

# Adjectives & Adverbs

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# Vocabulary

- **CON:** with or together
- **ANTI:** against
- **MEM:** remember
- **CIRCUM:** around
- **VINC / VICT:** conquer
- **INTER:** between / among
- **ANTE:** before

1. **congregate:** v. to gather with others in one place
2. **consolidate:** v. to unite into one whole; combine
3. **antibiotic:** n. a drug capable of killing germs inside the body
4. **antiaircraft:** adj. used against hostile planes
5. **antidote:** n. a remedy to counteract a poison
6. **memoirs:** n. a record of something to be remembered
7. **memorable:** adj. worth remembering; noteworthy
8. **commemorate:** v. to observe; to recall to memory
9. **memorabilia:** n. objects and things remembered and collected
10. **circumference:** n. the perimeter of a circle
11. **circumvent:** v. to go around or bypass
12. **circumspect:** adj. watchful; cautious
13. **invincible:** adj. cannot be defeated; unstoppable
14. **evict:** v. to put a person from a property by legal process
15. **intercept:** v. to take something on the way from one place to another
16. **interstate:** adj. crossing state lines
17. **interim:** n. the time between one thing and another (as in "in the interim")
18. **interdict:** v. to forbid
19. **antecede:** v. to go before in time
20. **antebellum:** adj. before the war (especially the Civil War)

# Introduction to Adjectives

An **adjective** modifies a noun or a pronoun by describing, identifying, or quantifying words. An adjective usually precedes the noun or the pronoun which it modifies.

In the following examples, the **highlighted** words are adjectives:

- The **truck-shaped** balloon floated over the treetops.  
Mrs. Morrison papered her **kitchen** walls with **hideous** wallpaper.  
The **small** boat foundered on the **wine-dark** sea.  
The **coal** mines are **dark** and **dank**.  
**Many** stores have already begun to play **irritating Christmas** music.  
A **battered music** box sat on the **mahogany** sideboard.  
The back room was filed with **large, yellow** rain boots.

An adjective can be modified by an adverb, or by a phrase or clause functioning as an adverb. In the sentence

- My husband knits intricately **patterned** mittens.

For example, the adverb "intricately" modifies the adjective "patterned."

Some nouns, many pronouns, and many participle phrases can also act as adjectives. In the sentence

- Eleanor listened to the **muffled** sounds of the radio **hidden** under her pillow.

For example, both **highlighted** adjectives are past participles.

Grammarians also consider **articles** ("the," "a," "an") to be adjectives.



# Possessive Adjectives

A **possessive adjective** ("my," "your," "his," "her," "its," "our," "their") is similar or identical to a possessive pronoun; however, it is used as an adjective and modifies a noun or a noun phrase, as in the following sentences:

- I can't complete **my** assignment because I don't have the textbook.

In this sentence, the possessive adjective "my" modifies "assignment" and the noun phrase "my assignment" functions as an object. Note that the possessive pronoun form "mine" is not used to modify a noun or noun phrase.

- What is **your** phone number?

Here the possessive adjective "your" is used to modify the noun phrase "phone number"; the entire noun phrase "your phone number" is a subject complement. Note that the possessive pronoun form "yours" is not used to modify a noun or a noun phrase.

- The bakery sold **his** favorite type of bread.

In this example, the possessive adjective "his" modifies the noun phrase "favorite type of bread" and the entire noun phrase "his favorite type of bread" is the direct object of the verb "sold."

- After many years, she returned to **her** homeland.

Here the possessive adjective "her" modifies the noun "homeland" and the noun phrase "her homeland" is the object of the preposition "to." Note also that the form "hers" is not used to modify nouns or noun phrases.

- We have lost **our** way in this wood.

In this sentence, the possessive adjective "our" modifies "way" and the noun phrase "our way" is the direct object of the compound verb "have lost". Note that the possessive pronoun form "ours" is not used to modify nouns or noun phrases.

- In many fairy tales, children are neglected by **their** parents.

Here, the possessive adjective "their" modifies "parents", and the noun phrase "their parents" is the object of the preposition "by." Note that the possessive pronoun form "theirs" is not used to modify nouns or noun phrases.

- The cat chased **its** ball down the stairs and into the backyard.

In this sentence, the possessive adjective "its" modifies "ball" and the noun phrase "its ball" is the object of the verb "chased." Note that "its" is the possessive adjective and "it's" is a contraction for "it is."

