Adverb

Definition of Adverb

An adverb is a part of speech that informs about an action – how, where, when, in which manner, or to what an extent it has been performed. The term *adverb* is derived from a Latin word *adverbium*, which is a combination of two words: *ad*, which means "to," and *verbum*, which means "word," or "verb."

An adverb can modify complete sentences, subordinate clauses, and prepositional phrases. However, its main purpose is to modify a verb, another adverb, or an [adjective](#). For instance, in the [sentence](#), "He was [eloquently](#) drunk, [lovingly](#) and [pugnaciously](#) drunk" (*Elmer Gantry*, by Sinclair Lewis), the underlined adverbs are modifying the adjective "drunk."

Types of Adverb

Depending upon the meanings, there are seven types of adverbs, which are given below:

- **Adverb of Time** – informs about when the action occurs, such as in "She never tells me anything," the word "never" is adverb of time.
- **Adverb of Place** – informs about where the action occurs, such as in "Tulips grow everywhere," the word "everywhere" is an adverb of place.
- **Adverb of Manner** – informs about how the action occurs, such as in "The cat walked stealthily," the word "stealthily" is an adverb of manner.
- **Adverb of Degree** – informs about to what extent an action has occurred, such as in "He trapped her more cleverly," the [phrase](#) "more cleverly" is an adverb of both manner and degree.
- **Adverb of Condition** – informs about a certain condition that is required before the action occurs. It often begins with 'unless' or 'if,' such as in "If the trains come, we will arrange the function," the phrase "If the train comes" is an adverb of condition.

Adverb of Concession – makes a contrast with the main idea. It begins with a subordinating [conjunction](#), such as *though*, *while*, *even*, *if*, *whereas*, and *although*. For instance, in "Although your face looks in odd shape, you are undoubtedly beautiful," the word "although" is an adverb of concession.

Adverb of Reason – provides a reason about the main idea. It begins with a [subordinating conjunction](#), such as *because*, *as*, *since*, or *given*. For instance, in "I cannot open the door because I lost the keys," the word "because" is an adverb of reason.

Examples of Adverbs in Literature

Example #1: *The Pit and the Pendulum* (by Edgar Allan Poe)

"The thought came gently and stealthily … but just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figures of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candles sank into nothingness; their flames went out utterly; the blackness of darkness supervened; all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades."

In this example, Poe has used adverbs of manner and condition. The first two adverbs, "gently" and "stealthily," are intensifying the meaning of verb "came." The other adverbs are "properly," "if," "magically," and "utterly."

Example #2: *At the Mountains of Madness* (by H.P. Lovecraft)

"And now, when Danforth and I saw the freshly glistening and reflectively iridescent black slime which clung thickly to those headless bodies and stank obscenely with that new unknown odor whose cause only a diseased fancy could envisage – clung to those bodies and sparkled less voluminously on a smooth part of accursedly re-sculptured wall in a series of grouped dots – we understood the quality of cosmic fear to its uttermost depths."

This is another good example in which the author has used adverbs of manner. These adverbs include "freshly," "reflectively," "thickly," "obscenely," "less voluminously," and "accursedly." All of them are modifying the meanings of their respective verbs.

Example #3: *In Our Time* (by Earnest Hemingway)

> "It was a <u>frightfully</u> hot day. We'd jammed an <u>absolutely</u> perfect barricade across the bridge. It was simply priceless."

In this example, the author has used adverbs of manner, which include "frightfully" and "absolutely." Theses adverbs are telling us about how the actions have occurred.

Example #4: *Holy Disorders* (by Edmund Crispin)

> "Fielding regarded <u>gloomily</u> an aged porter who was prodding <u>tentatively</u> at a trunk in the hope, <u>apparently</u>, of provoking it to spontaneous movement."

In this long sentence, there are three adverbs of manner, which include *gloomily*, modifying the verb "regarded," *tentatively*, modifying the verb "prodding," and *apparently*, enhancing the meaning of verb "hope."

Function of Adverb

The principal function of an adverb is to modify verbs and verb phrases. In this way, it can provide information in relation with time, place, frequency, certainty, manner, and other circumstance. An adverb also intensifies meanings of words it modifies. It does so by emphasizing the words, intensifying their meanings, and toning down the feelings they carry.