

ADVERBS

Adverbs are words that modify

- a **verb** (He drove slowly. — How did he drive?)
- an **adjective** (He drove a very fast car. — How fast was his car?)
- another **adverb** (She moved quite slowly down the aisle. — How slowly did she move?)

As we will see, adverbs often tell when, where, why, or under what conditions something happens or happened.

Adverbs frequently end in *-ly*; however, many words and phrases not ending in *-ly* serve an adverbial function and an *-ly* ending is not a guarantee that a word is an adverb.

The words *cowardly, daily, early, lovely, lonely, manly, monthly, motherly, nightly, friendly, neighborly, saintly, silly, sickly*, for instance, are adjectives:

- That lovely woman lives in a friendly neighborhood.

IRREGULAR ADVERBS

1. Some adjectives end in *-ly*, e.g. *lively*, *lonely*, *ugly*. We don't form adverbs from these adjectives because they are not easy to pronounce. We usually reword what we want to say instead.

Don't act in a silly way.

Not: ~~Don't act sillily.~~

She said it in a friendly way.

Not: ~~She said it friendlily.~~

2. Here is a list of irregular adverbs, i.e. adverbs which do not follow the normal rule.

Adjective	Adverb
good	well
fast	fast
hard	hard
late	late
deep	deep (<i>deeply</i> means "very")
short	short (<i>shortly</i> means "soon")
near	near (<i>nearly</i> means "almost")
wide	wide (<i>widely</i> means "generally")
straight	straight
wrong	wrong, wrongly

COMMONLY CONFUSED ADVERBS

1. Dead and deadly

Dead is an adverb used in expressions like dead right, dead certain, dead slow, dead straight, dead sure etc. It means ‘exactly’, ‘completely’ or ‘very’.

- I am **dead certain** that he is committing a mistake.
- I am **dead tired**.
- He is **dead drunk**.

Deadly is an adjective. It means ‘fatal’ or ‘causing death’.

- Cyanide is a **deadly** poison.

The adverb for this meaning is **fatally**.

- She was **fatally** injured in the accident. (NOT She was deadly injured in the accident.)

2. Free and freely

The adverb free means ‘without payment’. Freely means ‘without limit or restriction’.

- Buy one shirt and get one shirt **free**.
- You can’t eat **free** in a restaurant.
- Speak **freely** – no one will harm you. (NOT Speak free.)

3. Hard and hardly

The adverb hard has a similar meaning to the adjective hard.

- Work **hard** if you want to succeed.
- Hit it **hard**.

Hardly means ‘almost not’.

- We have got **hardly** any rice left.

4. High and highly

High refers to height. Highly often means ‘very much’.

- Throw it as **high** as you can.
- I can **highly** recommend this product.

5. Late and lately

The adverb **late** has a similar meaning to the adjective late. **Lately** means ‘recently’.

- He came **late**.
- I haven’t been to the opera **lately**.

6. Most and mostly

Most is the superlative form of much. **Mostly** means ‘mainly’.

- You are **the most** beautiful woman in the world.
- My friends are **mostly** non-smokers.

ERRORS OF ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS WITH SENSE VERBS

The following verbs require **adjective** modifiers:

• **sound** • **look** • **smell** • **taste** • **feel** • **seem**

These verbs are all "sense verbs," or verbs that describe someone's **sensation or feeling or perception**. Unlike other verbs, they require adjective, not adverb, modifiers.

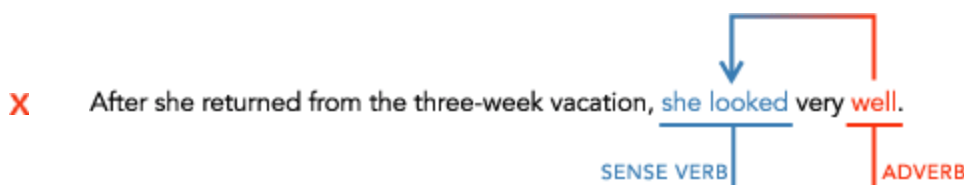
Incorrect: *The strawberry shortcake tastes **deliciously**.*

Correct: *The strawberry shortcake tastes **delicious**.*

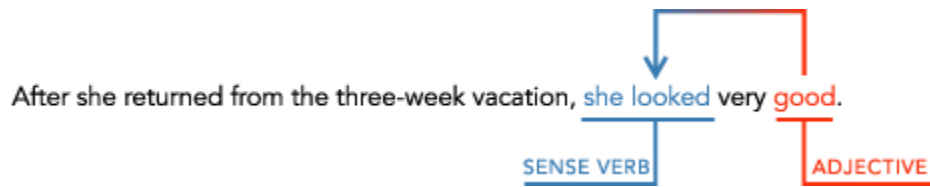
Some sense verb modifiers are commonly misused in speech. Be especially careful with these: just because they sound right doesn't mean they are right. Sometimes these errors arise from the misinterpretation of a popular grammar rule. Here's a common example:

*After she returned from the three-week vacation, she looked very **well**.*

How many times have you heard someone say, "He looks well"? It probably sounds fine, but in fact, this sentence is a comment on the visual abilities of the man in question; it means something like, "He's skilled at looking." But why is it wrong?



Looking at the version above: if you place an adverb (**well**) directly after a verb (**looked**), then the adverb modifies the verb. But we don't want to describe a verb - we want to describe a noun (or pronoun), in this case a woman who just came back from vacation.



"She" is a pronoun, and pronouns (which stand in for nouns) are modified with adjectives. Thus the correct sentence fixes our modification problem by replacing the adverb "well" with the adjective "good".

