

ADVERBS

An adverb is a word used to modify a verb, adjective, or another adverb. An adverb usually modifies by telling **how, when, where, why, under what conditions, or to what degree.** An adverb is often formed by adding *-ly* to an adjective.

Conjunctive adverbs form a separate category because they serve as both conjunctions (they connect) and adverbs (they modify). Groups of words can also function as adverb phrases or adverb clauses.

(In the examples below, the adverb is in bold and the modified word is underlined.)

1. An adverb can modify a verb.

*The girls ran **quickly** but **happily** through the puddle.* (The adverbs *quickly* and *happily* modify the verb **ran** by telling how.)

*Go to the administration office **first**, and **then** come to class.* (The adverb *first* modifies the verb *go*, and the adverb *then* modifies the verb *come*. Both modify the verbs by telling when.)

*They are moving her office **upstairs**.* (The adverb *upstairs* modifies the verb *moving* by telling where.)

2. An adverb can modify an adjective. The adverb usually clarifies the degree or intensity of the adjective.

*Maria was **almost** finished when they brought her an **exceptionally** delicious dessert.* (The adverb *almost* modifies the adjective *finished* and *exceptionally* modifies *delicious* by describing the degree or intensity of the adjectives.)

*He was **very** happy about being **so** good at such an **extremely** challenging sport.* (The adverb *very* modifies the adjective *happy*, *so* modifies *good*, and *extremely* modifies *challenging* by describing the degree or intensity of the adjectives.)

*Students are **often** entertained and **sometimes** confused, but **never** bored in that class.* (The adverb *often* modifies the

adjective *entertained*, *sometimes* modifies *confused*, and *never* modifies *bored* by describing the degree or intensity of the adjectives.)

3. An adverb can modify another adverb. The modifying adverb usually clarifies the degree or intensity of the adverb.

*Eating her lunch **somewhat** cautiously, Carolyn tried to ignore the commotion.* (The adverb *somewhat* modifies the adverb *cautiously* by telling to what degree.)

*Stan can discuss the English language **very** thoroughly.* (The adverb *very* modifies the adverb *thoroughly* by telling to what degree.)

*Even in the other room, Vickilee was **never** completely unaware of the crying kittens.* (The adverb *never* modifies the adverb *completely* by telling to what degree.)

Additional Notes on Adverbs

In addition to the rules that apply to the use of adverbs, the following points further discuss their formation and function.

- **Adverbs are often made by adding *-ly* to an adjective.**

adjective: *slow* adverb: *slowly*

adjective: *deep* adverb: *deeply*

adjective: *fair* adverb: *fairly*

However, not all words that end in *-ly* are adverbs!

nouns: *family, homily, rally, lily*

adjectives: *friendly, worldly, lovely, sly*

- Some common adverbs do not originate from adjectives.

very, quite, only, so

Some adverbs modify by negating a statement. These are referred to as *negative adverbs*.

hardly, never, no, not, scarcely