

Adverbs

Adverbs are the part of speech used to *describe more about verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs*, much like adjectives describe more about nouns or pronouns.

Adverbs *never* describe nouns!

Adverbs tell “when, where, how, or to what extent” about **verbs**, **adjectives**, or other **adverbs**.

Examples of adverbs telling when

Tomorrow	I will study <i>tomorrow</i> . (<i>When</i> will I study? Tomorrow)
Afterward	<i>Afterward</i> , I will call my mother. (<i>When</i> will I call? Afterward)
Now	She is eating cake <i>now</i> . (<i>When</i> is she eating? Now)
Soon	We ’ll leave <i>soon</i> . (<i>When</i> will we leave? Soon)
Never	I <i>never</i> thought of that. (<i>When</i> did I think of that? Never)

Examples of adverbs telling where

Here	I always study <i>here</i> . (Where do I study? Here)
Abroad	She will study <i>abroad</i> . (Where will she study? Abroad)
Far	Don’t go <i>far</i> . (Where to go? Far—negated by another adverb, <i>not</i>)
Downstairs	The boys play <i>downstairs</i> . (Where do the boys play? Downstairs)
Nearby	The dog stays <i>nearby</i> . (Where does the dog stay? Nearby)

Examples of adverbs telling how

Quickly	The dog eats <i>quickly</i> . (How does the dog eat? Quickly)
Quietly	Luis talks <i>quietly</i> . (How does Luis talk? Quietly)
Slowly	The couple dances <i>slowly</i> . (How does the couple dance? Slowly)
Carefully	Sean <i>carefully</i> helps the child. (How does Sean help? Carefully)
Peacefully	Mother speaks <i>peacefully</i> to the baby. (How does she speak? Peacefully)

Example of adverbs telling to what extent

Very	He is <i>very</i> tall . (To what extent is he tall? Very)
Almost	We are <i>almost</i> there . (To what extent are we there? Almost)
Too	Luis talks <i>too</i> loudly . (To what extent is he loud? Too loud)
Extremely	Luis talks <i>extremely</i> softly . (To what extent does he talk softly? Extremely)
Quite	I am <i>quite</i> happy . (To what extent am I happy? Quite)

Adjective placement:

Adjectives usually come in front of the noun they describe, but **adverbs** can sometimes be moved around:

Maria played outside **yesterday**.

Yesterday, Maria played outside.

The front position: before the subject of the sentence. It gives information in advance, to set the scene for the action that follows.

Slowly, she played the piano.

The mid position: the adverb in this position is intimately connected with the verb, and is generally placed immediately before it.

She slowly played the piano. (But NOT *She played slowly the piano.*)

If there is an auxiliary (helping) verb, the adverb is placed between the helping and main verb.

She will slowly play the piano.

She may slowly play the piano.

She may never play the piano.

If there is a negation like *not* (which is an adverb) and another adverb, the negative element generally comes first.

She does not usually play the piano.

The end position: at the end of the sentence.

She played the piano slowly.

It is important to consider the word **only**, which serves as both an adjective and an adverb, because it can often be misplaced and has the ability to change the meaning of the sentence. Look at the following examples:

I **only** fed my bird. (I fed my bird but did nothing else with it.) *Only* is an adverb describing the **verb** *fed*.

I fed **only** my **bird**. (I fed my bird and not any other birds.) Now *only* becomes an adjective for the **noun** *bird*.

Only I fed my bird. (No one else fed my bird but me.) Now *only* becomes an adjective for the **pronoun** *I*.