

The position and order of adverbs

A Starting activities

1 Matching them up

Learning the rules by finding examples

- 1 Work as a class. Here are some rules about adverb position and order and some examples of the rules. Match the rules with the examples.

Rules

- a Adverbs of manner usually come after the verb.
- b Sentence adverbs are often the first word in the sentence.
- c Adverbs of place and adverb phrases usually come after the verb.
- d Adverbs of frequency usually come before the main verb.

Examples

- (i) *Unfortunately*, Rosie did not get to the station in time.
- (ii) When I was a boy, I would *often* sit and listen to my parents talking until late at night.
- (iii) A large white mouse sat *under the table*.
- (iv) James Bond looked *carefully* round the room.

When you have finished, look at Activity note 65 on page 158.

- 2 Work as a class. Decide if the adverbs below are sentence adverbs, or adverbs of manner, or place, or frequency.

Adverbs: *beautifully, here, always, actually, angrily, frequently*

2 Ron from Mars

Adverbs of frequency, manner and place

Work as a class or in pairs. Ron has just arrived from the planet Mars. Describe as many of the following as you can to Ron: a cat, a computer, a disco, a tennis match. Remember Ron has not seen any of them before. Include as many adverbs of frequency, manner and place as you realistically can. Example: *A cat frequently sits in the sun washing itself energetically.*



B Grammar guide

- 1 Adverbs of manner**
(like *beautifully, secretly, carefully*)
- Adverbs of manner (e.g. *beautifully*) usually come after the verb.
Caroline sings beautifully.
But they can also come after the object (e.g. *that song*) if there is one.
Caroline sings that song beautifully.
If the object is long (e.g. *not to tell him*) they can sometimes come before the verb.
They secretly decided not to tell him.
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- 2 Adverbs of place**
(like *here, there, north, away, abroad*)
- Adverbs of place usually come after the verb.
Did you drive here? He looked everywhere for the money.
But they can also come after the object.
He looked for the money everywhere.
Adverb phrases with a preposition as the first word are used in the same way.
The cat is sitting under the table. (adverb phrase after the verb)
He looked for the money in all the wrong places. (adverb phrase after the object)
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- 3 Adverbs of time**
(like *afterwards, lately, soon, yesterday, since Tuesday, on Sunday*)
- Adverbs of time usually come at the beginning or the end of a sentence.
I saw her yesterday. Tomorrow we are going to London.
But *yet* can come before the verb.
We have not yet started discussing the details.
Adverb phrases of time can start with *since, for, at once, until* and *then*.
We waited until the shops closed.
-
- 4 Adverbs of frequency**
(like *ever, never, often, always*)
- Adverbs of frequency usually come before the main verb but they come after *to be*.
I sometimes go with him. He is always late.
If there is an auxiliary verb they come after the first auxiliary.
I have often told you about her.
Sometimes, occasionally and *frequently* can also come at the beginning of the sentence.
Sometimes I feel so sad.
-
- 5 Adverbs of degree**
(like *fairly, hardly, just, quite, very, extremely*)
- Adverbs of degree usually come before the adjective or adverb they modify.
The party didn't finish until fairly late.
If the adverb of degree modifies a verb it comes before the main verb.
She is just leaving. They had hardly started the race, when it began to rain.
Really can come early in the sentence for more emphasis.
You really should stop smoking.
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- 6 Sentence adverbs**
(like *actually, anyway, of course*)
- We use sentence adverbs to say what we feel about a whole sentence. These adverbs are usually the first word in the sentence.
Unfortunately, Rosie did not get to the station in time.
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- 7 The order of adverbs**
- When we have a number of adverbs in a sentence, the most usual order is manner, then place, then time.
They worked hard in the garden today.
- NOTE There are many exceptions to the rules about the position and order of adverbs.

