Adverbs

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?)

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**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.