



# Adverbs

# Topic Plan

- 1. Formation
- 2. Classification of adverbs
- 3. Syntactic functions of adverbs
- 4. Degrees of comparison
- 5. Position of adverbs in the sentence

# 1. Formation

**Adverbs** are words which modify or give extra info about verbs, adjectives, other words or whole clauses. They have diverse lexical meanings and differ in their structure and role in the sentence.

- Mostly adverbs are formed from adjectives by adding **-ly** (*calm –calmly*)
- Spelling rules: *busy – busily, capable – capably, final – finally*.
- **We cannot form** an adverb from an adjective ending in **-ly** -> use other phrases

e.g. *cowardly* (adj.) He felt ~~cowardlyly~~. He felt *like a coward / in a cowardly way*.

- In informal US English *real* and *good* are used instead of *really* and *well*.

- Some adverbs are not derived from other words (*just, well, soon, too, quite, still*)
- Fixed phrases (*kind of, of course, at last*)
- noun/preposition + -ward(s)/-wise (*home -> homeward, after -> afterwards, price -> pricewise, health -> healthwise*)
- Compounds (*some + times -> sometimes*)
- **Adverbs which have the same form as adjectives:** *close, dead, fast, fine, long, low, pretty, short, straight, wide, wrong*

# Common adverbs from the same base, with different meanings:

<p><i>direct</i> (= without stopping)  <i>We flew <b>direct</b> from La Guardia to Houston.</i></p>	<p><i>directly</i> (= immediately/very soon)  <i>Don't go. I'll be with you <b>directly</b>.</i></p>
<p><i>late</i> (= not on time/not early)  <i>The plane arrived <b>late</b> due to bad weather.</i></p>	<p><i>lately</i> (= recently)  <i>She's been rather ill <b>lately</b>.</i></p>
<p><i>high</i> (= to a great height)  <i>He lifted it <b>high</b> over his head.</i></p>	<p><i>highly</i> (= extremely)  <i>Arsenic is <b>highly</b> toxic.</i></p>
<p><i>hard</i> (= with a lot of effort/severely) <i>He braked <b>hard</b> when he saw the cat.</i></p>	<p><i>hardly</i> (= scarcely, almost not) <i>We <b>hardly</b> know our neighbours.</i></p>
<p><i>right</i> (= direction/correctly) <i>Turn <b>right</b> at the crossroads. Try to do it <b>right</b> this time!</i></p>	<p><i>rightly</i> (= correctly in my opinion)  <i>The tribunal <b>rightly</b> condemned the war criminals.</i></p>
<p><i>free</i> (= without paying) <i>We got into the concert <b>free</b>!</i></p>	<p><i>freely</i> (= without limitation or control) <i>Sheep roam <b>freely</b> over the hills.</i></p>
<p><i>deep</i> (= to a great depth/distance) <i>We explored <b>deep</b> into the jungle.</i></p>	<p><i>deeply</i> (= thoroughly)  <i>I'm <b>deeply</b> ashamed of my behaviour.</i></p>

## 2. Classification of adverbs

**1) adverbs of time:** *afterwards, already, at once, eventually, immediately, lately, now, presently, soon, suddenly, then, when, yesterday, yet, etc.*

e.g. He is coming **tomorrow**.

**2) adverbs of frequency:** *always, constantly, hardly ever, never, occasionally, often, seldom, sometimes, three times, twice, etc.*

e.g. He is **always** in time for meals.

**3) adverbs of place or direction:** *abroad, ashore, backwards, below, downstairs, everywhere, here, inside, outside, seaward(s), there, to and fro, where, etc.*

e.g. I looked for him **everywhere**.

**4) adverbs of manner:** *badly, clearly, deeply, fast, how, quickly, sideways, sincerely, somehow, well, willingly, etc.*

e.g. He speaks English **well**.

- Adverbs of manner saying *how* an action is performed can I freely occur **with dynamic verbs, but not with stative verbs**.

e.g. He *looked* into the problem **carefully**.

5) **adverbs of degree or intensifiers**: *completely, enough, extremely, highly, much, nearly, perfectly, pretty, quite, rather, really, so, somewhat, terribly, too, unusually, very, etc.*

e.g. I **quite** agree with you.

- **Adverbs of degree or intensifiers may be subdivided into three semantic groups:**

a) **emphasizers** (emphasizing the truth of the communication): *actually, at all, clearly, definitely, indeed, just, literally, plainly, really, simply, etc.*

b) **amplifiers** (expressing a high degree): *absolutely, altogether, badly, bitterly, completely, deeply, entirely, extremely, (by) far, fully, greatly, heartily, much, perfectly, quite, terribly, thoroughly, utterly, very, etc.*

c) **downtoners** (lowering the effect): *a bit, almost, barely, enough, hardly, kind of, (a) little, moderately, more or less, nearly, partly, quite, rather, scarcely, slightly, somewhat, sort of, sufficiently, etc.*

6) **focusing adverbs**, which can be of two kinds:

a) **restrictive**: *alone, exactly, just, merely, only, precisely, purely, simply, especially, etc.*

b) **additive**: *again, also, either, equally, even, too, etc.*

7) **viewpoint adverbs**: *economically, morally, politically, scientifically, etc.* e. g.

