

Adverbs

What are adverbs?

Adverbs give additional information to verbs, much like adjectives give additional information to nouns. Adverbs tell you how, where, when, and how often something is done.

Let's focus on the following, though: adverbs of manner, comment adverbs, and frequency adverbs.

(manner): The politician spoke *carefully* about the new tax.

(comment): *Foolishly*, I agreed to meet my ex-girlfriend.

(frequency): He *often* goes to the supermarket on Sundays.

What is the sentence structure?

Depending on the type of adverb, the position will change.

With adverbs of manner, the adverb usually comes before the verb or after the object of the sentence. But the adverb may never come between the verb and the object. So:

adverb | verb | object : The politician *carefully* spoke about the new tax.

verb | object | adverb : The politician spoke *carefully* about the new tax.

Comment adverbs are usually placed before the verb, but may also appear before the subject of the sentence. If the comment adverb comes before the subject, separate the adverb and the subject with a comma. For example:

adverb | verb | object : I *foolishly* agreed to meet my ex-girlfriend.

adverb | subject | verb | object : *Foolishly*, I agreed to meet my ex-girlfriend.

Adverbs of frequency use the following structures:

adverb | verb : He *often* goes to the supermarket on Sundays.

auxiliary verb | adverb : He will *often* go to the supermarket on his days off.

be verb | adverb : He is *often* at the supermarket on Sundays.

How are adverbs used?

Adverbs add detail to a sentence and make it more interesting. Many adverbs end with -ly (quickly, slowly, carefully, happily). But don't rely on this rule, because some adverbs don't end with -ly (fast, late, hard). There are also some words which aren't adverbs, but end with -ly (elderly, kindly, lonely). Remember: Adverbs describe how, where, when, and how often something is done.

Here are a few adverbs for the types studied here:

adverbs of manner: badly, briefly, carefully, carelessly, fast, furiously, gracefully, intentionally, hard, loudly, noisily, politely, safely, softly, successfully, and well.

comment adverbs: foolishly, fortunately, hopefully, luckily, and unfortunately.

adverbs of frequency: always, frequently, never, occasionally, often, and sometimes.

Is there additional information on adverbs?

You may occasionally break the rule and place adverbs in other parts of the sentence. This is done to highlight information, perhaps in answer to a question. For example:

A: How often do you miss work?

B: *Sometimes*, I take a day off from work.

More emphasis is placed on *sometimes*, which suggests that I'm at work most of the time. Because this is a more advanced rule, focus on correctly using adverbs as described here.

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