THE POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES			
SINGULAR		PLURAL	
Personal Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives	Personal Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives
I	→ MY	WE	→ OUR
YOU	→ YOU	YOU	→ YOUR
HE	→ HIS	THEY	→ THEIR
SHE	→ HER		
IT	→ ITS		

# Demonstrative Adjectives

The **demonstrative adjectives** "this," "these," "that," "those," and "what" are identical to the demonstrative pronouns, but are used as adjectives to modify nouns or noun phrases, as in the following sentences:

- When the librarian tripped over **that** cord, she dropped a pile of books.

In this sentence, the demonstrative adjective "that" modifies the noun "cord" and the noun phrase "that cord" is the object of the preposition "over."

- **This** apartment needs to be fumigated.

Here "this" modifies "apartment" and the noun phrase "this apartment" is the subject of the sentence.

- Even though my friend preferred **those** plates, I bought these.

In the subordinate clause, "those" modifies "plates" and the noun phrase "those plates" is the object of the verb "preferred." In the independent clause, "these" is the direct object of the verb "bought."

Note that the relationship between a demonstrative adjective and a demonstrative pronoun is similar to the relationship between a possessive adjective and a possessive pronoun, or to that between an interrogative adjective and an interrogative pronoun.

## Demonstrative Adjectives

This (singular and near)

That (singular and far)

These (plural and near)

Those (plural and far)

# Interrogative Adjectives

An **interrogative adjective** ("which" or "what") is like an interrogative pronoun, except that it modifies a noun or noun phrase rather than standing on its own (see also demonstrative adjectives and possessive adjectives):

- **Which** plants should be watered twice a week?

Like other adjectives, "which" can be used to modify a noun or a noun phrase. In this example, "which" modifies "plants" and the noun phrase "which plants" is the subject of the compound verb "should be watered":

- **What** book are you reading?

In this sentence, "what" modifies "book" and the noun phrase "what book" is the direct object of the compound verb "are reading."

## Indefinite Adjectives

An **indefinite adjective** is similar to an indefinite pronoun, except that it modifies a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase, as in the following sentences:

- **Many** people believe that corporations are under-taxed.

The indefinite adjective "many" modifies the noun "people" and the noun phrase "many people" is the subject of the sentence.

- I will send you **any** mail that arrives after you have moved to Sudbury.

The indefinite adjective "any" modifies the noun "mail" and the noun phrase "any mail" is the direct object of the compound verb "will send."

- They found a few **goldfish** floating belly up in the swan pond.

In this example the indefinite adjective modifies the noun "goldfish" and the noun phrase is the direct object of the verb "found":

- The title of Kelly's favorite game is "**All** dogs go to heaven."

Here the indefinite pronoun "all" modifies "dogs" and the full title is a subject complement.



# Adverb

An **adverb** can modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a phrase, or a clause. An adverb indicates manner, time, place, cause, or degree and answers questions such as "how," "when," "where," "how much".

While some adverbs can be identified by their characteristic "ly" suffix, most of them must be identified by untangling the grammatical relationships within the sentence or clause as a whole. Unlike an adjective, an adverb can be found in various places within the sentence.

In the following examples, each of the **highlighted** words is an adverb:

- The seamstress **quickly** made the mourning clothes.

In this sentence, the adverb "quickly" modifies the verb "made" and indicates in what manner (or how fast) the clothing was constructed.

- The midwives waited **patiently** through a long labour.

Similarly in this sentence, the adverb "patiently" modifies the verb "waited" and describes the manner in which the midwives waited.

- The **boldly**-spoken words would return to haunt the rebel.

In this sentence, the adverb "boldly" modifies the adjective "spoken."

- We urged him to dial the number more **expeditiously**.

Here the adverb "more" modifies the adverb "expeditiously."

- **Unfortunately**, the bank closed at three **today**.

In this example, the adverb "unfortunately" modifies the entire sentence.



# Words that Modify : Adverbs

## Definition

- 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 lovely, lonely, motherly, friendly, neighborly, for instance, are adjectives:

- That lovely woman lives in a friendly neighborhood.

If a group of words containing a subject and verb acts as an adverb (modifying the verb of a sentence), it is called an **Adverb Clause**:

- When this class is over, we're going to the movies.

When a group of words that do not contain a subject and verb acts as an adverb, it is called an **adverbial phrase**. **Prepositional phrases** frequently have adverbial functions (telling place and time, modifying the verb):

- He went to the movies.
- She works on holidays.
- They lived in Canada during the war.



