



WRITING CENTER

Adverbs

CONTENTS *Click on any heading below to jump directly to that topic.*

THE PURPOSE OF ADVERBS	1
FORMING ADVERBS.....	1
ADVERB TYPES.....	3
FUNCTION AND POSITION.....	3
COMMON PROBLEMS WITH ADVERBS.....	4
PRACTICE	5

THE PURPOSE OF ADVERBS

Adverbs are words that describe or modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Adverbs express ideas of time, place, manner, cause, and degree.

- Examples:** MODIFYING A VERB: John attends the Writing Center **regularly**.
MODIFYING AN ADJECTIVE: John is a **very** conscientious student.
MODIFYING ANOTHER ADVERB: John writes his papers **really** well.

Like the adjective, the adverb qualifies other words by answering questions about those words.

- How?** The student worked **diligently**. (Worked how?)
Where? Mary went **home** to write her paper. (Went where?)
When? John handed in his paper **yesterday**. (Handed in when?)
To what degree? The paper was **unusually** well-written. (How well-written?)

FORMING ADVERBS

Adverbs can have inflectional endings for comparative and superlative degrees—often formed by adding **-ly** to the adjective form.

Adjective form:	radiant	certain	odd	impressive
Adverb form:	radiantly	certainly	oddly	impressively

Adverbs

Some adverbs will use the same form as adjectives. The adjective may not have a suffix or may already have an **-ly** ending.

No suffix:	straight	late	far	right
-ly suffix	early	daily	weekly	hourly

Some words are almost always adverbs but are not identified by an **-ly** ending:

also	maybe	only	soon
anyway	never	perhaps	tomorrow
ever	not	quite	then
somewhat	now	rather	there
fast	often	seldom	today
indeed	sometimes	so	too
yesterday	always	somehow	very

Adverbs form the comparative and superlative degrees similarly to adjectives. An **-er** is added to the positive form to make the comparative degree, which shows a comparison between two things. An **-est** is added to the positive form to make a superlative degree, which shows a comparison between one thing and several others.

Positive:	soon	late	fast
Comparative:	sooner	later	faster
Superlative:	soonest	latest	fastest

If the adverb ends in **-ly**, **more** and **most** are used to form the degrees of comparison.

Positive:	quickly	tenderly	loudly
Comparative:	more quickly	more tenderly	more loudly
superlative:	most quickly	most tenderly	most loudly

Note: Use **less** and **least** with the adverb to show a lesser degree.

Example:	quickly	less quickly	least quickly
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Adverbs

Some adverbs from the comparative and superlative degrees irregularly:

Positive:	good	badly	much	far
Comparative:	better	worse	more	farther/further
Superlative:	best	worst	most	farthest/furthest

Note: Some prepositions may be used as adverbs to express a spatial relationship.

Example: John let the cat in. (*No object of the preposition*)

ADVERB TYPES

- **Interrogative** adverbs ask a question—**where, when, why,** and **how**.
Examples: **Why** do you work so hard?
Where are you going?
- **Relative** adverbs introduce relative or subordinate clauses—**where, when, why** and **how**.
Examples: **When you are ready,** we will go.
You did not tell me where you want to go.

FUNCTION AND POSITION

- The adverb is usually near the word it modifies, but it can be found anywhere in the sentence.
- When the adverb modifies another adverb or an adjective, it is in front of the word it modifies.
- If the adverb is modifying a verb, the adverb can appear almost anywhere—before or after the verb, between the helping and main verbs, or at the beginning or end of the sentence.
Examples: BEFORE THE VERB: Mary **often** stays late.
AFTER THE VERB: Mary stays, **often** late.
BETWEEN THE HELPING AND MAIN VERB: Mary will **often** stay late.
BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE: **Often** Mary stays late.
END OF THE SENTENCE: Mary stays late **often**.

Adverbs

- Adverbs can modify entire clauses or sentences. Because they can modify so many different elements in the sentence, their positions can be more varied than other parts of speech.

The eight meanings which adverbs can express are as follows:

1. Manner—Mary writes **well**. (Shows how Mary writes)
2. Degree—Mary's paper is **too** long. (Describes a quality of the paper)
3. Frequency—Mary attends the Writing Center **often**. (Shows how frequently Mary attends)
4. Time—Mary wrote her paper **yesterday**. (Tells when she wrote her paper)
5. Place—Mary wrote her paper **here**. (Tells where she wrote her paper)
6. Negation—Mary **never** writes her paper in the library. (Negates that she writes in the library)
7. Affirmation—Mary **really** likes to write. (Affirms that she likes to write)
8. Qualification—Mary will **probably** get a high grade on her paper. (Expresses the quality of certainty or probability)

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH ADVERBS

- Do not confuse adverbs with adjectives, especially **well** with **good**. **Well** is an adverb; **good** is an adjective.
- Avoid double negatives. For instance, do not use **hardly**, **scarcely**, **only**, or **never** with **no** or **not**. One negative word to a clause is enough.

Adverbs

PRACTICE

Practice Exercise A

Choose the correct form in parentheses in the first five sentences.

1. The sick man (was not, was) scarcely able to sit up in bed.
2. The sergeant did not want (any, no) advice from (anyone, no one).
3. They (could, could not) hardly hear each other above the crowd.
4. Mr. Sand's work does not allow him (any, no) margin of error.
5. I (do not never, never) anticipate trouble.

Practice Exercise B

Underline the adverbs in the following sentences.

1. My co-workers seldom attend the annual conference.
2. Have you ever seen this machine in operation?
3. Often Mr. Sands was in a very cheerful mood.
4. He responded intuitively to the call for help.
5. Sometimes he drove fast, but he was not reckless.

Practice Exercise C

Complete each of these sentences by inserting an adjective or an adverb. If an adjective is required, insert the adjective printed in parentheses. If an adverb is required, insert the adverb formed from the adjective printed in parentheses.

1. The president of the company looked _____ on my suggestion. (cold)
2. Please return to the office as _____ as you can. (quick)
3. We shall need _____ more information before we can give you an answer.
(considerable)
4. I will _____ call you at your office at the time you have suggested. (sure)
5. The mistake she made has _____ caused her to feel _____. (sure, bad)

Adverbs

Practice Exercise D

Insert the word *only* at the proper places in these sentences. The sense in which *only* is to be used in the sentence is indicated by the words in parentheses.

1. This offer holds good for ten days. (not more than ten days)
2. Ms. Simpson is able to do this work. (no one else can do it)
3. It will take a few minutes to get the figures. (not more than a few minutes)
4. I am calling to see whether I can be of further service. (for no other reason)
5. A person gets what he is worth. (not more than he is worth)

Practice Exercise E

In the blanks in these sentences insert *good* or *well*—whichever is correct.

1. She has been ill, and she still looks far from _____ .
2. Your handwriting is _____, and you write _____ .
3. He has done _____ in his new position.
4. Do you really feel _____ enough to come to the office?
5. He has not been a _____ man since he had that severe attack of illness last winter.

Practice Exercise F

Underline the correct form in parentheses.

1. Mary has felt (bad, badly) since her last cold.
2. Jim arranged the layout (crooked, crookedly).
3. The host nation gave the delegates a (real, really) friendly reception.
4. An unknown arsonist set fire to (most, almost) all the houses on Quivira Road.
5. (Most, Almost) all the votes have now been counted.