

# 25

## Adverbials

### 205 Summary

Introduction to adverbials • 206

An adverbial can be an adverb phrase, prepositional phrase or noun phrase.

*Luckily the money was **on my desk** when I arrived **this morning**.*

Adverb forms • 207

Many adverbs end in *ly*: *quietly, finally, certainly*. There are some pairs of adverbs like *hard and hardly* with different meanings.

The position of adverbials • 208

Some adverbials come next to the word or phrase they modify.

*those people **over there** **really** nice*

Some adverbials modify a verb or a whole clause. They come in front, mid or end position.

Front	Mid	End
<i><b>Today</b> the train</i>	<i><b>actually</b> left</i>	<i><b>on time</b>.</i>

Types of adverbial

Adverbs of manner • 209

*slowly, with a smile* (how?)

Place and time • 210

*here, at the post office* (where?)

*yesterday, next week* (when?)

*ages, for three weeks* (how long?)

Adverbs of frequency • 211

*often, every week* (how often?)

Adverbs of degree • 212

*very, a bit* (how?)

Focus and viewpoint • 213

*only, especially*

*medically, from a political point of view*

Truth adverbs • 214

*probably, on the whole*

**Comment adverbs • 215***luckily, to our amusement***Linking adverbs • 216***also, on the other hand*

## NOTE

For phrasal verbs, e.g. *Switch the light off*, • 230.For means, e.g. *I cut it with a knife*, • 228(5).For function/role, e.g. *I use this room as my office*, • 228(6).For *where, when, why* and *how* in questions, • 27, and as relative adverbs, • 279.**206 Introduction to adverbials**

In this real conversation Liz is telling a friend how she and Tony were stopped by the police.

## STOPPED BY THE POLICE

Liz: *It was **at about eleven o'clock at night**, and **at that sort of time** the police are **always** looking for people who've been drinking. And I can remember **very well** that we were **in a hurry** to get **home** because Catherine was **with a babysitter**, but she wasn't **at home**, she was **in someone else's house**, and we wanted to get **back** before they were ready to go **to bed**. Do you remember?*

Tony: *We'd been **to the cinema**.*

Liz: *Mhm. And I can remember...*

Tony: *Hadn't had a drink **for days**.*

Liz: *No. I can remember distinctly that you were going **very very slowly** as you saw the police car **in front of you**, and **then** you said **in a very impatient fashion**, 'Oh, they're doing this **on purpose**. They're going **very slowly**. I will overtake them.' You overtook them, and **sure enough** they thought that that was worth stopping you for. So they did.*

Tony: *So they got **out**, and they inspected the car **thoroughly in a very officious manner**.*

(from M. Underwood and P. Barr *Listeners*)

- 1 An adverbial can have these forms.

Adverb phrase:	<i>You were going <b>very slowly</b>. We wanted to get <b>back</b>.</i>
Prepositional phrase:	<i>Catherine wasn't <b>at home</b>. You saw the police car <b>in front of you</b>.</i>
Noun phrase:	<i>We wanted to get <b>home</b>. It happened <b>last week</b>.</i>

- 2 Sometimes an adverbial is necessary to complete a sentence.

*Catherine was **with a babysitter**. We'd been **to the cinema**.*

But very often the adverbial is an extra element.

*I can remember **very well**. You saw the police car **in front of you**.*

For details, • 12.

Putting in an extra adverbial adds something to the meaning. For example, it can tell us how, when or where something happened.

- 3 An adverbial can modify different parts of the sentence.

*The car **in front of us** was a police car.*

*You were getting **really** impatient.*

*They were going **very** slowly.*

*They inspected the car **thoroughly**.*

***Then** you decided to overtake.*

Here the adverbials add information about the noun *car*, the adjective *impatient*, the adverb *slowly*, the action *inspected the car* and the clause *you decided*.

## 207 Adverb forms

- 1 Some adverbs are unrelated to other words, e.g. *always, soon, very, perhaps*. But many adverbs are formed from an adjective + *ly*, e.g. *quick quickly, certain certainly*.

### NOTE

There are some spelling rules for adverbs in *ly*.

*Y* changing to *i*: *easy easily* • 294

Adjectives ending in consonant + *le*: *probable probably* • 292(5)

Adjectives ending in *ic*: *magic magically* • 292(5)

- 2 We cannot add *ly* to an adjective which already ends in *ly*. Instead we can either use a prepositional phrase with *manner/way/fashion*, or we can use another adverb.

*We received a **friendly greeting**. They greeted us **in a friendly manner**.*

NOT *friendlily*

*That isn't very **likely**.*

*That **probably** won't happen.*

Some adjectives in *ly* are *friendly, lively, lovely, silly, ugly, cowardly, lonely, costly, likely*.

### NOTE

Some adjectives ending in *ed* have no adverb form.

*The woman stared in **astonishment**, NOT **astonishedly***

But those ending in *ted* can take an *ly* ending.

