** ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES**

1. **Adjective or Adverb?**

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/537/02/

**Rule #1: Adjectives modify nouns; adverbs modify verbs,
adjectives, and other adverbs.**

You can recognize adverbs easily because many of them are formed by adding -ly to an adjective.

Here are some sentences that demonstrate some of the differences between an adjective and an adverb.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Richard is careless.* | careless is an adjective that modifies the proper noun Richard. |
| *Richard talks carelessly.* | carelessly is an adverb that modifies the verb talks. |
| *Priya was extremely happy.* | happy is an adjective that modifies the proper noun Priya and extremely is an adverb that modifies the adjective happy. |

Adverbs can't modify nouns, as you can see from the following incorrect sentences.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| He is a quietly man. | The correct sentence above should say, "He is a quiet man." |
| *I have a happily dog.* | The correct sentence above should say, "I have a happy dog." |

**Rule #2:** An **adjective always follows a form of the verb to be when it modifies the noun before the verb**.

Here are some examples that show this rule.

*I was nervous. She has been sick all week. They tried to be helpful.*

**Rule #3:** An **adjective always follows a sense verb or a verb of appearance** (feel, taste, smell, sound, look, appear, and see) **when it modifies the noun before the verb.**

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| --- | --- |
| *Sharon's cough sounds bad.* | bad is an adjective that modifies the noun cough. Using the adverb badly here would not make sense, because it would mean her cough isn't very good at sounding. |
| *Castor oil tastes awful.* | awful is an adjective that modifies the noun oil. Using the adverb awfully here would not make sense, because it would mean that castor oil isn't very good at tasting. |
| *The ocean air smells fresh.* | fresh is an adjective that modifies the noun air. Using the adverb freshly here would not make sense, because it would mean that the air has a sense of smell that it uses in a fresh manner. |
| *She seems unhappy today.* | unhappy is an adjective that modifies the pronoun she. Using the adverb unhappily here would not make sense, because it would mean that she isn't very good at seeming. |

Be careful to notice whether the word modifies the subject or the verb in the sentence. If the word modifies the subject, you should use an adjective. If the word modifies the verb, you should use an adverb. The difference is shown in the following pair of sentences.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *This apple smells sweet.* | sweet is an adjective that modifies the noun apple. Using the adverb sweetly here would not make sense, because it would mean that the apple can smell things in a sweet manner. |
| *Your dog smells carefully.* | carefully is an adverb that modifies the verb smells. Using the adjective careful here would not make sense, because it would mean that the dog gives off an odor of carefulness. |

1. **Avoiding Common Errors**

**Bad** orBadly**?**

When you want to describe how you feel, you should use an adjective (Why? *Feel* is a sense verb; see rule #3 above). So you'd say, "*I feel* ***bad***." Saying you feel badly would be like saying *you play football badly*. It would mean that you are unable to feel, as though your hands were partially numb.

 "*The dog smells badly*." Here, badly means that the dog does not do a good job of smelling.

 "*The dog smells* ***bad***." Here, "**bad**" means that dog needs a bath.

N.B. Sometimes people say "*I feel badly*" when they feel that they have done something wrong. Let's say you dropped your friend's favorite dish, and it broke into a million pieces. You might say, "*I feel really badly about what happened.*"

**Good** or Well?

Good is an adjective, so you do NOT *do good* or *live good*, but you *do well* and *live well*.

Remember, though, that an adjective follows sense-verbs and be-verbs, so you also *feel good, look good, smell good, are good, have been good*, etc. (Refer to rule #3 above for more information about sense verbs and verbs of appearance.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *My mother looks good*. | This does not mean that she has good eyesight; it means that she appears healthy. |
| *I feel really good today*. | This does not mean that I touch things successfully. It means rather that I am happy or healthy. |

N.B. Many people confuse this distinction in conversation, and that's okay. You will hear people say, *"I feel well*" when they mean that they feel good. However, if you're talking about action verbs, you'd say "well." "*I did well on my exam.*" "*She plays tennis well*."

When well is used as an adjective, it means "not sick" or "in good health." For this specific sense of well, it's correct to say you feel well or are well; for example, after recovering from an illness.

When not used in this health-related sense, well functions as an adverb; for example, "I did well on my exam."

**Double-negatives**

*Scarcely* and *hardly* are already negative adverbs. To add another negative term is redundant, because in English only one negative is ever used at a time

*They found scarcely any animals on the island.* (not scarcely no...)

*Hardly anyone came to the party.* (not hardly no one...)

**Sure** or Surely?

Sure is an adjective, and surely is an adverb. For example:

 "*He is* ***sure*** *about his answer*." **Sure** describes he.

 "*The Senator spoke out surely*." Here, surely describes how the senator spoke.

Surely can also be used as a sentence-adverb. For example, "*Surely, you're joking*." Here, surely describes the entire sentence "you're joking." The sentence more or less means, "You must be joking."