# Conjunctive Adverbs

You can use a **conjunctive adverb** to join two clauses together. Some of the most common conjunctive adverbs are "also," "consequently," "finally," "furthermore," "hence," "however," "incidentally," "indeed," "instead," "likewise," "meanwhile," "nevertheless," "next," "nonetheless," "otherwise," "still," "then," "therefore," and "thus." A conjunctive adverb is not strong enough to join two independent clauses without the aid of a semicolon.

The highlighted words in the following sentences are conjunctive adverbs:

- The government has cut university budgets; **consequently**, class sizes have been increased.
- He did not have all the ingredients the recipe called for; **therefore**, he decided to make something else.
- The report recommended several changes to the ways the corporation accounted for donations; **furthermore**, it suggested that a new auditor be appointed immediately.
- The crowd waited patiently for three hours; **finally**, the doors to the stadium were opened.
- Batman and Robin fruitlessly searched the building; **indeed**, the Joker had escaped through a secret door in the basement.

accordingly	however	likewise	on the other hand
also	indeed	meanwhile	on the contrary
as a result	instead	moreover	still
consequently	in addition	nevertheless	therefore
for example	in fact	otherwise	thus
furthermore	in other words		

# Infinitive Phrases

And [infinitive phrases](#) can act as adverbs (usually telling why):

- She hurried to the mainland to see her brother.
- The senator ran to catch the bus.

But there are other kinds of adverbial phrases:

- He calls his mother as often as possible.

Adverbs can modify [adjectives](#), but an adjective cannot modify an adverb. Thus we would say that "the students showed a [really](#) wonderful attitude" and that "the students showed a [wonderfully](#) casual attitude" and that "my professor is [really](#) tall, but [not](#) "He ran real fast."

Like adjectives, adverbs can have comparative and superlative forms to show degree.

- Walk faster if you want to keep up with me.
- The student who reads fastest will finish first.

We often use more and most, less and least to show degree with adverbs:

- With sneakers on, she could move more quickly among the patients.
- The flowers were the most beautifully arranged creations I've ever seen.
- She worked less confidently after her accident.
- That was the least skillfully done performance I've seen in years.

The as, as construction can be used to create adverbs that express sameness or equality: "He can't run as fast as his sister."

A handful of adverbs have two forms, one that ends in -ly and one that doesn't. In certain cases, the two forms have different meanings:

- He arrived late.
- Lately, he couldn't seem to be on time for anything.

In most cases, however, the form without the -ly ending should be reserved for casual situations:

- She certainly drives slow in that old Buick of hers.
  - He did wrong by her.
  - He spoke sharp, quick, and to the point.
- 



**INFINITIVE PHRASE**

# Intensifiers

Adverbs often function as **intensifiers**, conveying a greater or lesser emphasis to something. Intensifiers are said to have three different functions: they can emphasize, amplify, or downtone. Here are some examples:

## Emphasizers:

- I really don't believe him.
- He literally wrecked his mother's car.
- She simply ignored me.
- They're going to be late, for sure.

## Amplifiers:

- The teacher completely rejected her proposal.
- I absolutely refuse to attend any more faculty meetings.
- They heartily endorsed the new restaurant.
- I so wanted to go with them.
- We know this city well.

## Downtoners:

- I kind of like this college.
- Joe sort of felt betrayed by his sister.
- His mother mildly disapproved his actions.
- We can improve on this to some extent.
- The boss almost quit after that.
- The school was all but ruined by the storm.

Adverbs (as well as adjectives) in their various degrees can be accompanied by premodifiers:

- She runs very fast.
  - We're going to run out of material all the faster
- 



# Kinds of Adverbs

## Adverbs of Manner

- She moved slowly and spoke quietly.

## Adverbs of Place

- She has lived on the island all her life.  
She still lives there now.

## Adverbs of Frequency

- She takes the boat to the mainland every day.  
She often goes by herself.

## Adverbs of Time

- She tries to get back before dark.  
It's starting to get dark now.  
She finished her tea first.  
She left early.

## Adverbs of Purpose

- She drives her boat slowly to avoid hitting the rocks.  
She shops in several stores to get the best buys.
- 



# Positions of Adverbs

One of the hallmarks of adverbs is their ability to move around in a sentence. Adverbs of manner are particularly flexible in this regard.