*The crowd shouted **excitedly**.*

- 3 Some adverbs have the same form as adjectives.

Adjective

Adverb

*Louise caught the **fast** train.*

*The train was going quite **fast**.*

*We didn't have a **long** wait.*

*We didn't have to wait **long**.*

*I had an **early** night.*

*I went to bed **early**.*

Other adverbs like this are *walk **straight**, sit **still** and bend **low***. For *hard, hardly, late, lately* etc, • (5).

- 4 Sometimes the adverb can be with or without *ly*. It is more informal to leave out *ly*.

*You can buy cassettes **cheap/cheaply** in the market.*

*Do you have to talk so **loud/loudly**?*

*Get there as **quick/quickly** as you can.*

*Go **slow/slowly** here.*

*Cheap(ly), loud(ly), quick(ly) and slow(ly) are the most common. Others are direct(ly), tight(ly) and fair(ly). For American usage, • 305(2).*

## NOTE

- a We use the form without *ly* only in common expressions, e.g. *talk so loud, go slow, fly direct, play fair*. We use *ly* with longer or less common expressions.  
Do you have to rustle that newspaper so **loudly**? We need to take action **quickly**.
- b *Right* and *wrong* are adverbs of manner, but *rightly* and *wrongly* express a comment.  
I'll try to do it **right** this time.  
Helen decided **rightly** to call the police.
- c *First* and *last* are both adjectives and adverbs.  
Karen took **first** place/came **first** in the race.  
*Firstly* and *lastly* are linking adverbs.  
*First/Firstly*, I'd like to thank you all for coming.

- 5 There are some pairs such as *hard* and *hardly* which have different meanings.
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>You've all worked <b>hard</b>.</i>                          | <i>I've got <b>hardly</b> any money.</i><br>( <i>hardly any</i> = almost no) |
| <i>There's a bank quite <b>near</b>.</i>                       | <i>We've <b>nearly</b> finished.</i> (= almost)                              |
| <i>I often stay up <b>late</b>.</i>                            | <i>I've been unwell <b>lately</b>.</i> (= recently)                          |
| <i>The plane flew <b>high</b> above the clouds.</i>            | <i>The theory is <b>highly</b> controversial.</i> (= very)                   |
| <i>Submarines can go very <b>deep</b>.</i>                     | <i>Mike feels very <b>deeply</b> about this.</i>                             |
| <i>Airline staff travel <b>free</b>.</i><br>(= without paying) | <i>The prisoners can move around <b>freely</b>.</i><br>(= uncontrolled)      |
| <i>This ear hurts the <b>most</b>.</i>                         | <i>We <b>mostly</b> stay in.</i> (= usually)                                 |
- 6 *Hourly, daily etc* are formed from *hour, day, week, month* and *year*. They are both adjectives and adverbs.  
*It's a **monthly** magazine.* *It comes out **monthly**.*
- 7 *Good* is an adjective, and *well* is its adverb.  
*Roger is a **good** singer, isn't he?*  
*Roger sings **well**, doesn't he?* NOT *He sings good.*  
But *well* is also an adjective meaning 'in good health'.  
*I was ill, but I'm **well**/I'm all right now.*  
*How are you? ~ Very **well**, IFine, thank you.*

NOTE We use *well* in expressions such as *well organized, well deserved* and *well known*.

## 208 The position of adverbials

The position of an adverbial depends on what it modifies. It can modify a word or phrase or a whole clause. Its position also depends on what type of adverbial it is and whether it is a single word or a phrase.

### 1 Modifying a noun, adjective or adverb

- a An adverbial which modifies a noun usually goes after it.  
*The shop on the corner is closed.*  
*Who's the girl with short hair?*  
*Those people outside are getting wet.*  
For more examples, • 148.
- b An adverb which modifies an adjective or adverb usually goes before it. • 212  
*That's very kind of you. We heard the signal fairly clearly.*

## 2 Front position, mid position and end position

When an adverbial modifies a verb or a whole clause, there are three main places we can put it.

- Front: **Really**, I can't say.
- Mid: I can't **really** say.
- End: I can't say, **really**.

Sometimes we can also put an adverbial after the subject. • (4) Note c  
*I really can't say.*

## 3 Front position

- Sure enough*, the police car stopped us.
- Just** hold on a moment.
- In the end* our efforts will surely meet with success.

Front position is at the beginning of a clause. Most types of adverbial can go here. We often put an adverbial in front position when it relates to what has gone before.

*You were getting impatient. And then you decided to overtake.*

For an example text, • 49(1).

NOTE

A prepositional phrase can sometimes be the subject.

- Along that path* is the quickest way. *After lunch* is usually a quiet time.
- For there + be, • 50.

## 4 Mid position

- The police are always* looking for people at this time.
- This stereo is definitely* faulty.
- I usually* enjoy maths lessons.

