



Writing Centre

ADVERBS

What is an Adverb?

Adverbs are incredibly flexible. An adverb can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause. An adverb indicates manner, time, place, cause, or degree and answers questions such as "how," "when," "where," "how much". Unlike an adjective, an adverb can be found in various places within the sentence.

Adverbs often end in "ly," but many must be identified by looking at the logical relationships and the function of the word within the sentence or clause as a whole.

Six Types of Adverbs

Adverbs of Manner: Adverbs of manner provide information on how someone does something.

For example: Mary drives very *carefully*.

Adverbs of Time: Adverbs of time provide information on when something happens.

For example: We'll let you know our decision *next week*.

Adverbs of Frequency: Adverbs of frequency provide information on how often something happens.

For example: They *usually* get to work at nine o'clock.

Adverbs of Degree: Adverbs of degree provide information concerning the intensity of a verb/action, or another adverb or of an adjective.



For example: They *like* hockey *a lot*. He drove *very slowly*. She is *extremely pretty*.

Adverbs of Comment: Adverbs of comment provide a comment or opinion about a situation.

For example: *Fortunately*, there was enough food for everyone.

Conjunctive Adverbs: Conjunctive adverbs show the logical connection between ideas.

For example: I was tired; *therefore*, I slept.
continued to study.

I was tired; *however*, I



Adverb Formation

Adverbs are usually formed by adding '-ly' to an adjective.

For example: *quiet - quietly, careful - carefully, careless - carelessly*

Adjectives ending in '-le' change to '-ly'.

For example: *possible - possibly, probable - probably, incredible - incredibly*

Adjectives ending in '-y' change to '-ily'.

For example: *lucky - luckily, happy - happily, angry - angrily*

Adjectives ending in '-ic' change to '-ically'.

For example: *basic - basically, ironic - ironically, scientific - scientifically*.

Adverb Sentence Placement

Adverbs of Manner: Adverbs of manner are placed **after** the verb or entire expression (at the end of the sentence). They can, for emphasis, be moved to the beginning of a clause (note the comma).

For example: Their teacher speaks *quickly*. *Suddenly*, the lights went out.

Adverbs of Time are placed **after** the verb or entire expression (at the end of the sentence). They can also be moved to the beginning of a sentence or clause (note the comma).

For example: She visited her family *last year*. *Last year*, she visited her family.

Adverbs of Frequency are placed **before** the main verb (not the auxiliary verb).

For example: She *often* goes to bed late. Do you *sometimes* get up early?



Note: Adverbs of frequency are placed after the verb 'to be' when used as the main verb of the sentence.

For example: Jack *is often* late for work.

Note: Some adverbs of frequency (sometimes, usually, normally) are also placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis.

For example: *Sometimes* I visit my friends in London.

Adverbs of Degree can be placed **after** the verb phrase or entire clause or before the adjective or adverb they modify.

For example: She'll attend the meeting *as well*. She is *very happy* to attend.

Adverbs of Comment are flexible and can be placed in various locations in a sentence. They are usually surrounded by commas.

For example: *Fortunately*, I was able to come to the presentation. I was, *fortunately*, able to come to the presentation. I was able to come to the presentation, *fortunately*.

There is a useful chart on the Word Order handout that shows adverb placement in context.

Reference: University of Ottawa's The Writing Centre. (n.d.). *What is an Adverb?* Retrieved from <http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/adverbs.html>

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