

Adverbs are words like now, then, today, tomorrow and carefully. An adverb modifies the meaning of a verb, an adjective or another adverb. Read the following sentences:

Alice smiled sweetly.

Those mangoes were very sweet.

He spoke quite loudly.

In sentence 1, the adverb quickly shows how (or in what manner) Alice smiled. It modifies the verb smiled.

In sentence 2, the adverb very says something about the sweetness of the mangoes. It modifies the adjective sweet.

In sentence 3, quite says something about the manner in which he spoke. It modifies the adverb loudly.

Note that adverbs standing at the beginning of sentences sometimes modify the whole sentence, rather than a particular word.

Unfortunately no one was present there. (= It was unfortunate that no one was present there.)

Probably I am mistaken. (= It is probable that I am mistaken.)

Kinds of adverbs

There are very many kinds of adverbs.

Adverbs of time

Adverbs of time answer the question 'when'. Examples are: today, yesterday, now, before, daily, already, since, ago, never etc.

I met him yesterday.

His father died two years ago.

I have seen him before.

They have already come.

We will have to start now.

Adverbs of frequency

Adverbs of frequency answer the question 'how often'. Examples are: often, always, once, never, again, seldom, frequently etc.

We seldom go out on Sundays.

I have seen him only once.

He called again this morning.

We must always try to do our best.

Adverbs of place

Adverbs of place answer the question 'where'. Examples are: here, there, up, down, everywhere, out, in etc.

She sat down.

He looked up.

I searched for him everywhere.

Come in.

Adverbs of manner

Adverbs of manner answer the question 'how' or 'in what manner'. Note that this class includes nearly all those adverbs ending in -ly. Examples are:

quickly, carefully, sweetly, clearly, bravely, beautifully, well, fast etc.

The soldiers fought bravely.

This essay is well written.

she walked slowly.

The baby slept soundly.