

113 Adverbs and word order

A Where do adverbs go?

There are three places in the sentences where an adverb can go. They are called front position (at the beginning of a sentence), mid position (see B) and end position (at the end of a sentence). (But for adverbs of degree see Unit 115.)

FRONT	MID	END
<i>Then the ship slowly sailed away.</i>		
<i>Outside it was obviously raining hard.</i>		

B Mid position

Mid position means close to the verb. Here are some examples of adverbs in mid position.

	AUXILIARY	ADVERB	AUXILIARY	MAIN VfcRB
<i>The visitors are just leaving.</i>				
<i>Andrew has always liked Jessica.</i>				
<i>We don't often go out in the evening.</i>				
<i>You should never take unnecessary risks.</i>				
<i>The pictures have definitely been stolen.</i>				
<i>I really hate housework.</i>				
<i>You probably left the bag on the bus.</i>				

The adverb comes after the first auxiliary, e.g. **are**, **has**, **don't**.

If there is no auxiliary, then the adverb comes before the main verb, e.g. **hate**, **left**.

Note the word order in questions.

Has Andrew always liked Jessica? Do you often go out in the evening?

When the verb be is on its own, the adverb usually comes after it.

The boss is usually in a bad temper. You're certainly a lot better today.

When there is stress on the main verb be or on the auxiliary, then the adverb usually comes before it.

You certainly are a lot better today. I really have made a mess, haven't I?

C Verb and object

An adverb does not usually go between the verb and the direct object.

We put it in end position, after the object.

VERB	OBJECT	ADVERB	
<i>Tom ate his breakfast quickly.</i>			NOT <i>Tom ate quickly his' breakfast.</i>
<i>We played volleyball yesterday,</i>			NOT <i>We played yesterday volleyball.</i>
<i>I like classical music very much,</i>			NOT <i>I like very much classical music.</i>

But an adverb can go before a long object.

Detectives examined carefully the contents of the dead man's pockets.

D Adverbs of manner

An adverb of manner tells us how something happens, e.g. noisily, quickly. It usually goes in end position, but an adverb which ends in ly can sometimes go in mid position. *We asked permission politely.* We *politely asked permission.*

E Adverbs of place and time

Adverbs and adverbial phrases of place and time usually go in end position.

*Is there a phone box **nearby**? People didn't have cars **then**.*

*We're meeting **by the entrance**. Trevor wasn't very well **last week**.*

*Did you have a nice time **in New York**? I'll see you **before** very long.*

Sometimes they can go in front position.

*We're really busy this week. **Last week** we had nothing to do.*

Some short adverbs of time can also go in mid position.

*I'll soon find out. The train is **now** approaching Swindon.*

For **yet**, **still** and **already** see Unit 114.

F Adverbs of frequency

An adverb of frequency tells us 'how often'. It usually goes in mid position (see B).

*Mark is **always** in such a hurry. I **sometimes** feel depressed.*

*I've **often** thought about getting married. Do you **usually** work so late? **Normally**, **usually**, **often**, **sometimes** and **occasionally** can also go in front or end position.*

*Normally Sarah goes by train. I feel depressed **sometimes**.*

Phrases like **every day**, **once a week** or **most evenings** go in front or end position.

*Every day we go logging. Rachel has a driving lesson **three times a week**. There's a news summary **every hour**. We watch television **most evenings**.*

G Sentence adverbs

A sentence adverb is a word or phrase like **certainly**, **perhaps**, **luckily**, **of course**. It says something about the situation described in the sentence. The adverb can go in front, mid or end position. Sometimes we put a comma after or before the adverb, especially in front or end position.

Fortunately, the weather stayed fine. Maybe you'll win a free holiday.

*We'll probably have to queue for tickets. Rachel was late, of course. In a negative sentence, **probably** and **certainly** come before **won't**, **didn't**, etc.*

We probably won't get there in time. I certainly didn't expect a present!

Also usually goes in mid position, but **too** and **as well** go in end position.

Melanie bakes lovely cakes. She also makes bread./She makes bread, too/as well.

H End position

There can be more than one adverb or adverbial phrase in end position. Usually a single-word adverb (e.g. **safely**) comes before a phrase (e.g. **on a small airfield**).

They landed safely on a small airfield. I always eat here at lunch-time.

When there is a close link in meaning between a verb and an adverb, then that adverb goes next to the verb. For example, with verbs of movement like **go**, **come** and **move**, a phrase of place comes before time.

