

# Adverbs

## OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you:

- identify an adverb
- gain confidence in choosing adverbs for your writing
- vary the way that you use adverbs in your writing.



## What is an adverb?

**Adverbs** are words that answer the following questions.

### How?

Natalie ran **quickly**. (How did Natalie run?)

Simon sang **loudly**. (How did Simon sing?)

### When?

We are playing football **tomorrow**. (When are you playing football?)

**Afterwards** we went camping. (When did you go camping?)

### Where?

I left my book **there**. (Where did you leave your book?)

I am going **home**. (Where are you going?)

Warning – *there* and *home* are not always adverbs. Check if they answer the question **Where?**

Adverbs give more information about *verbs*. For example:

Simon **sang** **loudly**.

verb

The adverb tells us more about how Simon sang.

Adverbs also give more information about *adjectives*. For example:

Dad was **extremely** tired.

The adverb tells us more about how tired Dad was. adjective

Adverbs can also give more information about *adverbs*. For example:

Vashti told the joke **very** **skilfully**.

'very' tells us how skilfully

'skilfully' tells us how Vashti told the joke.

## Activity 1

Find the adverbs in the following sentences, then write them down.

- 1 Alex was waiting there.
- 2 Nadine thought carefully about the question.
- 3 We planned to meet today.
- 4 Charlotte sang confidently at the karaoke.
- 5 Kamal wrote his letter very neatly.

## Activity 2

Write down the adverbs from the following paragraph. Look for **single words** that answer these questions: *How?* *When?* or *Where?* The first adverb is shown in **bold**.

... When he picked it up he **immediately** realised that here was a tin with a difference.

For one thing, it was lighter than all the others he had come across. Far, far lighter. This was definitely no ordinary tin of beans or soup or stewed steak or curried chicken or macaroni cheese. This was a tin which felt so light that it could almost have been empty. But despite being so light, it definitely had something inside it. Fergal knew that for certain. He could tell that quite clearly.

Extract from *Tins* by Alex Shearer

## Activity 3

For each blank space in the passage below, choose an adverb from the word box that you think fits best.

I was \_\_\_\_\_ interested in the new music download system. \_\_\_\_\_ it was \_\_\_\_\_ easy to use, and you could \_\_\_\_\_ choose what you \_\_\_\_\_ wanted.

absolutely	amazingly	essentially	exactly
extremely	fundamentally	genuinely	instantly
particularly	specifically	really	very
quickly	basically	quite	



## Where can an adverb go in a sentence?

If you always put an adverb in the same place in a sentence, it can make your writing seem repetitive. Read the following sentences.

She put the key in the door **cautiously**. She entered the house **silently**. She picked up the post **excitedly**.

These sentences all sound the same. You can solve this by moving the adverb. Look at the following choices.

**Cautiously**, she put the key in the door.  
She **cautiously** put the key in the door.  
She put the key in the door **cautiously**.

### Activity 4

In the following passage, the adverbs are always at the end of the sentence. Rewrite the passage so that the adverbs are in different places in the sentences.

The manager had agreed to hold the party in the function room enthusiastically. She walked towards the round table in the centre of the room cheerfully. She took orders quickly and efficiently. A party of twelve was already singing merrily.

### Activity 5

Write down the adverbs in the following passage, and the words that those adverbs are giving information about. Use what you have learned so far about adverbs to help you. For example, the adverb 'sleepily' (shown in **bold**) shows *how* the writer 'got up from [his] bed'.

I got up from my bed **sleepily**. Foolishly, I had left it too late as usual. I searched frantically for my school uniform, finding it eventually in various extremely strange places. After rapidly eating my breakfast, I left the house and ran to catch the bus.

Curiously, the bus stop was unusually quiet. I suddenly realised the reason. It was a school closure day.

## Adverbs in advertising

Advertisers regularly use adverbs to encourage the public to use their products. For example:

- We have an *excitingly* original range.
- We make *terrifically* tasty crisps.
- *Fantastically* generous offers are available today.
- You can be sure of a *thrillingly* exciting day.

Have you seen or heard other examples?

### Activity 6

Decide on a product you are going to advertise such as a new drink, cereal bar or pair of trainers. Now write three sentences, with at least one adverb in each, advertising your product. Use what you have learned so far about adverbs to help you.

You could choose from this word box, or make your own choice.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Adverbs **do not exist** for some adjectives which end in **-ly**. For example:

She gave me a **friendly** wave.

~~She waved **friendlyly**.~~

Other examples are: *costly*, *lively*, *lonely*, *lovely*, *ugly*, *unlikely*.

amazingly	brilliantly
excellently	expertly
futuristically	safely
skilfully	specially
tastily	technically
wonderfully	
mouthwateringly	

## Patterns for spelling adverbs

Typically, adverbs are formed by adding the suffix **-ly**. For example:

actually    sincerely    skilfully    surely    unfortunately

### Activity 7

Not all adverbs can be formed by just adding **-ly**. For the following exceptions, note down what you need to do before adding the suffix **-ly**.

necessary → necessarily      terrible → terribly  
true → truly                      whole → wholly

## Thinking back, moving forward

### With your partner

- Explain how you can use adverbs at different points in a sentence and use them in different ways.
- Find a recent piece of writing that includes adverbs and exchange it with your partner. Give each other at least one piece of advice about how to improve it by using adverbs in a more interesting way.

### On your own

How confident are you now that you can:

- identify an adverb
- vary the way that you use adverbs?