Mid position is after an auxiliary verb, after the ordinary verb *be* on its own, or before a simple-tense verb.

	(Auxiliary)			
Subject	( <i>be</i> on its own)	Adverb	(Verb)	
<i>It</i>	<i>doesn't</i>	<b>often</b>	<i>rain</i>	<i>in the Sahara.</i>
<i>We</i>	<i>'ve</i>	<b>just</b>	<i>booked</i>	<i>our tickets.</i>
<i>The news</i>	<i>will</i>	<b>soon</b>	<i>be</i>	<i>out of date.</i>
<i>You</i>	<i>were</i>	<b>probably</b>		<i>right.</i>
<i>You</i>		<b>probably</b>	<i>made</i>	<i>the right decision.</i>
<i>I</i>		<b>always</b>	<i>get</i>	<i>the worst jobs.</i>

Most types of short adverbial can go here, especially adverbs of frequency (*often*), but not phrases.

NOT *I every time get the worst jobs.*

- a In a question there is inversion of subject and auxiliary.  
*Have you just booked your tickets? Why do I always get the worst jobs?*
- b If there are two auxiliaries, then mid position is usually after the first one.  
*We've just been queuing for tickets. The shops will soon be closing.*  
But adverbs of manner and some adverbs of degree go after the second auxiliary.  
*We've been patiently queuing for tickets. You could have completely spoiled everything.*

- c We sometimes put an adverb after the subject and before the verb phrase. This happens especially with a negative (*probably doesn't*) or when there is stress (*really 'are*).
- It **probably** doesn't matter very much.*  
*You **really** are serious, aren't you?*
- An adverb also goes before *have to*, *used to* and *ought to*.  
*I **never** have to wait long for a bus.*
- Sometimes the position can affect the meaning. Compare these sentences.  
*They **deliberately didn't** leave the heating on.* (They left it off on purpose.)  
*They **didn't deliberately** leave the heating on.* (They left it on by mistake.)

## 5 End position

- a *I hadn't had a drink **for days**.*  
*The police were driving **very slowly**.*  
*They're doing this **on purpose**.*
- Most types of adverbial can come here, especially prepositional phrases.
- b If there is an object, then the adverbial usually goes after it.  
*I wrapped the parcel **carefully**, NOT *I wrapped carefully the parcel.*  
*We'll finish the job **next week**, NOT *We'll finish next week the job.***
- But a short adverbial can go before a long object.  
*I wrapped **carefully** all the glasses and ornaments.*
- Here the adverb of manner can also go in mid position.  
*I **carefully** wrapped all the glasses and ornaments.*
- c We often put an adverbial in end position when it is new and important information.  
*There was a police car in front of us. It was going **very slowly**.*

### NOTE

When there are two clauses, the position of the adverb can affect the meaning.

*They agreed **immediately** that the goods would be replaced.* (an immediate agreement)

*They agreed that the goods would be replaced **immediately**.* (an immediate replacement)

## 6 Order in end position

- a Sometimes there is more than one adverbial in end position. Usually a shorter adverbial goes before a longer one.  
*Sam waited **impatiently outside the post office**.*  
*We sat **indoors most of the afternoon**.*  
*They inspected the car **thoroughly in a very officious manner**.*
- b When there is a close link in meaning between a verb and adverbial, then the adverbial goes directly after the verb. For example, we usually put an adverbial of place next to *go*, *come* etc.  
*I **go to work** by bus. Charles **came home** late.*
- c Phrases of time and place can often go in either order.  
*There was an accident **last night on the by-pass**.*  
*There was an accident **on the by-pass last night**.*

### NOTE

A smaller place usually comes before a larger one.

*They live **in a bungalow near** Coventry.*

Manner, time and place usually come before frequency.

*I can find my way around **quite easily, usually.***

*Sarah gets up **early occasionally.***

In more careful English, the adverb of frequency would come in mid position.

*I can **usually** find my way around quite easily.*

When a truth, comment or linking adverb comes in end position, it is usually last, a kind of afterthought.

*Phil's had to stay late at work, **perhaps.***

*Someone handed the money in at the police station, **incredibly.***

*Wendy is a member. She doesn't go to the club very often, **however.***

## 209 Adverbs of manner

### 1 Adjectives and adverbs

a Look at these examples.

Adjective

*Kevin had a **quick** snack.*

*Kate is **fluent** in Russian.*

*Think of a **sensible** reply.*

Adverb

*He ate **quickly.***

*She speaks Russian **fluently.***

*Try to reply **sensibly.***

An adjective modifies a noun (*snack*). An adverb of manner modifies a verb (*ate*).

Most adverbs of manner are formed from an adjective + *ly*. For adverbs without *ly*,

- 207(3-4).

b Compare the different types of verb.

Linking verb + adjective

*The inspector **was polite.***

Action verb + adverb

*She **listened politely.** NOT *She listened polite.**

Linking verbs are *be, seem, become, look, feel* etc. • 9. Some verbs can be either linking verbs or action verbs.