I usually go to bed early.

Tom came here yesterday.

My parents moved to London in 1993.

But often two adverbial phrases can go in either order.

The concert was held at the arts centre last night. The concert was held last night at the arts centre.

113 Exercises

1 Adverbs (A-B)

Read each sentence and write down the word which is an adverb.

- I'm just finishing an interesting article in this magazine, *just*
1 We have to leave our dirty shoes outside.
2 Perhaps you have to type a password into the computer.
3 Someone always leaves this door open.
4 Obviously we aren't going to go for a walk in the rain.
5 The car rolled silently down the hill.
6 Your friend Andrew works hard, doesn't he?

2 Adverbs and their position (A-B)

Read this true story. Some adverbs are underlined. Say if their position is front, mid or end.

Once a man called Alvin decided to rob a bank in Montgomery, Alabama. Alvin's parents had often told him that good manners were important. So Alvin went to the bank and stood in line. He waited patiently. Soon it was his turn. He dramatically pulled out a gun and threatened the cashier. She politely told him that he was in the wrong line and should go to another counter. Alvin immediately went to the correct place and stood in line again. Suddenly the police rushed in and arrested him. Alvin was amazed. They'd caught him before he'd even done the robbery. The moral of the story is that you shouldn't always do what your parents tell you.

ADVERB	POSITION	ADVERB	POSITION
► once	<i>front</i>		
1 often		6 immediately	
2 patiently		7 again	
3 soon		8 suddenly	
4 dramatically		9 even	
5 politely		10 always	

3 Mid position (B)

Complete the conversations using the words in brackets. Put the adverbs in the best place.

- Emma: Did you know the man who tried to steal your bag? (certainly / recognize / would)
Vicky: No, but I *would certainly recognize* him again.
1 David: That was a goal, wasn't it? (clearly / crossed)
Tom: Yes, the ball..... *the line*.
2 Mark: The weather is a lot better today, (probably / rain / will)
Sarah: It said on the radio it *later*.
3 Tom: How do we get to Mike's place? (didn't / fully / understand)
Nick: I don't know. I *the directions*.
4 Harriet: It's quiet here today, isn't it? (usually / are)
Laura: Yes, the neighbours *out on a Sunday*.
5 Emma: Have you been to this place before? (it / occasionally / visited)
Matthew: Yes, I *as a child*.
6 Alan: Did the computers crash this morning? (soon / were / working)
Mark: Yes, but they *again*.
7 Melanie: Your friend's late, Vicky, (forgotten / has / obviously)
Vicky: Rachel *that we arranged to go out*.

4 Adverbs of frequency (B, F)

- Look at what people are saying and write the information in one sentence.
Put the adverb or adverbial phrase in mid or end position. Choose the best position.
- ? Vicky: I lose my way in London. It always happens.
Vicky always loses her way in London.
- ? Laura: The birds wake me up. It happens every morning.
The birds wake Laura up every morning.

- 1 David: It rains when I'm on holiday. Well, usually.
- 2 Rita: My friend visits me. She comes most weekends.
- 3 Mark: I get a pay rise. I get one every year.
- 4 Rachel: I don't check my work. I never do that.

5 Adverbs and word order (A-G)

Put the words in the right order and write the statements. Sometimes there is more than one possible order.

► cleaned / every day / is / the office *The office is cleaned every day.*

- 1 always / I've / known / your secret
- 2 afford / can't / certainly / a new car / we
- 3 didn't / far / the tourists / walk
- 4 carefully / cut / the paper / Tom
- 5 also / can / Natasha / play / the violin
- 6 I / most days / read / the newspaper

6 Adverbs in end position (H)

Complete these sentences from a newspaper. Put the words and phrases in the best order.

► The Queen has visited the show *regularly since 1985* (*regularly / since 1985*).

- 1 The President died(at his home / peacefully).
- 2 The protesters marched(through the streets / yesterday).
- 3 The Prime Minister went(last year / to Greece).
- 4 Henry likes Rome. He spent a week(in June / there).

7 Adverbs and word order (A-H)

Read the postcard from Olivia to her friend Kirsty and write the sentences. Put the adverbs in the best place.

(►) Thank you for having us (last weekend). (1) We had a lovely time (in the country). (2) We arrived home at about eight (safely). (3) You must come and visit us (before too long). (4) It's nice to see you and Tony (always). (5) You'll be able to come in the new year (maybe). (6) We'll see you (sometime).

► *Thank you for having us last weekend.*

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