a clause

Example: **Clearly**, John has a problem arriving to work on time.

At the end of a sentence or a clause

Example: Sarah and John attend the opera **frequently**.

After the verb

Example: Bob and John have **always** participated in the soccer tournament.

Between the subject and the verb

Example: Sarah **rarely** forgets to call home when she is out late.