

RULES FOR ADVERBS

What do Adverbs modify?

An adverb is a word that modifies or describes:

• A verb	⇒ he sings loudly
• An adjective	⇒ very tall
• Another adverb	⇒ ended too quickly
• Or even a whole sentence	⇒ Fortunately, I had brought an umbrella.

Adverbs often end in -ly, but some look exactly the same as their adjective counterparts. Take for example, fast, quick, bad, good, and so on.

Examples

1. Tom Longboat did not run badly.
2. Tom is very tall.
3. The race finished too quickly.

Rule # 1

Many adverbs end in -ly, but many do not. Generally, if a word can have -ly added to its adjective form, place it there to form an adverb.

Examples

1. She thinks quick/quickly. => How does she think? Quickly.
2. She is a quick/quickly thinker. => Quick is an adjective describing thinker, so no -ly is attached.
3. She thinks fast/fastly. => Fast answers the question how, so it is an adverb. But fast never has -ly attached to it

Rule # 2

Adverbs that answer the question 'how' sometimes cause grammatical problems. It can be a challenge to determine if -ly should be attached.

Avoid the trap of -ly with linking verbs such as taste, smell, look, feel, which pertain to the senses. Adverbs are often misplaced in such sentences, which require adjectives instead.

Examples:

1. Roses smell sweet/sweetly => In this case, smell is a linking verb—which requires an adjective to modify roses—so no -ly
2. The woman looked angry/angrily to us => Did the woman look with her eyes, or are we

describing her appearance? We are describing her appearance (she appeared angry), so no -ly

3. The woman looked angry/angrily at the paint splotches. => Here the woman actively looked (used her eyes), so the -ly is added.
4. She feels bad/badly about the news. => She is not feeling with fingers, so no -ly.

Rule # 3

The word good is an adjective, whose adverb equivalent is well.

Examples:

1. You did a good job. => Good describes the job.
2. You smell good today. => Good describes your fragrance, not how you smell with your nose, so using the adjective is correct.
3. You smell well for someone with a cold. => You are actively smelling with your nose here, so use the adverb.

Rule # 4

The word well can be an adjective, too. When referring to health, we often use well rather than good.

Examples:

1. You do not look well today.
2. I don't feel well, either.

Rule # 5

Adjectives come in three forms, also called degrees. An adjective in its normal or usual form is called a positive degree adjective. A common error in using adjectives and adverbs arises from using the wrong form of comparison.

Examples:

1. She is the cleverer of the two women (never cleverest).

Point to Remember

The word cleverest is what is called the superlative form of clever. Use it only when comparing three or more things. For example - She is the cleverest of them all.

Incorrect Use	• Chocolate or vanilla: which do you like best?
Correct Use	• Chocolate or vanilla: which do you like better?

Rule # 6

There are also three degrees of adverbs. In formal usage, do not drop the -ly from an adverb when using the comparative form.

Examples:

Incorrect Use	• Talk quieter.
Correct Use	• Talk more quietly.

Incorrect Use	• She spoke quicker than he did.
Correct Use	• She spoke more quickly than he did.

Rule # 7

When this, that, these, and those are followed by a noun, they are adjectives. When they appear without a noun following them, they are pronouns.

Examples:

1. This house is for sale. => This is an adjective and a pronoun as well.

Rule # 8

Use of 'Much' and 'Very' - 'Much' qualifies adjectives or adverbs in the comparative degree; 'very' in the positive.

Examples:

1. The air is much hotter today than yesterday.
2. This book is much heavier than that.
3. This book is very useful.
4. He spoke very loudly.

Rule # 9

Use of hard, hardly, scarce, scarcely.

Examples:

1. **Hard** – as an adverb means 'Diligently'. It usually follows the verb. For example,
 - He works hard to make both ends meet.
 - Our team played hard in Pakistan.
 - I tried hard to succeed.

2. **Hardly** - When used as an adverb means scarcely, barely. It conveys a negative meaning/ Hardly and scarcely are followed by when. For example,
 - Hardly (Scarcely) had he reached the station, when the train left.
3. **Scarce** - As an adjective means 'not plentiful, hard to find, not often found. For example,
 - Coal has become scarce in England.
4. **Scarcely** – as an adverb is almost synonymous to 'Hardly'. For example,
 - I can scarcely hear you.
 - They have scarcely enough to look after their children

Rule # 10

Adverb 'As' is used with the following verbs - Regard, Describe, define, treat, view, know.

Adverb 'As' is not used with the following verbs - Name, elect, think, consider, call, appoint, make, choose.

Examples:

1. I regard him as my mentor.
2. Biology is defined as the study of organisms.

Rule # 11

Else' should be followed by 'but'

Examples

Incorrect	• It is nothing else than pride.
Correct	• It is nothing else but pride.

Incorrect	• You do nothing else except feel sorry for yourself.
Correct	• You do nothing else but feel sorry for yourself.