- Solemnly the minister addressed her congregation.
- The minister solemnly addressed her congregation.
- The minister addressed her congregation solemnly.

The following adverbs of frequency appear at various points in these sentences:

- Before the main verb: I never get up before nine o'clock.
- Between the auxiliary verb and the main verb: I have rarely written to my brother without a good reason.
- Before the verb used to: I always used to see him at his summer home.

Indefinite adverbs of time can appear either before the verb or between the auxiliary and the main verb:

- He finally showed up for batting practice.
  - She has recently retired.
- 



# Misplaced Modifiers

Review the section on **Misplaced Modifiers** for some additional ideas on placement. Modifiers can sometimes attach themselves to and thus modify words that they ought not to modify.

- They reported that Giuseppe Balle, a European rock star, had died on the six o'clock news.

Clearly, it would be better to move the underlined modifier to a position immediately after "they reported" or even to the beginning of the sentence, so the poor man doesn't die on television.

Misplacement can also occur with very simple modifiers, such as only and barely:

- She only grew to be four feet tall.

It would be better if "She grew to be only four feet tall."

## Misplaced Modifiers

- *Misplaced modifier:*  
Sam bought a used car from a local dealer with a smoky tailpipe. 
- *Corrected version:*  
Sam bought a used car with a smoky tailpipe from a local dealer.

# Adjuncts, Disjuncts, & Conjuncts

Regardless of its position, an adverb is often neatly integrated into the flow of a sentence. When this is true, as it almost always is, the adverb is called an adjunct. (Notice the underlined adjuncts or adjunctive adverbs in the first two sentences of this paragraph.) When the adverb does not fit into the flow of the clause, it is called a disjunct or a conjunct and is often set off by a comma or set of commas. A disjunct frequently acts as a kind of evaluation of the rest of the sentence. Although it usually modifies the verb, we could say that it modifies the entire clause, too. Notice how "too" is a disjunct in the sentence immediately before this one; that same word can also serve as an adjunct adverbial modifier: It's too hot to play outside. Here are two more disjunctive adverbs:

- Frankly, Martha, I don't give a hoot.
- Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Conjuncts, on the other hand, serve a connector function within the flow of the text, signaling a transition between ideas.

- If they start smoking those awful cigars, then I'm not staying.
- We've told the landlord about this ceiling again and again, and yet he's done nothing to fix it.

At the extreme edge of this category, we have the purely conjunctive device known as the conjunctive adverb (often called the adverbial conjunction):

- Jose has spent years preparing for this event; nevertheless, he's the most nervous person here.
  - I love this school; however, I don't think I can afford the tuition.
-

# Some Special Cases

The adverbs enough and not enough usually take a postmodifier position:

- Is that music loud enough?
- These shoes are not big enough.
- In a roomful of elderly people, you must remember to speak loudly enough.

(Notice, though, that when enough functions as an adjective, it can come before the noun:

- Did she give us enough time?

The adverb enough is often followed by an infinitive:

- She didn't run fast enough to win.

The adverb too comes before adjectives and other adverbs:

- She ran too fast.
- She works too quickly.

If too comes after the adverb it is probably a disjunct (meaning also) and is usually set off with a comma:

- Yasmin works hard. She works quickly, too.

The adverb too is often followed by an **infinitive**:

- She runs too slowly to enter this race.

Another common construction with the adverb too is too followed by a prepositional phrase "for + the object of the preposition" followed by an infinitive:

- This milk is too hot for a baby to drink.





# Relative Adverbs

**Adjectival clauses** are sometimes introduced by what is called relative adverbs: where, when, and why. Although the entire clause is adjectival and will modify a noun, the relative word itself fulfills an adverbial function (modifying a verb within its own clause).

The **relative adverb** where will begin a clause that modifies a noun of place:

- My entire family now worships in the church where my great grandfather used to be minister.

The relative pronoun "where" modifies the verb "used to be" (which makes it adverbial), but the entire clause ("where my great grandfather used to be minister") modifies the word "church."

A when clause will modify nouns of time:

- My favorite month is always February when we celebrate Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day.

And a why clause will modify the noun reason:

- Do you know the reason why Isabel isn't in class today?

We sometimes leave out the relative adverb in such clauses, and many writers prefer "that" to "why" in a clause referring to "reason":

- Do you know the reason why Isabel isn't in class today?
  - I always look forward to the day when we begin our summer vacation.
  - I know the reason that men like motorcycles.
-