Sure is an adjective, and surely is an adverb. Sure is also used in the idiomatic expression sure to be.

Surely can be used as a sentence-adverb. Here are some examples that show different uses of sure and surely.

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| --- | --- |
| *I am* ***sure*** *that you were there* | sure is an adjective that modifies the pronoun I. |
| *He is surely ready to take on the project.* | surely is an adverb that modifies the adjective ready. |
| *She is* ***sure*** *to be a great leader.*  | sure to be is an idiomatic phrase that functions as an adjective that modifies the pronoun she. |
| *Surely, environmental destruction has been one of the worst catastrophes brought about by industrial production.* | surely is an adverb that modifies the verb has been. |

**Real** or Really?

Real is an adjective, and really is an adverb.

Here are some examples that demonstrate the difference between real and really.

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| --- | --- |
| *She did really well on that test.* | really is an adverb that modifies the adverb well. |
| *Is she really going out with him?* | really is an adverb that modifies the verb phrase going out. |
| *Popular culture proposes imaginary solutions to* ***real*** *problems.* | **real** is an adjective that modifies the noun problems |

**Near** or Nearly?

Near can function as a verb, adverb, adjective, or preposition.

Here are some examples that demonstrate the differences between various uses of near and nearly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *The moment of truth neared.*  | neared is a verb in the past tense. |
| *We are nearly finished with this project.*  | nearly is an adverb that modifies the verb finished. |
| *The cat crept near.*  | near is an adverb of place that modifies the verb crept. |
| *First cousins are more nearly related than second cousins.* | nearly is an adverb that modifies the verb related. |
| *The detective solves the mystery in a scene near the end of the movie.*  | near is a preposition. The prepositional phrase near the end of the movie modifies the noun scene. |

Nearly is used as an adverb to mean "in a close manner" or "almost but not quite."

Here are some examples that demonstrate the differences between various uses of near and nearly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *I'll be seeing you in the* ***near*** *future* | near describes the noun "future." |
| *The cat crept* ***near***." | Near is an adverb that describes where the cat crept. |
| *Don't worry; we're nearly there* | nearly describes how close we are. |

Near can also be used as a verb and a preposition.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *My graduation neared*." | neared is the verb of the sentence |
| *I want the couch near the window* | Near is a preposition at the head of the phrase "near the window." |

Near can function as a verb, adverb, adjective, or preposition. Nearly is used as an adverb to mean "in a close manner" or "almost but not quite."

1. **Adjectives with Countable and Uncountable Nouns**

A countable noun is one that can be expressed in plural form, usually with an "s." For example, "cat--cats," "season--seasons," "student--students."

An uncountable noun is one that usually cannot be expressed in a plural form. For example, "milk," "water," "air," "money," "food." Usually, you can't say, "He had many moneys."

Most of the time, this doesn't matter with adjectives. For example, you can say, "The cat was gray" or "The air was gray."

However, the difference between a countable and uncountable noun does matter with certain adjectives, such as the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| some/anymuch/many | little/fewa lot of/lots of | a little bit ofplenty of | enoughno |

**Some/Any**

Both "some" and "any" can modify countable and uncountable nouns.

*There is some water on the floor. There are some Mexicans here.*

*Do you have any food? Do you have any apples?*

**Much/Many**

"Much" modifies only uncountable nouns.

*They have so much money in the bank. The horse drinks so much water.*

"Many" modifies only countable nouns.

*Many Americans travel to Europe. I collected many sources for my paper.*

**Little/Few**

"Little" modifies only uncountable nouns.

*He had little food in the house. When I was in college, there was little money to spare.*

"Few" modifies only countable nouns.

*There are a few doctors in town. He had few reasons for his opinion.*

**A lot of/lots of**

"A lot of" and "lots of" are informal substitutes for much and many. They are used with uncountable nouns when they mean "much" and with countable nouns when they mean "many."

*They have lots of (much) money in the bank. A lot of (many) Americans travel to Europe.*

*We got lots of (many) mosquitoes last summer. We got lots of (much) rain last summer.*

**A little bit of**

"A little bit of" is informal and always precedes an uncountable noun.

*There is a little bit of pepper in the soup. There is a little bit of snow on the ground.*

**Plenty of**

"Plenty of" modifies both countable and uncountable nouns.

*They have plenty of money in the bank. There are plenty of millionaires in Switzerland.*

**Enough**

Enough modifies both countable and uncountable nouns.

*There is enough money to buy a car. I have enough books to read.*

**No**

No modifies both countable and uncountable nouns.