Linking verb + adjective

*The speaker **looked nervous.***

*The milk **smelled funny.***

*The atmosphere **grew tense.***

Action verb + adverb

***He looked nervously** round the room.*

*Dave **smelled the milk suspiciously.***

*The plants **grew rapidly.***

### 2 Prepositional phrases

We can often use a prepositional phrase to express manner.

*Handle **carefully/with care.** They were doing it **deliberately/on purpose.***

*They inspected the car **officially/in an officious manner.***

NOTE

We can often use an adjective or adverb in the prepositional phrase.

*It **must be handled with great care.***

*They inspected the car **in an extremely officious manner.***

### 3 Position

- a We put an adverbial of manner mainly in end position, • 208(5). These are real examples from stories.

*'I didn't know whether to tell you or not,' she said **anxiously**.*

*The sun still shone **brightly** on the quiet street.*

*We continued our labours **in silence**.*

NOTE

An adverb of manner can also modify an adjective.

*The team were **quietly** confident.      The dog lay **peacefully** asleep.*

- b The adverbial can sometimes come in front position for emphasis. • 49(1c)  
***Without another word**, he walked slowly away up the strip.*

## 210 Place and time

### 1 Position

- a Adverbials of place and time often go in end position.

*The match will be played **at Villa Park**.*

*The President made the comment to reporters **yesterday**.*

*A Norwegian ferry was being repaired **last night** after running aground **in the Thames**.*

*The office is closed **for two weeks**.*

For more than one adverbial in end position, • 208(6).

- b They can also go in front position.

*I've got two meetings tomorrow. And **on Thursday** I have to go to London.*

For details and an example text, •49(1).

- c Some short adverbials of time can go in mid position.

*I've **just** seen Debbie.      We'll **soon** be home.*

These include *now, then, just* (= a short time ago), *recently, soon, at once, immediately, finally, since, already, still* and *no longer*.

- d An adverbial of place or time can modify a noun.

*The radiator **in the hall** is leaking.*

*Exports **last year** broke all records.*

### 2 *Yet, still and already*

- a We use *yet* for something that is expected.

*Have you replied to the letter **yet**? ~ No, **not yet**.*

*I got up late. I haven't had breakfast **yet**.*

*Yet* comes at the end of a question or negative statement.

NOTE

We can use *yet* in mid position, but it is a little formal.

*We have **not yet** reached a decision on the matter.*



- b We use *still* for something going on longer than expected. In positive statements and questions it goes in mid position.

*I got up late. I'm **still** having breakfast.*

*Does Carl **still** ride that old motor-bike he had at college?*

In negative statements *still* comes after the subject.

*The child **still** hasn't learnt to read.*

This is more emphatic than *The child hasn't learnt to read yet.*

NOTE

*Still* can go after a negative auxiliary when we express surprise. Compare these sentences.

*I **still** don't feel well. (= I still feel ill.)*

*You don't **still** feel sick, do you? (= I am surprised that you still feel sick.)*

- c We use *already* for something happening sooner than expected. We use it mainly in mid position in positive statements and questions.

*I got up early. I've **already** had breakfast.*

*Have you **already** replied to the letter? ~ Yes, I have. ~ That was quick. It only came yesterday.*

*Already* in end position has more emphasis.

*Good heavens! It's lunch time **already**.*

*Have you typed the whole report **already**?*

NOTE

*Already* can go after the subject and before a stressed auxiliary.

*I **already** have typed the report, I tell you.*

### 3 *No longer, any more and any longer*

- a We use *no longer* for something coming to an end. It goes in mid position.

*Mrs Hicks **no longer** works at the town hall.*

*No longer* is a little formal. In informal speech we use *any more*. It goes in end position in a negative sentence.

*Barbara doesn't work at the town hall **any more**.*

- b We often use *any longer* in a negative sentence for something that is about to end.

*I'm not going to wait **any longer**.*

### 4 *Long and far*

- a We normally use the adverbs *long* and *far* only in questions and negative statements.

*Have you been waiting **long**? It isn't **far** from here to the motorway.*

In positive statements we use *a long time/way*.

*I had to wait **a long time**/ wait ages. It's **a long way** to Vladivostok.*

- b But we use *long* and *far* after *too*, *so* and *as*, and with *enough*.

*The speech went on **too long**.*

*I'm annoyed because I've had to wait **so long**/such a long time.*

*Let's go back now. We've walked **far enough**.*

NOTE

We can also use the comparative and superlative forms in positive statements.

*The journey takes **longer** in the rush hour. You threw the ball **furthest**.*

## 5 After

We do not often use *after* on its own as an adverb.

*We all went to the cinema and then **afterwards** to a pizza restaurant.*

*The talk lasted half an hour. Then/After **that** there was a discussion.*

We can say *the day/week after*.

