

Johnson County Community College

Adverbs

I. Adverbs are words that describe or modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Adverbs express ideas of time, place, manner, cause, and degree.

Examples:

Adverb modifying a verb:

John attends the Writing Center **regularly**.

Adverb modifying an adjective:

John is a **very** conscientious student.

Adverb modifying another adverb

John writes his papers **unusually** well.

Like the adjective, the adverb qualifies other words by answering questions about those words.

How?	The student worked diligently . (How worked)
Where?	Mary went home to write her paper. (Went where)
When?	John handed in his composition yesterday . (When handed in)
To what degree?	The paper was unusually well-written. (How well-written)

II. Adverbs are also identified by their inflectional endings for comparative and superlative degrees. They can be further identified by their position and function in the sentence.

Inflections--Often adverbs are formed by adding an *-ly* to the adjective form.

Examples:	<u>Adjective form</u>	<u>Adverb form</u>
	radiant	radiantly
	certain	certainly
	odd	oddly
	impressive	impressively

Some adverbs will use the same form as adjectives. The adjective may not have a suffix or may already have an *-ly* ending.

Examples:	<u>No suffix</u>	<u>-ly suffix</u>
	straight	early
	late	daily
	far	weekly
	right	hourly
	hard	

There are words that are almost always adverbs but are not identified by an *-ly* ending:

rather	always	sometimes	not	so	ever
soon	also	somehow	fast	then	anyhow
somewhat	here	there	anyway	thus	never
today	ever	very	now	tomorrow	
indeed	often	too	maybe	only	very
perhaps	seldom	yesterday	quite		

Adverbs form the comparative and superlative degrees similarly to adjectives. An *-er* is added to the positive form to make the comparative degree which shows a comparison between two things. An *-est* is added to the positive form to make a superlative degree which shows a comparison between one thing and several others.

Examples:	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
	soon	sooner	soonest
	late	later	latest

If the adverb ends in *-ly*, *more* and *most* are used to form the degrees of comparison.

Examples:	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
	quickly	more quickly	most quickly
	tenderly	more tenderly	most tenderly

Use *less* and *least* with the adverb to show a lesser degree.

quickly	less quickly	least quickly
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Some adverbs from the comparative and superlative degrees irregularly:

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Comparative</u>	<u>Superlative</u>
well	better	best
badly	worse	worst
much	more	most
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

Some prepositions may be used as adverbs to express a spatial relationship.

Example: John let the cat in. (No object of preposition)

III. Types:

Interrogative adverbs ask a question--*where*, *when*, *why*, and *how*

Why do you work so hard?

Where are you going?

Relative adverbs introduce relative or subordinate clauses--*where*, *when*, *why* and *how*

When you are ready, we'll go.

You did not tell me **where you want to go**.

IV. Function and Position--Generally, the adverb is found in any position in the sentence, but usually near the word it modifies. When the adverb modifies another adverb or an adjective, it will be in front of the word it modifies. If the adverb is modifying a verb, however, the adverb can appear almost anywhere in the sentence--before or after the verb, between the helping and main verbs, or at the beginning or end of the sentence.

Examples:

Before verb--Mary **often** stays late.

After verb--Mary stays **often** late.

Between helping and main verb--Mary will **often** stay late.

Beginning of sentence--**Often** Mary stays late.

At end of sentence--Mary stays late **often**.

Adverbs can modify entire clauses or sentences. Because they can modify so many different elements in the sentence, their positions can be more varied than other parts of speech. The eight meanings which adverbs can express are as follows:

1. Manner--Mary writes **well**. (Shows how Mary writes)
2. Degree--Mary's composition is **too** long.
3. Frequency--Mary attends the Writing Center **often**. (Shows how frequently Mary attends)
4. Time--Mary wrote her composition **yesterday**. (Tells when she wrote her composition)
5. Place--Mary wrote her composition **here**. (Tells where she wrote her paper)
6. Negation—Mary **never** writes her composition in the library. (Negates that she writes in the library)
7. Affirmation--Mary **really** likes to write. (Affirms that she likes to write)
8. Qualification--Mary will **probably** get a high grade on her composition. (Expresses the quality of certainty or probability)

V. Problems with Adverbs

Be sure to not confuse adverbs with adjectives, especially *well* with *good*. *Well* is an adverb; *good* is an adjective.