C Activities

1 A three-day search for hidden treasure

Position of adverbs

- 1 Work as a class. Suggest three valuable items of 'treasure'. (Examples: *an expensive computer, one thousand pounds in cash.*) Then suggest at least three places in your school or in the area around the place where you are learning English where each item could be hidden. Example: *The computer could be hidden behind the dustbins in the car park.* Each suggestion must use an adverb phrase of place. Your teacher will listen to your suggestions and decide where the three items are hidden, but won't tell you yet.
- 2 Work in pairs or groups. Imagine and describe a three-day search for the three items of treasure. Include as many adverbs as you naturally can. Use the list of verbs below to help you. Include two surprising incidents or problems that you had when you were looking for the hidden treasure. Example: *On the first day, we were looking carefully through the cupboards in the classroom when one of the teachers came in and rudely asked us to leave the building.*
Say where you found each item of treasure.
Verbs: *look for, search, go through, think of (looking), come up with (an idea), dig, dig up*
- 3 Work as a class. Tell the rest of the class about your three-day search and make a note of the adverbs that other groups or pairs use when they describe their search. Your teacher will then tell you where the treasure was actually hidden.

2 Adverb game

Position of adverbs

- 1 Work in pairs, A and B. You need one piece of paper between the two of you.

- **Person A:** Write the first part of a sentence putting in someone's name (the name of someone famous, or the name of someone in the class perhaps), a verb and an adverb of manner.

(Name) was (verb) (adverb of manner)
along the street when he/she . . .

Fold the paper so B cannot see what you wrote and pass it to B.

- **Person B:** Write this part of a sentence putting in someone's name, an adverb of manner and an adverb phrase of place.

saw (name) going (adverb of manner)
into a shop (adverb phrase of place).

Fold the paper so A cannot see what you wrote and pass it to A.

- **Person A:** Write this sentence putting in an adverb of frequency.

'Do you (adverb of frequency) go in there?'

Fold the paper and pass it to B.

- **Person B:** Write this sentence putting in a sentence adverb, an adverb of frequency and a noun.

'(Sentence adverb) I (adverb of frequency)
go in there to buy my (noun).'

- 2 Open the paper out and change the story, if you need to, until it makes sense.
- 3 Read the story out to the class.

D Accuracy practice

1 Where can we put the adverb in brackets in these sentences? More than one answer is sometimes possible.

- 1 I go to the cinema on my own. (sometimes)
- 2 We had finished eating when the door bell rang. (hardly)
- 3 She ought not to argue all the time. (really)
- 4 Do you want to change your job? (ever)
- 5 I will know how he managed to do it. (never)
- 6 She takes an afternoon off work. (often)
- 7 She is one of the last to leave. (often)

2 Is the adverb or adverb phrase printed in *italics* in the correct place? If it is not, move it to a correct place.

- 1 *Always* I forget to give you my homework.
- 2 He has not *yet* answered my letter.
- 3 Richard has *since four o'clock* been on the phone.
- 4 He is *extremely* good at dealing with problems quickly.
- 5 Jerry *quite* dances well actually.
- 6 You must listen to me when I'm talking to you *really*.
- 7 He has *lately* been very depressed.
- 8 I will *on Thursday* give you any necessary information.
- 9 We can't *anyway* go yet, it's too early.
- 10 She isn't ready to play *of course* for the club team.

3 Write these sentences with the phrase or phrases in brackets in the right order, and in a correct place in the sentence.

- 1 There's a brown file. (the/in/desk/drawer)
- 2 I'll see you. (on/here/Monday)
- 3 She always criticizes your work. (a/way/in/very/polite)
- 4 I ordered a new computer. (ago/a/weeks/few)
- 5 Please put that down. (over/carefully/before/you/there/go)

4 Complete the story using the adverbs below. Use each word once.

far, unhappily, back, everywhere, there, cheerfully, around, never, often

There is a homeless old man living near here who I ¹ see in the mornings wandering ² the field near my house. He ³ goes very ⁴ from the field. He sleeps ⁵ too, in a large box under a tree. One day I lost some papers. 'I'll just have to do all that work again', I said ⁶. Then I thought the papers might have fallen out of my case on the way to my house. So I searched ⁷ in the field but I could not see the papers. I was just on my way ⁸ home when the old man appeared with the papers. He grinned ⁹. 'There are three mistakes in this report', he said. 'How do you know?' I said. 'I know a lot about your company', he said, 'I used to be the Managing Director.'