*There is no time to finish now. There are no squirrels in the park.*

1. **Adjectives and Adverbs**

Adjectives modify nouns. To modify means to change in some way. For example:

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| --- | --- |
| *I ate a meal*. | Meal is a noun. We don't know what kind of meal; all we know is that someone ate a meal. |
| *I ate an enormous lunch*. | Lunch is a noun, and enormous is an adjective that modifies it. It tells us what kind of meal the person ate. |

Adjectives usually answer one of a few different questions: "What kind?" or "Which?" or "How many?" For example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *The tall girl is riding a new bike.* | Tall tells us which girl we're talking about. New tells us what kind of bike we're talking about. |
| *The tough professor gave us the final exam.* | Tough tells us what kind of professor we're talking about. Final tells us which exam we're talking about. |
| *Fifteen students passed the midterm exam; twelve students passed the final exam.* | Fifteen and twelve both tell us how many students; midterm and final both tell us which exam. |

So, generally speaking, adjectives answer the following questions:

 Which? What kind of? How many?

**The Basic Rules: Adverbs**

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. (You can recognize adverbs easily because many of them are formed by adding -ly to an adjective, though that is not always the case.) The most common question that adverbs answer is how.

**Verbs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *She sang beautifully.* | Beautifully is an adverb that modifies sang. It tells us how she sang. |
| *The cellist played carelessly.* | Carelessly is an adverb that modifies played. It tells us how the cellist played. |

**Adverbs** also modify adjectives and other adverbs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *That woman is extremely nice.* | Nice is an adjective that modifies the noun woman. Extremely is an adverb that modifies nice; it tells us how nice she is. How nice is she? She's extremely nice. |
| *It was a terribly hot afternoon.* | Hot is an adjective that modifies the noun afternoon. Terribly is an adverb that modifies the adjective hot. How hot is it? Terribly hot. |

Generally, adverbs answer the question how. (They can also answer the questions when, where, and why.)

Some other rules:

Most of the time, adjectives come before nouns.

However, they come after the nouns they modify, most often when the verb is a form of the following:

* be
* feel
* taste
* smell
* sound
* look
* appear
* seem

Some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *The dog is black.* | Black is an adjective that modifies the noun dog, but it comes after the verb. (Remember that "is" is a form of the verb "be.") |
| *Brian seems sad.* | Sad is an adjective that modifies the noun Brian. |
| *The milk smells rotten.* | Rotten is an adjective that modifies the noun milk. |
| *The speaker sounds hoarse.* | Hoarse is an adjective that modifies the noun speaker. |

Be sure to understand the differences between the following two examples:

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| --- | --- |
| *The dog smells carefully.* | carefully describes how the dog is smelling. We imagine him sniffing very cautiously. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *The dog smells clean.* | clean describes the dog itself. It's not that he's smelling clean things or something; it's that he's had a bath and does not stink.  |

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ No.: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Exercise 1: Adjective or Adverb**

Circle the correct item:

1. He (correct, correctly) defined the terms. The answer sounded (correctly, correct).

2. She (quickly, quick) adjusted the fees. She adapted (quick, quickly) to any situation.

3. He measured the floor (exact, exactly). They proved to be (perfectly, perfect) (exact, exactly) measurements.

4. The stillness of the tomb was (awfully, awful). The tomb was (awfully, awful) still.

5. It was a (dangerously, dangerous) lake to swim in. The man was (dangerous, dangerously) drunk. The gas smelled (dangerously,dangerous).

6. She performed (magnificent, magnificently). It was a (magnificent, magnificently) beautiful performance.

7. Her voice sounds (beautifully, beautiful). She sang the song (exact, exactly) as it was written. We heard it (perfectly, perfect).

8. He was a very (sensibly, sensible) person. He acted very (sensible, sensibly).

9. Mike wrote too (slow, slowly) on the exam. He always writes (slow, slowly).

10. Talk (softly, soft) or don't talk at all. The music played (softly, soft).

11. Andrea knows the material very (good, well). She always treats us (good, well).

12. You must send payments (regular, regularly). We deal on a (strictly, strict) cash basis.

13. The mechanic's tools were (well, good). The foreman said that his work was (good, well) done.

14. She worked (careful, carefully) with the sick child. She was a very (careful, carefully) worker.

15. He did not pass the course as (easy, easily) as he thought he would.

16. I find this novel very (interesting, interestingly). It was (interesting, interestingly) written.

**Exercise 2: Adjective or Adverb**

In the following sentences, cross out the incorrect words and write in the correct form in the blanks.
If the sentence is correct as it is, write "correct" in the blank.

1. Terrence plays quarterback as well as Brian.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. The game hadn't hardly begun before it started to rain.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. This was sure a mild winter.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Jane behaves more pleasant than Joan.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. When you are a parent, you will think different about children.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. I felt badly about not having done good on my final exams.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. Whether you win is not near as important as how you play.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Asian music often sounds oddly to Western listeners.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. Does your car run well enough to enter the race?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10. I felt safely enough to go out at night on my own.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

11. You can see the distant mountains clear with these binoculars.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

12. Our team was real sharp last Saturday afternoon during the game.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_