Avoid double negatives. For instance, do not use *hardly*, *scarcely*, *only*, or *never* with *no* or *not*. Remember, one negative word to a clause is enough.

Practice Exercise A

Using the comparative and superlative degrees, compose your own sentence for the adverb given in parentheses.

1. (sooner)
2. (soonest)
3. (more quickly)
4. (more badly)
5. (most affectionately)
6. (most late)
7. (more agreeably)
8. (most carefully)
9. (most thoroughly)
10. (more responsibly)

Practice Exercise B

Choose the correct form in parentheses in the first five sentences. Compose sentences of your own for the words in parentheses (6-10).

1. The feeble man (wasn't, was) scarcely able to sit up in bed.
2. The sergeant didn't want (any, no) advice from (anyone, no one).
3. They (could, couldn't) hardly hear each other above the crowd.
4. Mr. Sand's work doesn't allow him (any, no) margin of error.
5. I (don't never, never) anticipate trouble.
6. (barely)
7. (hardly)
8. (never)

9. (scarcely)

10. (none)

Practice Exercise C

Underline the adverbs in the following sentences.

1. My co-workers seldom attend the annual conference.
2. Have you ever seen this machine in operation?
3. Often Mr. Sands was in a very cheerful mood.
4. He responded intuitively to the call for help.
5. Sometimes he drove fast, but he was not reckless.
6. An exceptionally notorious outlaw once lived here.
7. Later he would regret having spoken harshly to Cynthia.
8. Some customers never pay their bills willingly.
9. Noisily the old truck came to a stop.
10. Now the mountain roads are relatively free of snow.
11. Sam visited us today.
12. Soon wild flowers will blanket the entire hillside.
13. Did Mr. Sands accept the loss philosophically?
14. Mr. Smith seldom saw a car along the bleak stretch of coast.

Practice Exercise D

Each of the blanks in these sentences is to be filled in by inserting an adjective or an adverb. If an adjective is called for, insert the adjective printed in parentheses. If, however, an adverb is required, insert the adverb formed from the adjective printed in parentheses.

1. The president of the company looked _____ on my suggestion. (cold)
2. Please return to the office as _____ as you can. (quick)

3. We shall need _____ more information before we can give you an answer. (considerable)
4. I will _____ call you at your office at the time you have suggested. (sure)
5. The mistake she made has _____ caused her to feel _____. (sure, bad)
6. Please speak just as _____ as possible. (distinct)
7. You have improved _____ in your work. (considerable)
8. His voice sounds _____ over the telephone. (different)
9. How _____ the stars look on a winter night! (cold)
10. The whole matter was managed _____ from the beginning. (bad)
11. The whirr of the machinery sounds _____ even at this distance. (loud)
12. I _____ felt _____ after that experience. (sure, bad)
13. It looks _____ to see a young man wasting his time. (bad)
14. The machine is _____ suitable for our purposes. (perfect)
15. Mrs. Stone has been _____ successful in making the window display look _____.
(moderate, good).
16. We have done an _____ large business this season. (unusual)
17. He is carrying an _____ heavy burden. (unnecessary)
18. You do not speak _____ enough to be heard in the back of the room. (plain)
19. I can see _____ enough that you do not understand the principle involved. (clear)
20. The cloth _____ feels _____. (sure, smooth)

Practice Exercise E

Insert the word *only* at the proper places in these sentences. The sense in which *only* is to be used in the sentence is indicated by the words in parentheses.