*I sent the form off, and I got a reply the week **after**/a week **later**.*

## 211 Adverbs of frequency

- 1 An adverb of frequency usually goes in mid position.

*The bus doesn't **usually** stop here. I can **never** open these packets.*

*It's **always** cold up here. I **often** get up in the night.*

Some adverbs of frequency are *always*; *normally*, *generally*, *usually*; *often*, *frequently*; *sometimes*, *occasionally*; *seldom*, *rarely*; *never*.

### NOTE

- a The adverb can sometimes go after the subject and before a negative auxiliary. Compare these sentences.

*I **don't often** have breakfast.* (= I seldom have breakfast.)

*I often **don't have** breakfast.* (= I often go without breakfast.)

*Sometimes goes before a negative auxiliary.*

*You **sometimes can't** get a table here.*

- b *Seldom* and *rarely* are a little formal. In informal speech we use *not often*.

*I **don't often** play cards.*

- c *Never* is a negative word. • 17(4)

*I've **never** felt so embarrassed in my life. Will you **never** learn?*

We use *ever* mainly in questions.

*Have you **ever** done any ballroom dancing? ~ No, never.*

But we can also use *ever* with negative words.

*I **haven't ever** felt so embarrassed.*

*You **hardly ever** buy me flowers.*

*Ever* can add emphasis to the negative.

***No one ever** said that to me before.*

***Nothing ever** happens in this place.*

*I **never ever** want to see that awful man again.*

We can also use *ever* in conditions and comparisons.

*If you **ever** feel like a chat, just drop in.*

*James swam **faster than** he'd **ever** done before.*

*If **ever** can go before the subject.*

***If ever** you feel like a chat, just drop in.*

We do not normally use *ever* in positive statements.

*I **always** have lots to do. NOT I ever have lots to do.*

- 2 *Normally*, *generally*, *usually*, *frequently*, *sometimes* and *occasionally* also go in front or end position.

***Normally** I tip taxi-drivers. My sister comes to see me **sometimes**.*

*Often*, *seldom* and *rarely* can go in end position, especially with e.g. *very* or *quite*.

*Doctors get called out at night **quite often**.*

*A lot* (= often) goes in end position.

*We go out **a lot** at weekends.*

### NOTE

- a *Always*, *never* and *often* in front position are emphatic.

***Always** the ghost appeared at the same time.*

We can use *always* and *never* in instructions.

***Never** try to adjust the machine while it is switched on.*

- b For *never*, *seldom* and *rarely* with inversion, • 17(6c).

- 3 We can also use a phrase with *every*, *most* or *some* to express frequency. These phrases can go in front or end position.  
*Every summer* we all go sailing together.  
 The dog has to have a walk *every day*.  
 The postman calls *most days*.  
*Some evenings* we don't have the television on at all.
- We can also use *once*, *twice*, *three times* etc.  
 The committee meets *once a month*.  
 Two tablets to be taken *three times a day*.  
 Paul has been married *several times*.

## NOTE

Compare *often* and *several times*.

We've *often* been skiing. (= many times over a long period)

We've been skiing *several times*. (= perhaps four or five times)

- 4 The adverbs *daily* (= every day), *weekly* etc go in end position.  
 Are you paid *weekly or monthly*?

## 212 Adverbs of degree

### 1 Modifying an adjective or adverb

- a We can use an adverb of degree before some adjectives and adverbs.
- + Adjective: *It's **very** cold. I'm **so** tired.*  
                   *You're **absolutely** right.      These are **rather** expensive.*  
                   *We're **a bit** busy today.      It wasn't **at all** interesting.*
- + Adverb: *I come here **quite** often.      I saw her **fairly** recently.*  
                   *We **hardly** ever go out.      He agreed **somewhat** reluctantly.*

Here are some common adverbs of degree.

Full degree: *completely, totally, absolutely, entirely, quite*

Large degree: *very, extremely, really, awfully, terribly*

Medium degree: *rather, fairly, quite, pretty, somewhat*

Small degree: *a little, a bit, slightly*

Negative: *hardly, scarcely • 17(4), at all*

Others: *so, as; too; more, most, less, least • 220*

We can also use a fraction or percentage.

*The bottle is only **half** full.*

*The forecast was **eighty per cent** accurate.*

## NOTE

- a We use *completely, totally, absolutely* etc with words expressing a full or large degree.

*This tin opener is **completely** useless. (useless = absolutely no use)*

*We are **absolutely** delighted at the news. (delighted = very pleased)*

We do not normally use *very* or *extremely* with these words.

*It's **very** unsatisfactory. NOT It's very useless.*

*We were **extremely** pleased. NOT We were extremely delighted:*

Some words that do not normally take *very* or *extremely* are: *amazed, amazing, appalled, appalling, awful, complete, delighted, dreadful, essential, false, fascinated, horrible, ideal, impossible, incredible, magnificent, marvellous, perfect, terrible, terrific, useless.*

- b After a phrase with *very* we can put *indeed* for extra emphasis.

