

**An *adverb*** is a [part of speech](#) (or [word class](#)) that's primarily used to [modify](#) a [verb](#), [adjective](#), or other adverbs and can additionally modify [prepositional phrases](#), [subordinate clauses](#), and complete [sentences](#). Put another way, adverbs are [content words](#) that provide information about how, when, or where something happens. Adverbs are also called *intensifiers* because they intensify the meaning of the word or words they are modifying, notes [Your Dictionary](#).

An adverb that modifies an adjective—as in *quite sad*—or another adverb—as in *very carelessly*—appears immediately in front of the word it modifies, but one that modifies a verb is generally more flexible: It may appear before or after—as in *softly sang* or *sang softly*—or at the beginning of the sentence—*Softly* she sang to the baby—with the position of an adverb typically affecting the meaning of the sentence. [Adverbs](#) can modify a verb or adjective in several ways, by providing information about emphasis, manner, time, place, and frequency.

## [Adverbs of Emphasis](#)

*Adverbs of emphasis* are used to give added force or a greater degree of certainty to another [word](#) in a [sentence](#) or to the sentence as a whole, for example:

- He *certainly* liked the food.
- She is *clearly* the frontrunner.
- *Naturally*, I like my chicken crispy.

Other common adverbs of emphasis include *absolutely, definitely, obviously, positively, really, simply, and undoubtedly*. These types of adverbs serve to [bolster](#) the part of speech they modify.

## [Adverbs of Manner](#)

*Adverbs of manner* indicate [how something is done](#). They are usually placed at the end of a sentence or before the main verb, as in:

- Tom drives *quickly*.
- She *slowly* opened the door.
- Mary waited for him *patiently*.

Other examples of adverbs of manner include *quietly, fitfully, and carefully*.

## Adverbs of Time

*Adverbs of time* tell you **when or at what time something is done**. Adverbs of time are usually placed at the end of a sentence. They can also be used at the beginning of a sentence followed by a comma.

- The meeting is *next* week.
- *Yesterday*, we decided to take a walk.
- I've *already* bought my tickets for the concert.

These adverbs are used with other **time expressions**, such as days of the week. The most common adverbs of time include *yet*, *already*, *yesterday*, *tomorrow*, *next week* (or *month* or *year*), *last week* (or *month* or *year*), *now*, and *ago*.

## Adverbs of Place

*Adverbs of place* indicate **where** something is done and usually appear at the end of a sentence, but they can also follow the verb.

- I decided to rest *over there*.
- She'll wait for you in the room *downstairs*.
- Peter walked *above* me *upstairs*.

Adverbs of place can be confused with **prepositional phrases** such as *in the doorway* or *at the shop*. **Prepositional phrases indicate where something is**, but adverbs of place can tell you **where something occurs**, such as *here* and *everywhere*.

## Adverbs of Frequency

*Adverbs of frequency* tell you **how often** something is repeatedly done. They include *usually*, *sometimes*, *never*, *often*, and *rarely*. Adverbs of frequency are often placed directly before the main verb:

- *She rarely goes to parties.*
- I *often* read a newspaper.
- He *usually* gets up at 6 o'clock.

Adverbs of frequency that express infrequency are not used in the negative or question form. **Sometimes, adverbs of frequency are placed at the beginning of a sentence:**

- *Sometimes*, I enjoy staying at home instead of going on vacation.

- *Often*, Peter will telephone his mother before he leaves for work.

Adverbs of frequency follow the verb *to be*:

- He **is** *sometimes* late for work.
- I **am** *often* confused by computers.

## Adverbs Modifying Adjectives

When adverbs modify an adjective, they are placed before the adjective:

- She is **extremely** happy.
- They are **absolutely** sure.

However, do not use **very** with adjectives to express increased quality of a basic adjective, such as *fantastic*:

- She is an *absolutely* fantastic piano player.
- Mark is an *absolutely* amazing lecturer.

You would not say, "She is very fantastic," or "Mark is a very amazing lecturer."

## Forming Adverbs From Adjectives

Adverbs are often formed by adding **-ly** to an adjective, such as:

- Beautiful > beautifully
- Careful > carefully

However, some adjectives don't change in the adverb form, such as *fast* and *hard*. Many common adverbs like *just*, *still*, and *almost* do not end in *-ly*. *Good* is probably the most important example. The adverb form of *good* is *well*, as in:

- He is *good* at tennis.
- He plays tennis *well*.

In the first sentence, *good* is an adjective that modifies the pronoun *he*; while in the second, *well* is an adverb that modifies *plays* (explains how he plays tennis). Additionally, not all words that end in *-ly* are adverbs, such as *friendly* and *neighborly*, which are both adjectives.

She studies **hard** for her exam (Adj) = She actually does study hard

She **hardly** studies for her exam (Adverb) = She does not study at all

## A fast train

**The train is fast/ She drives fast not fastly**

## Distinguishing Between Adverbs and Adjectives

Sometimes the same word can be both an adjective and an adverb. To distinguish between them, it is important to look at the context of the word and its function in a sentence.

For instance, in the sentence, "The *fast* train from London to Cardiff leaves at 3 o'clock," the word *fast* modifies and comes before a noun, *train*, and is, therefore, an attributive adjective. However, in the sentence, "The sprinter took the bend *fast*," the word *fast* modifies the verb *took* and is, therefore, an adverb.

Interestingly, *-ly* is not the only suffix that can be added to the end of a word to change its meaning or be used by both adjectives and adverbs. Additionally, *-er* and *-est* can combine with adverbs in a much more limited way wherein the comparative form of an adverb is likely to add *more* or *most* to the beginning of the adverb phrase rather than adding an *-er* or *-est*.

It's important to refer to context clues when hints like the addition of an *-ly* or the word *most* to accompany a word doesn't tell you whether it is an adjective or adverb. Look to the word that is being emphasized. If the word being emphasized is a noun, you have an adjective; if the word being emphasized is a verb, you have an adverb.

In English grammar, a preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence. Prepositions are words like *in* and *out*, *above* and *below*, and *to* and *from*, and they're words we use all the time.

How useful are prepositions? Just look at how many prepositions are italicized in this simple sentence from E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*: "*For* the first few days *of* his life, Wilbur was allowed to live *in* a box *near* the stove *in* the kitchen."