

# ADVERB

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### Defining an Adverb

An adverb is a word that describes - or modifies, as grammarians put it - a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

- A verb is an action word (jump, run, swim, ski, fish, talk)
- An adjective is a descriptive word that describes a noun (pretty, happy, silly, sunny)
- A noun is a person, place or thing (girl, dog, mom)

It is easy to see how adverbs describe, or modify, verbs, since they simply explain most about the action. For example:

- He *quickly* runs
- She *slowly* walks
- He *happily* chatters

Adverbs can also describe adjectives or other adverbs. They provide more information about that other descriptive word.

For example:

- He *very quickly* runs. In this sentence, quickly is an adverb describing the word runs. Very is another adverb, this time describing the word quickly.

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- The *very pretty* girl sat down. In this sentence, pretty is an adjective describing the noun girl. Very is an adverb describing the adjective pretty.

### Identifying an Adverb

You can tell whether or not a word is an adverb by considering its function in the sentence. If it is describing one of those three parts of speech- a verb, adjective or other adverb- it is an adverb.

You can also tell whether something is an adverb by looking at the ending of the word. A lot of adverbs - not all, but a lot - end in "ly." For example, happily, quickly, speedily, steadily, foolishly, and angrily are all adverbs. So, if you said:

- He *happily* runs.  
You can tell that happily is an adverb because it is describing the word runs and because it ends in ly.
- Many frequency words are adverbs as well. For example, very, much, more and many can all be adverbs.
- The *very* pretty girl was in the car.
- The *much* smarter boy won the race.

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### Common Errors with Adverbs and Adjectives

People often mistakenly use adjectives when they should use an adverb and vice versa. For example, a sentence that reads:

- He behaved very *bad* on the field trip.  
Is incorrect, because *bad* is modifying or describing *behaved*, which is a verb. It should read
- He behaved very *badly*.  
On the other hand, if you said:
- His behavior is *bad*.  
That would be correct, because in this case, the word *bad* is an adjective describing the noun *behavior*.

### Good and Well

Confusing adverbs and adjectives is a common error with the words *good* and *well*.

- *Good* is an adjective that should modify nouns (the *good* boy).
- *Well* is an adverb that modifies a verb (he listens *well*), or even an adjective (the *well* educated boy).

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### 1. The adverbs and the adjectives in English

**Adjectives** tell us something about a person or a thing. Adjectives can modify nouns (*here: girl*) or pronouns (*here: she*).

**Adverbs** tell us in what way someone does something. Adverbs can modify verbs (*here: drive*), adjectives or other adverbs.

Adjective	adverb
Mandy is a <b>careful girl</b> .	Mandy <b>drives carefully</b> .
<b>She</b> is very <b>careful</b> .	She <b>drives carefully</b> .

Mandy is a **careful driver**. This sentence is about Mandy, the driver, so use the **adjective**.

Mandy **drives carefully**. This sentence is about her way of driving, so use the **adverb**.

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## 2. Form

Adjective + **-ly**

adjective	adverb
dangerous	dangerously
careful	carefully
nice	nice <sup>ly</sup>
horrible	horrib <sup>ly</sup>
easy	eas <sup>ily</sup>
electronic	electron <sup>ically</sup>

Irregular forms:

adjective	adverb
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adjective	adverb
good	well
fast	fast
hard	hard

If the adjective ends in *-y*, change *-y* to *-i*. Then add *-ly*:

- happy – happ**ily**

but:

- shy – shy**ly**

If the adjective ends in *-le*, the adverb ends in *-ly*:

- terrible – terrib**ly**

If the adjective ends in *-e*, then add *-ly*:

- safe – saf**ely**

► Not all words ending in *-ly* are adverbs:

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- **adjectives ending in -ly:** friendly, silly, lonely, ugly
- **nouns, ending in -ly:** ally, bully, Italy, melancholy
- **verbs, ending in -ly:** apply, rely, supply

There is no adverb for an adjective ending in -ly.

### 3. Use of adverbs

#### 3.1. to modify verbs

The handball team **played badly** last Saturday.

#### 3.2. to modify adjectives

It was an **extremely bad** match.

#### 3.3. to modify adverbs

The handball team played **extremely badly** last Wednesday.

#### 3.4. to modify quantities

There are **quite a lot of** people here.

#### 3.5. to modify sentences

**Unfortunately,** the flight to Dallas had been cancelled.

### 4. Types of adverbs

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### 4.1. Adverbs of manner

- **quickly**
- **kindly**

### 4.2. Adverbs of degree

- **very**
- **rather**

### 4.3. Adverbs of frequency

- **often**
- **sometimes**

### 4.4. Adverbs of time

- **now**
- **today**

### 4.5. Adverbs of place

- **here**
- **nowhere**

5. How do know whether to use an adjective or an adverb?

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John is a **careful driver**. – In this sentences we say how John is – **careful**. If we want to say that the careful John did not drive the usual way yesterday – we have to use the **adverb**:

- John **did not drive carefully** yesterday.

Here is another example:

- I am a **slow** walker. (*How am I? → **slow** → **adjective***)
- I walk **slowly**. (*Ho do I walk? → **slowly** → **adverb***)

## 6. Adjective or Adverb after special verbs

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Both adjectives and adverbs may be used after look, smell and taste. Mind the change in meaning.

Here are two examples:

adjective	adverb
The pizza tastes <b>good</b> . <i>(How is the pizza?)</i>	Jamie Oliver can taste <b>well</b> . <i>(How can Jamie Oliver taste?)</i>
Peter's feet smell <b>bad</b> . <i>(How are his feet?)</i>	Peter can smell <b>badly</b> . <i>(How can Peter smell?)</i>

Do not get confused with *good/well*.

- Linda looks **good**. *(What type of person is she?)*
- Linda looks **well**. *(How is Linda? – She may have been ill, but now she is fit again.)*
- How are you? – I'm **well**, thank you.

One can assume that in the second/third sentence the adverb **well** is used, but this is wrong – **well** can be an **adjective** (meaning fit/healthy), or an **adverb** of the adjective good.

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## Conclusion:

- Use the **adjective** when you say something about the **person** itself.
- Use the **adverb**, when you want to say about the **action**.

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