*It's **very** cold **indeed** today.*

- c We often use *very* with a negative.  
*These photos aren't very good.*  
 This is more usual than *These photos aren't good* or *These photos are bad*.
- d Instead of *really* we can use *real* in informal speech, especially in American English.  
*It's real cold today.*
- e *Pretty* and *a bit* are informal.
- f *Somewhat*, *a little*, *a bit* and *slightly* have an unfavourable sense.  
*The carriage was somewhat crowded.*  
*I felt a bit sick.*  
 But we can use them with comparatives in a favourable sense.  
*I felt a bit better/somewhat more cheerful.*
- g *At all* can also go in end position.  
*It wasn't interesting at all.*  
 For phrases used to emphasize a negative, • 17(6b).
- h In informal English we can use *that* instead of *so* in a negative sentence.  
*No, they don't own an aeroplane. They aren't that rich.*
- i We can use *much*, *far* or *rather* to modify *too*.  
*This coat is much too big for me.*
- j For *twice/three times as expensive*, • 194(2).

- b *Enough* comes after the adjective or adverb it modifies.  
*Are you warm enough?*  
*Steve didn't react quickly enough.*

Compare *too* and *enough*.

*It's too small* (for me)./ *It isn't big enough* (for me).

NOTE

Compare *enough* as adverb and as quantifier.

*I'm not rich enough.*/ *I haven't enough money.*

## 2 Modifying a comparative adjective or adverb

*This new sofa is much nicer than the old one. NOT very nicer*

*Come on. Try a bit harder.*

*The alternative route was no quicker.*

Before a comparative we can use (*very*) *much*, *a lot*; *rather*, *somewhat*; *a little*, *a bit*, *slightly*; *three times* etc.

## 3 Modifying a superlative

*It was just about the nicest holiday I could have imagined.*

*We offer easily the best value/by far the best value.*

NOTE

The adverb can sometimes come after the phrase with a superlative.

*We offer the best value by far.*

## 4 *So/such, quite* and *too*

We can use most adverbs of degree with an attributive adjective.

*that very tall girl my fairly low score a rather nice restaurant*

But after *a/an* we do not normally use *so* or *quite*.

*She's such a tall girl. NOT a so tall girl*

*It's quite an old book. (a quite old book is less usual)*

*Too* or *as* and the adjective go before *a/an*.

*You've cut **too short a piece**, NOT a too short piece*

*I know just **as quick a way**. NOT a just as quick way*

We can use *so* in the same way, although the pattern with *such* is more usual.

*I don't like to criticize **so famous an artist**.*

*I don't like to criticize **such a famous artist**.*

NOTE

a We can use *rather* in both patterns.

*We had **a rather long wait/rather a long wait**.*

b We can use *such* and *rather* + *a/an* + noun without an adjective.

*That man is **such an idiot**. It's **rather a pity** you won't be here.*

We can also use *a bit of*.

*Sorry. The flat's in **a bit of a mess**.*

*Quite* in this pattern means something large or special.

*We had **quite a wait**. That was **quite a party**.*

The meaning is the same as *That was **some** party.* • 179(5c)

## 5 *Quite* and *rather*

### a Stress

In these examples with *quite*, the adjective is stressed.

*It's quite **'warm** today.* (It's warmer than expected.)

*Your friends are quite **'rich**.* (They've got a lot of money.)

If we stress *quite*, we limit the force of the adjective.

*It's **'quite** warm.* (but not as warm as expected)

*Things went **'quite** well.* (but not as well as I'd hoped)

NOTE We do not stress *rather*.

### b *Quite* warm/*rather* cold

When we make a favourable comment, we usually prefer *quite* to *rather*. *Quite* is unstressed.

*It's **quite** pleasant here. It was **quite** a good party.*

In unfavourable comments, we usually prefer *rather*, but *quite* is possible.

*It's **rather/quite** depressing here. It was **rather/quite** a dull party.*

*It was **rather/quite** inconvenient having to change trains twice.*

*Rather* in a favourable comment often means 'to a surprising or unusual degree'.

*I expected the party to be dull, but it was actually **rather** good.*

*The test paper was **rather** easy.* (It isn't usually so easy.)

### c Two meanings of *quite*

*Quite* + adjective can express a medium degree or a full degree, depending on the kind of adjective.

Medium degree: 'fairly'

Full degree: 'completely'

*The task is **quite** difficult.*

*The task is **quite** impossible.*

*The film was **quite** good.*

*The film was **quite** brilliant.*

*I feel **quite** tired.*

*I feel **quite** exhausted.*

With adjectives like **difficult**, we can use different degrees: **fairly difficult**, **a bit difficult**, **very difficult**, **more difficult** etc. Adjectives like *impossible* and *brilliant* already mean a full or large degree. An impossible task is *completely* out of the question; a brilliant film is *very* good.