Incorrect: *After she returned from the three-week vacation, she looked very **well**.*

Correct: *After she returned from the three-week vacation, she looked very **good**.*

POSITION OF ADVERBS IN A SENTENCE

1. Adverbs of Manner

(e.g.: slowly, carefully, awfully)

These adverbs are placed behind the direct object (or behind the verb if there's no direct object).

subject	verb(s)	direct object	adverb
He	drove	the car	carefully.
He	drove		carefully.

2. Adverbs of Place

(e.g.: here, there, behind, above)

Like adverbs of manner, these adverbs are placed behind the direct object or the verb.

subject	verb(s)	direct object	adverb
I	didn't see	him	here.
He	stayed		behind.

3. Adverbs of Time

(e.g.: recently, now, then, yesterday)

Adverbs of time are usually placed at the end of the sentence.

subject	verb(s)	indirect object	direct object	time
I	will tell	you	the story	tomorrow.

If you don't want to put emphasis on the time, you can also place the adverb of time at the beginning of the sentence.

time	subject	verb(s)	indirect object	direct object
Tomorrow	I	will tell	you	the story.

4. Adverbs of Frequency

(e.g.: always, never, seldom, usually)

Adverbs of frequency are placed directly before the main verb. If 'be' is the main verb, and there is no auxiliary verb, adverbs of frequency are placed behind 'be'. If there's an auxiliary verb, however, adverbs of frequency are placed before 'be'.

subject	auxiliary/be	adverb	main verb	object, place or time
I		often	go swimming	in the evenings.
He	doesn't	always	play	tennis.
We	are	usually		here in summer.
I	have	never	been	abroad.

FOCUSING ADVERBS

In writing and speech, we draw attention to a part of a sentence with a focusing adverb. Without the focusing word, the spoken version would require emphasis to make its meaning known. When we use a focusing adverb, it signals to the reader or listener—this information is important! Ex.:

BEFORE THE SUBJECT

Only my phone can make calls to family in this area. (*not my tablet or any other's, for example*)

BEFORE THE MAIN VERB

My phone can **only** make calls to family in this area. (*one function, not texts or data, for example*)

BEFORE THE OBJECT

My phone can make **only** calls to family in this area. (*one function, not texts or data, for example*)

BEFORE AN INDIRECT OBJECT

My phone can make calls **only** to family in this area. (*not friends*)

BEFORE A PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

My phone can make calls to family **only** in this area. (*not long distance*)

The most common focusing adverbs we use: *also, just, even, only*.

NEGATIVE ADVERBS AND INVERSION

When a negative or restrictive expression is placed at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis, it is usually followed by **auxiliary verb** + **subject**. When there is no auxiliary verb, **do** is used as auxiliary.

Time

Hardly	Hardly had we arrived home when we heard the shocking news.
Barely ... when	Barely had I opened the book to read when my neighbor put on some music at full blast.
No sooner ... than	No sooner had the shop open its doors than it went bankrupt.

Only

Only if	Only if we invest more money can we save the company from the crisis.
Only when	Only when I sleep can I forget about the incident.
Only now	Only now am I able to understand what really happened.
Only ...	Only at 7 could I fall asleep

Not

Not only ... but also	No only will you have a good result, but you will also be the best.
Not once	Not once did she look at me at the party.
Not since	Not since I was child have I had such a great time.
Not ...	Not in a million years will I go back to that hotel.

No

Under no circumstances	Under no circumstances should we allow this to happen.
In no way	In no way am I related to Luis Barcenás.
Nowhere	Nowhere were the people more excited than in the streets of Manhattan.
No way (common in informal speech)	No way are we going to pay for the damages.

Never/ rarely/ seldom/ little

Never	Never (before) have I met such a stupid person.
Rarely	Rarely have there been so many cases of corruption before.
Seldom	Seldom have we seen him in his office since he took the job.
Little	Little did we know about him when we hired him.

This kind of inversion is also common with the **third conditional**. The word **if** disappears and the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject.

If you hadn't been so stupid, you would have realized that she is a nice girl.

Hadn't you been so stupid, you would have realized that she is a nice girl.

If I had seen the thief, I would've called the police immediately.

Had I seen the thief, I would've called the police immediately.

Here and **there** are also affected by this inversion:

- **Here** comes the bus.
- **There** goes Sally.
- **Here's** my number.

But if the subject is a personal pronoun, there is NO inversion:

- **Here** it comes.
- **There** she goes.
- **Here** you have.

So, generally, if an adverb or an adverbial expression of place comes in the initial position (at the beginning of the sentence), the subject and verb are inverted:

- **Down the hill** rolled the children.
- **Round the corner** was a nice café.

This is a rhetorical device used mainly in formal and literary styles; however, it may also occur in everyday conversation.

ADVERBIAL PHRASES

Adverbial phrase is the term for **two or more words** which play the role of an **adverb**. Look at these examples:

- I will sit **quietly**. (normal adverb)
- I will sit **in silence**. (adverbial phrase)
- I will sit **like a monk meditates**. (adverbial clause) (*When the multi-word adverb contains a subject and a verb -like in this example-, it is an **adverbial clause** as opposed to an adverbial phrase.*)

When (Adverbial Phrase of Time)

An adverbial phrase of time states when something happens or how often.

- I'll do it **in a minute**.
- **After the game**, the king and pawn go into the same box. (Italian Proverb)
- Do not wait for the last judgment. It takes place **every day**. (Albert Camus)

Where (Adverbial Phrase of Place)

An adverbial phrase of place states where something happens.

- I used to work in a fire-hydrant factory. You couldn't park **anywhere near the place**.
- Opera is when a guy gets stabbed **in the back** and, instead of bleeding, he sings.

How (Adverbial Phrase of Manner)

An adverbial phrase of manner states how something is done.

- He would always talk **with a nationalistic tone**.
- He sings **in a low register**.
- People who say they sleep **like a baby** usually don't have one.