**Geographically** and **linguistically**, these islands are closer to the mainland than to the neighbouring islands.

8) **attitudinal adverbs** which express the speaker's comment on the content of what he is saying: *admittedly, allegedly, apparently, decidedly, definitely, doubtless, maybe, obviously, perhaps, possibly, presumably, probably, quite likely, supposedly, surely, etc.*

e.g. **Certainly, he** had very little reason to fear anyone.

9) **Conjunctive adverbs**: *consequently, finally, first(ly), for all that, for example, further, furthermore, hence, however, incidentally, etc.*

e.g. **Incidentally,** he left you a message. It is on your desk.

10) **formulaic adverbs** (markers of courtesy): *cordially, kindly, please, etc.*

e.g. Will you kindly help me with the parcel?



# 3. Syntactic functions of Adverbs

## 1. Adverbs as modifiers of

- **Verbs** (adverbial modifiers of time, frequency, place, manner, degree)

*e.g. During my walks I occasionally met people I knew. (frequency)*

- **Adjectives** (adverbial modifiers of degree - intensifiers)

*e.g. My English was too poor to allow me to make speeches.*

- **Prepositional phrases**

*e.g. They lived nearly on the top of the hill.*

- **Nouns**

*e.g. He was fully master of the situation.*

- **Sentences**

*e.g. He felt sure that, politically, the proposal might have serious consequences. Luckily, I came just in time.*

## 2. Connectors between two sentences or statements.

*e.g. He felt ill, yet he didn't stay in. I know you are not a doctor. Nevertheless (still) you could have bandaged his cut.*

## 4. Degrees of Comparison

The degrees of comparison of adverbs are formed in the same way as those of adjectives.

- Monosyllabic adverbs and “*early*” form the comparatives by adding the suffixes **-er** and **-est** (*hard — harder — hardest, soon — sooner — soonest, early — earlier — earliest*)
- All other adverbs (mostly ending in -ly) -> **more** and **most** (*beautifully — more beautifully — most beautifully*)
- **Irregular forms** (*well — better — best, badly — worse — worst, much — more — most, little — less — least*)

## 5. Position of adverbs in the sentence

The position of an adverb depends on its meaning and the word or phrase it is modifying. There are 3 common adverbial positions:

- *Front* (before the subject)
- *Mid* (next to the verb / predicate)
- *Final* (after the object or complement)

front

mid

final

*e.g. These days I **probably** take my health **much more seriously**.*

- If the object or complement of a verb is very long we can put a final position adverb before it:

*e.g. These days I take **much more seriously** all those things I used to take for granted.*

# Front Position

- To link or contrast with information in the previous sentence

*e.g. I've been incredibly busy this week. **Yesterday** I worked more than twelve hours.*

- Inversion: after negative adverbs or after adverbs of time and place followed by a verb of movement or position, we put the verb before the subject

*e.g. **Never** have I seen such a disturbing sight.*

- We do not use adverbs of definite frequency, e.g. *daily, weekly*, in front position:

*e.g. ~~Monthly~~ I get paid. I get paid monthly.*

# Mid Position

Usual position for adverbs of indefinite frequency, adverbs of degree, adverbs of certainty, one-word adverbs of *time*, *even* and *only*

- With a simple verb we put the adverb between the subject and the verb, but with simple forms of *be* the adverb goes after the verb:

*e.g. She arrives always by taxi and she ~~always is~~ on time. She always arrives by taxi and she is always on time.*

- If there is a modal or auxiliary verb we put the adverb after the (first) auxiliary verb:

*e.g. We've **never** been to the Greek islands.*

- These adverbs (frequency, degree, etc.) go after *do* or *not*:

*They **don't really** understand my point of view.*

- But we put *sometimes*, *still*, *certainly*, *definitely* and *probably* before a negative auxiliary:

*e.g. I **sometimes don't** understand his arguments. He **still hasn't** convinced me.*

- We do not use time adverbs (definite time or frequency) in mid position **beside** *always*, *frequently*, *generally*, *hardly ever*, *never*, *normally*, *occasionally*, *often*, *rarely*, *seldom*, *sometimes*, *usually*, *already*, *finally*, *immediately*, *just*, *now*, *no longer*, *soon*, *still*, *then*

*e.g. We ~~every day~~ buy our lunch at that sandwich bar on the corner.*

- But we can do this in **news reports**:

*e.g. The Federal Reserve **today** announced an immediate rise in interest rates.*

# Final Position

- usual position for *yet, a lot, any more, any longer, too, as well*:

e.g. *They aren't selling it **any more**.*

- adverbs of manner (which describe *how* something is done) and adverbs of definite frequency:

e.g. *He plays the guitar **well**.*

- Adverbs of manner which end in *-ly* (except *badly*) can go in final or mid position:

e.g. *Harry **painstakingly** counted out the coins and arranged them **neatly** into piles.*

- We don't use *hardly ever* or *never* in final position:

e.g. *They **hardly ever** watch television.*

- If we put *often, rarely* and *seldom* in final position, we must use *very* or *quite*:

e.g. *These days I eat desserts **very rarely**.*

- If there are several adverbs in final position, we usually follow a sequence of adverbs of manner, then place, and finally time:

e.g. *The statue was lifted (**carefully**)(**onto the plinth**)(**before the ceremony**).*