*Quite* means 'completely' before these adjectives:

<i>absurd</i>	<i>brilliant</i>	<i>disgusting</i>	<i>fascinated</i>	<i>perfect</i>
<i>alone</i>	<i>certain</i>	<i>dreadful</i>	<i>fascinating</i>	<i>ridiculous</i>
<i>amazed</i>	<i>dead</i>	<i>empty</i>	<i>horrible</i>	<i>right</i>
<i>amazing</i>	<i>delicious</i>	<i>extraordinary</i>	<i>impossible</i>	<i>sure</i>
<i>appalled</i>	<i>determined</i>	<i>exhausted</i>	<i>incredible</i>	<i>true</i>
<i>appalling</i>	<i>different</i>	<i>exhausting</i>	<i>magnificent</i>	<i>useless</i>
<i>awful</i>	<i>disgusted</i>	<i>false</i>	<i>marvellous</i>	<i>wrong</i>

## NOTE

a We can sometimes use *fairly* etc with some of the adjectives listed above, especially in informal speech.

*The task is fairly impossible. I feel pretty exhausted.*

But **quite** *impossible/exhausted* etc always means 'completely'.

b *Not quite* means 'not completely'.

*What you said is not quite true.* (= almost true)

c *Quite* + *like/enjoy/want* = *fairly*.

*I quite enjoyed the film. It was quite good.*

*Quite* + *agree/understand* = *completely*.

*I quite agree. You're quite right.*

## 6 Modifying a preposition

Some adverbs of degree can modify a preposition.

*The offices are right in the centre of town.*

*I'm not very up to date, I'm afraid.*

For more examples, • 224(3).

## 7 Modifying a verb

a We can use an adverb of degree to modify a verb.

*I'm really enjoying myself.*

*We were rather hoping to have a look round.*

*The doorman absolutely refused to let us in.*

*The suitcase was so heavy I could hardly lift it.*

In mid position we can use *absolutely*, *completely*, *totally*; *just*, *really*; *almost*, *nearly*; *hardly*, *scarcely*; *quite*, *rather*.

*Absolutely*, *completely*, *totally* and *rather* can also go in end position.

*I completely forgot the time. / I forgot the time completely.*

## NOTE

The adverb goes before a stressed auxiliary • 208(4) Note c, and also sometimes before a negative auxiliary.

*I just don't know what to do. The driver almost didn't see the red light.*

b We often use an adverb of degree before a passive participle.

*The car was badly damaged in the accident.*

*Our schedule was completely disrupted by the changes.*

- c Some adverbs go in end position when they modify a verb.

*During the speech my attention wandered **a lot**.*

*This tooth aches **terribly**.*

These are *a lot, very much; a bit, a little, slightly; somewhat; terribly, awfully; more, (the) most.*

- d We can use *much* or *very much* in a negative sentence or question, but we cannot use *much* on its own in a positive statement.

Negative: *I don't like this sweater **much/very much**.*

Positive: *I like this sweater **very much**. NOT *I like this sweater much.**

## 8 Modifying a quantifier

We can use these patterns.

- a *very/so/too + many/much/few/little*  
*There were **so many people** there.*
- b *such/rather/quite + a lot (of)*  
*There were **such a lot of** people there.*  
*We've had **rather a lot of** complaints.*
- c *quite + a few/a bit (of)*  
*We've had **quite a few** complaints.*
- d *almost/nearly + all/every*  
***Almost all** the pudding had been eaten.*
- e *hardly any*  
*There was **hardly any** pudding left.*
- f *a lot/much/a bit/a little/any/no + more/less*  
*Would you like **a bit more** pudding?*

### NOTE

We can use *much, far* or *rather* to modify *too*.

*You've put **far too much** salt in.*

# 213 Focus and viewpoint

## 1 Focus adverbials

We sometimes use an adverb to focus on a particular word or phrase.

*Emily works every day, **even** on Sundays.*

*I don't like alcohol, **especially** beer.*

### NOTE

Compare *even* and *also*.

*Everyone laughed, **even** the teacher.*

*(Everyone includes the teacher.)*

*We've invited the whole class, and **also** the teacher.*

*(The whole class does not include the teacher.)*

## 2 *Only and even*

- a In rather formal or careful English we put *only* and *even* before the word or phrase we want to focus on.

*I knew **only one** of the other guests.*

*Alan always wears shorts. He wears them **even in winter**.*

But in informal English *only* and *even* can be in mid position.

*I **only** knew one of the other guests.*

*Alan **even** wears shorts in winter.*

We stress the word we want to focus on, e.g. *one, winter*.