1. This offer holds good for ten days. (not more than ten days)
2. Ms. Simpson is able to do this work. (no one else can do it)

3. It will take a few minutes to get the figures. (not more than a few minutes)
4. I am calling to see whether I can be of further service. (for no other reason)
5. A person gets what he is worth. (not more than he is worth)

Practice Exercise F

In the blanks in these sentences insert *good* or *well*--whichever is correct.

1. She has been ill, and she still looks far from _____ .
2. Your handwriting is _____, and you write _____ .
3. He has done _____ in his new position.
4. Do you really feel _____ enough to come to the office?
5. He has not been a _____ man since he had that severe attack of illness last winter.
6. She did _____ in the test, and she made a _____ impression on the interviewer.
7. She is not yet _____ enough in her work to operate the machine _____ .
8. If you will do each piece of work _____, you will become a _____ office worker.
9. She is a _____ stenographer and always does her work _____.
10. If you want to be _____ at all times, you must take _____ care of your health.

Practice Exercise G

Most of these sentences are incorrect; a few are correct. (1) Read the sentence carefully. (2) If it is correct, put a checkmark at the end of the sentence. (3) If it is incorrect, cross out each word which makes the sentence incorrect; then write the correct word over the word or words you crossed out.

1. It was so dark in the room that we couldn't hardly see.
2. I was so frightened that I couldn't scarcely tell where I was.

3. There isn't but one orange left.
4. The work will not take but a week.
5. I hadn't scarcely finished the work when I was called to the telephone.
6. You wouldn't scarcely believe the trouble we have had with this machine.
7. You couldn't hardly tell the difference between the two girls.
8. He won't be but a few minutes.
9. Even now I do not hardly feel well enough to start work.
10. We hadn't hardly set out on the trip when the rain started to come down heavy.
11. He says that he can't find but two errors in the paper.
12. It seems to me that there are but two plans from which to choose.
13. That company hasn't hardly suffered at all.
14. I could scarcely bear to look at him.
15. You have done the work so good that you are entitled to a promotion.
16. I couldn't scarcely believe that not one of the courses offered in these departments are listed in the latest catalog.
17. He talks well, and he makes a good appearance.
18. It is a real remarkable record when you consider how bad the team played last year.
19. We can't hardly sell enough merchandise in this territory to pay the selling costs.
20. Our sales figures in that territory haven't hardly been lowered at all.

Practice Exercise H

Underline the correct form in parentheses.

1. Mary has felt (bad, badly) since her last cold.
2. Jim arranged the layout (crooked, crookedly).
3. The host nation gave the delegates a (real, really) friendly reception.

4. The waitress ground the pepper (coarse, coarsely) for the salad.
5. An unknown arsonist set fire to (most, almost) all the houses on Quivira Road.
6. Sims anticipates failure too (ready, readily).
7. The brown sofa looks (well, good) against the beige drapes.
8. Nancy looked (bad, badly) when I last saw her.
9. Mr. Sands spoke to the nervous girl (gentle, gently).
10. I slept (good, well).
11. The watermelon tasted (sweet, sweetly).
12. The machine performed (good, well) for ten minutes.
13. (Most, Almost) all the votes have now been counted.
14. John worked out the answers (slow, slowly).
15. Dr. Anderson's wife was (sure, surely) right in saying he overworked.
16. Only one of the switchboard operators had a (real, really) pleasant voice.
17. At the end of the examination the doctor said I was not a (good, well) man.
18. Milk shakes don't look (well, good) to Tom unless they are thick.
19. The old prospector divided his meager stores with us (generous, generously).
20. Did you feel (bad, badly) about having to rewrite your theme?
21. The trio sang at the summer band concerts (regular, regularly).
22. The food was arranged on the trays very (appetizing, appetizingly).
23. His answers to questions were almost always given too (hasty, hastily).
24. She looked (quick, quickly) in the direction of the sound.
25. The poor girl continually spelled the word yacht (incorrectly, incorrect).