

Adverbs

Adverbs give information about verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Adverbs tell us *how* (manner), *where* (place), *when* (time), *how often* (frequency), or *how much* (intensity) something happens or is done. An adverb can be a single word (*sometimes*) or a phrase (*from time to time*).

How adverbs are used

Adverbs which tell us about

- ◆ **manner** are often formed by adding *-ly* to the adjective form:
careful → *carefully* *happy* → *happily*
They usually come after the verb (and object, if there is one):
I plan my trips very carefully. (not *I plan very carefully my trips*)
- ◆ **place** usually come after the verb:
It was the first time I had been there.
Try to stay near the old part of the city.
- ◆ **time** such as *today*, *tomorrow*, *now*, *since 2003*, *for three minutes* can go at the beginning or the end of a clause:
I had a very memorable trip last year. (or *Last year I had a very memorable trip.*)
- ◆ **frequency** usually come before the verb but after *be* or an auxiliary verb:
I often travel for my job.
I have always enjoyed my visits there.
He's never late.
- ◆ **intensity** affect the strength of adjectives or adverbs:

<i>fairly, quite,</i>	<i>very, extremely,</i>	<i>absolutely,</i>	stronger
<i>rather, pretty</i>	<i>highly, really</i>	<i>completely, totally</i>	
weaker			

The adverbs at the stronger end of the scale (*absolutely, completely, totally*) can only be used with some adjectives. These tend to be 'extreme' adjectives that suggest a limit in their meaning (e.g. *terrifying, excellent, exhausted*). Other 'non-extreme' adjectives (e.g. *frightened, good, tired*) never collocate with these stronger adverbs. Compare:
There are some absolutely stunning examples of Indian silk embroidery. (not *fairly stunning*)
The people are very friendly. (not *absolutely friendly*)
Really collocates with most adjectives.

- ▲ We cannot intensify adjectives or nouns which describe type (not ~~a~~ *very Textile Museum*).

The order of adverbs

When two or more adverbs are used together at the end of a clause the order is usually manner → place → time:

I'll meet you outside the station at six o'clock. (outside the station = place, at six o'clock = time)

Irregular adverbs

Some adverbs of manner look the same as the adjective form (e.g. *hard, fast, straight, late, early*):

Work hard on your research. (adverb)
This is a hard exercise. (adjective)

Hard is an adjective and an adverb, and *hardly* is an adverb meaning *very little*:
He hardly had time to say hello. (= he had very little time to say hello)

Good is an adjective, and *well* is the adverb:

He spoke very good English. (describes English)
He spoke English very well. (describes how he spoke)

However, *well* can also be an adjective when talking about health:
She's not well - she's got a cold.

Comment adverbs and viewpoint adverbs

We use some adverbs to make a comment on what we are saying.

some comment adverbs:	examples
☆ indicate how likely we think something is	apparently, certainly, clearly, definitely, obviously, presumably, probably, undoubtedly
☆ indicate our attitude to or opinion of what is said	astonishingly, frankly, generally, honestly, interestingly, luckily, naturally, sadly, seriously, surprisingly, unbelievably
☆ show our judgement of someone's actions	bravely, carelessly, foolishly, generously, kindly, rightly, stupidly, wisely, wrongly

Comment adverbs often apply to the whole sentence and are most frequently used in front position (see Unit 75A), although they can also be used at the end of the sentence and in other positions. At the beginning and end of sentences we usually separate them from the rest of the sentence by a comma in writing or by intonation in speech:

- Presumably, he didn't hear me when I called.
- The book was based on his experience in China, apparently.
- If you practise continuously, you will undoubtedly get better.

Comment adverbs which show judgement usually follow the subject, although they can be put in front position for emphasis:

- He kindly offered to give me a lift. (or **Kindly**, he offered ... to emphasise 'kindly')

- Comment adverbs apply to only part of the sentence they can be used in other positions. Compare:
Astonishingly, she did well in the exam. (= I was surprised that she did well) *and*
She did **astonishingly** well in the exam. (= she did extremely well)
- You've had a major operation. **Obviously**, it will be very painful for a while. (= I expect you to know this already) *and*
- When he stood up it was **obviously** very painful. (= the pain was clear to see)

Some adverbs are used to make clear what *viewpoint* we are speaking from; that is, identifying what features of something are being talked about:

- Financially**, the accident has been a disaster for the owners of the tunnel.
- The brothers may be alike **physically**, but they have very different personalities.

Also: **biologically, environmentally, financially, ideologically, industrially, logically, medically, morally, outwardly, politically, technically, visually**

A number of phrases are used in a similar way:

- Politically / In political terms**, this summer is a crucial time for the government.

Also: **politically speaking, in terms of politics, from a political point of view, as far as politics is / are concerned**

Some adverbs or phrases are used to say *whose* viewpoint we are expressing:

- The head of National Bank is to receive, **according to reports**, a £1 million bonus.
- In my view**, the foreign minister should resign immediately.

Also: **to my / his / her (etc.) knowledge, from my / his / her (etc.) perspective, personally, in my / his / her (etc.) opinion**