### NOTE

- a *Only* can be an adjective.  
*Saturday is the **only** day I can go shopping.*
- b We can use the adverb *just* (= *only*).  
*I knew **just** one of the other guests.*
- b When we focus on the subject, we put *only* and *even* before it.  
***Only you** would do a silly thing like that.* (No one else would.)  
***Even the experts** don't know the answer.*
- NOTE For *Only then did I realize*, • 17(6c).
- c In official written English, e.g. on notices, *only* comes after the word or phrase it focusses on.  
*Waiting limited to **30 minutes only***

## 3 Viewpoint adverbials

These express the idea that we are looking at a situation from a particular aspect or point of view.

***Financially**, things are a bit difficult at the moment.*

*Can you manage **transport-wise**, or do you need a lift?*

*The building is magnificent **from an architectural point of view**, but it's hell to work in.*

***As far as insurance is concerned**, we can fix that up for you.*

### NOTE

A viewpoint adverb can also modify an adjective.

The scheme is *economically beneficial but **environmentally** disastrous*.

## 214 Truth adverbs

- 1 A truth adverb expresses what the speaker knows about the truth of a statement: how likely it is to be true, or to what degree it is true.

***Perhaps/Maybe** Mandy has missed the bus.*

*You've **certainly/undoubtedly** made a good start.*

*I agree with you **basically**. Service isn't included, **presumably**.*

***Clearly** the matter is urgent. The boxer **allegedly** took drugs.*



Most of these adverbs can go in front, mid or end position. *Certainly, definitely* and *probably* usually go in mid position. But in a negative sentence we put a truth adverb after the subject rather than after the auxiliary.

*You **certainly** haven't wasted any time.*

*Service **presumably** isn't included.*

NOTE For Mandy *might* have missed the bus, • 97.

- 2 We can also use a prepositional phrase.  
*The whole thing is ridiculous **in my opinion**.*  
***Ofcourse** I'll pay you back.*  
*We get on quite well together **on the whole**.*
- 3 We can also use a clause with *I*.  
***I think** the whole thing is ridiculous.*  
*Someone's fused the lights, **I expect**.*  
***I'm sure** you've made a mistake.*

## 215 Comment adverbs

- 1 We use this kind of adverb to make a comment on what we are saying  
***Luckily** no one was killed. (= It was lucky that no one was killed.)*  
*The newspaper wasn't interested in the story, **surprisingly**.*  
*I'm **afraid/Unfortunately** we didn't win anything.*
- 2 We can also use an adverb to comment on someone's behaviour.  
*Dick **wisely** didn't interfere. (= It was wise of Dick not to interfere.)*  
Compare the adverbs of comment and manner.  
***I stupidly** left the car unlocked. (= It was stupid of me.)*  
*The man stared **stupidly**. (= in a stupid manner)*
- 3 We can use a phrase with *to* for someone's feelings about something.  
***To my surprise**, the newspaper wasn't interested in the story.*  
***To Phil's delight**, his plan proved successful.*
- 4 We can comment on why we are saying something.  
***Honestly/To be honest**, I think you're making the wrong decision.*

## 216 Linking adverbs

A linking adverb relates to the previous clause or sentence. It most often goes in front position, but it can go in mid or end position. Here are some real examples.

*But the baby does not just grow bigger and heavier. Its shape and body proportions **also** change as it grows up.*

*When Beethoven was fourteen, he was forced to give lessons to support his parents. **However**, he still found time to take a few violin lessons, and he went on composing.*

*If you pay the bill in full within 25 days you won't be charged interest. **Otherwise** you are charged interest on any balance outstanding.*

Some other linking adverbs are *as well*, *too*, *in addition*, *furthermore*, • 244; *nevertheless*, *on the other hand*, • 246; *therefore*, *consequently*, *as a result*, • 247; *likewise*; *instead*. They have similar meanings to conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, *so* and *if*.

2 Here are some other ways of relating one clause or sentence to another.

Ordering:	<i>There are two reasons. <b>Firstly</b>, I'm not interested, and <b>secondly</b>, I haven't got the time.</i>
Summing up:	<i><b>In conclusion</b>, I'd like to say a few words about future prospects.</i>
Rephrasing:	<i>The matter is under consideration. <b>In other words</b>, they're thinking about it.</i>
Correcting:	<i>I'll see you tomorrow then. <b>Or rather</b> on Monday.</i>
Giving examples:	<i>We've got lots of things we could sell. There's the car, <b>for example</b>.</i>
Picking up a topic:	<i>I think I'll have the sausages. ~ <b>Talking of</b> sausages, did you know there's a barbecue on Saturday?</i>
Changing the subject:	<i>I had a lovely lunch. ~ Good. <b>By the way</b>, where did you put that file?</i>
Supporting a statement:	<i>I think I'd better be going. It's past midnight, <b>after all</b>.</i>
Dismissing something:	<i>I don't know whether we did the right thing. <b>Anyway</b>, it doesn't matter now.</i>
Comparing:	<i>The government sold the telephone service to private investors. Gas and electricity were privatized <b>in the same way</b>.</i>