

## What is an Adverb?

An adverb is a word that tells us more about a verb. It "qualifies" or "modifies" a verb (The man ran quickly). In the following examples, the adverb is in bold and the verb that it modifies is in italics.

- John speaks loudly. (How does John speak?)
- Afterwards she smoked a cigarette. (When did she smoke?)
- Mary lives locally. (Where does Mary live?)

But adverbs can also modify adjectives (Tara is really beautiful), or even other adverbs (It works very well). Look at these examples:

- Modify an adjective:
  - He is really handsome. (How handsome is he?)
  - That was extremely kind of you.
- Modify another adverb:
  - She drives incredibly slowly. (How slowly does she drive?)
  - He drives extremely fast.

Note that adverbs have other functions, too. They can:

- Modify a whole sentence: Obviously, I can't know everything.
- Modify a prepositional phrase: It's immediately inside the door.

## **Adverb Form**

We make many adverbs by adding **-ly** to an adjective, for example:

- **quick** (adjective) > **quickly** (adverb)
- **careful** (adjective) > **carefully** (adverb)
- **beautiful** (adjective) > **beautifully** (adverb)

There are some basic rules about spelling for -ly adverbs. See the table below:

Adjective ending	do this	adjective	adverb
most adjectives	add -ly	quick nice sole careful	quickly nicely solely carefully
-able or -ible	change -e to -y	regrettable horrible	regrettably horribly
-y	change -y to -ily	happy	happily
-ic	change -ic to -ically	economic	economically

But not all words that end in -ly are adverbs. The words *friendly*, *lovely*, *lonely* and *neighbourly*, for example, are all adjectives.

And some adverbs have no particular form. Look at these examples:

- well, fast, very, never, always, often, still

## Kinds of Adverbs

Here you can see the basic kinds of adverbs.

### Adverbs of Manner

Adverbs of Manner tell us the manner or way in which something happens. They answer the question "how?". Adverbs of Manner mainly modify *verbs*.

- He *speaks* **slowly**. (How does he speak?)
- They *helped* us **cheerfully**. (How did they help us?)
- James Bond *drives* his cars **fast**. (How does James Bond drive his cars?)

We normally use Adverbs of Manner with **dynamic (action)** verbs, not with stative or state verbs.

- He ran fast. She came quickly. They worked happily.
- ~~She looked beautifully. It seems strangely. They are happily.~~

### Adverbs of Place

Adverbs of Place tell us the place where something happens. They answer the question "where?". Adverbs of Place mainly modify *verbs*.

- Please *sit* **here**. (Where should I sit?)
- They *looked* **everywhere**. (Where did they look?)
- Two cars were *parked* **outside**. (Where were two cars parked?)

subject	verb(s)	direct object	adverb
I	didn't see	him	here.
He	stayed		behind.

## Adverbs of Time

Adverbs of Time tell us something about the time that something happens. Adverbs of Time mainly modify *verbs*.

They can answer the question "when?":

- He *came* **yesterday**. (When did he come?)
- I *want* it **now**. (When do I want it?)

Or they can answer the question "how often?":

- They *deliver* the newspaper **daily**. (How often do they deliver the newspaper?)
- We **sometimes** *watch* a movie. (How often do we watch a movie?)

subject	verb(s)	indirect object	direct object	time
I	will tell	you	the story	Tomorrow

- If you don't want to put emphasis on the time, you can also put the adverb of time at the beginning of the sentence.

time	subject	verb(s)	indirect object	direct object
Tomorrow	I	will tell	you	the story.

## Adverbs of Degree

Adverbs of Degree tell us the degree or extent to which something happens. They answer the question "how much?" or "to what degree?". Adverbs of Degree can modify *verbs*, *adjectives* and other *adverbs*.

- She **entirely** *agrees* with him. (How much does she agree with him?)
- Mary is **very** *beautiful*. (To what degree is Mary beautiful? How beautiful is Mary?)
- He drove **quite** *dangerously*. (To what degree did he drive dangerously? How dangerously did he drive?)

subject	auxiliary/be	adverb	main verb	object, place or time
I		often	go swimming	in the evenings.
He	doesn't	always	play	tennis.
We	are	usually		here in summer.
I	have	never	been	abroad.

## Using Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs. They tell you *How* something is done. **Example:** *How does he/she sing? - She sings beautifully.*

**Rule:** Adverbs are often formed by adding -ly to an adjective

**Example:** beautiful - beautifully, careful - carefully

Be Careful!

- Some adjectives don't change in the adverb form. The most important of these are: fast - fast, hard - hard
- Good is probably the most important exception. The adverb form of 'good' is 'well'. Unfortunately, this is a common mistake that many Americans make!

NOT! He plays tennis good.

**Rule:** Adverbs can also modify an adjective. In this case, the adverb is placed before the adjective.

**Example:** She is extremely happy. They are absolutely sure.

Be Careful!

- Do not use 'very' with adjectives that express an increased quality of a basic adjective **Example:** good - fantastic

NOT!!: She is a very beautiful woman.

**Rule:** Adverbs of frequency (always, never, sometimes, often, etc.) usually come before the main verb

**Example:** He is often late for class. Do you always eat in a restaurant?  
They don't usually travel on Fridays.

### Notes

- Adverbs of frequency expressing infrequency are not usually used in the negative or question form. NOT!!: Does she rarely eat fish? They don't seldom go to the cinema.
- Adverbs of frequency are often placed at the beginning of a sentence.  
**Example:** *Sometimes, he likes to go to museums.*
- Adverbs of frequency follow - come after - the verb 'to be'. **Example:** *He is sometimes late for work.*

### **Exercise**

#### **1- Rewrite the sentences and put the adverbs in correctly.**

1. We were in London. (last week) →
2. He walks his dog. (rarely) →
3. She waited. (patiently) →
4. My father goes fishing. (always) →
5. Your bedroom is. (upstairs) →
6. We don't go skiing. (in summer) →
7. Cats can hear. (well) →
8. I saw him. (there) →
9. The girl speaks English. (fluently) →
10. I have seen that film. (never) / (before) →

#### **2- Make sentences and put the adverbs (in italic print) in correctly (behind the verb or object).**

1. is / *over there* / the cinema -
2. *inside* / go / let's -

3. the kitchen / *downstairs* / is -
4. playing / the kids / are / *outside* -
5. she / not / been / *here* / has -
6. the bathroom / is / *upstairs* -
7. were / *everywhere* / we / for / looking / you -
8. we / *anywhere* / you / find / couldn't -
9. ? / there / a post office / *nearby* / is -
10. must / we / walk / *back home* -