

Adverbs

An **adverb** is a word that describes or modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb. Adverbs communicate where, when, why, how, how often, how much, or to what degree. They can be qualified (e.g. much) and moved within a sentence to the beginning, middle, or end.

Example: She picked up her books and ran to class **hurriedly**.
In this sentence, the adverb "hurriedly" is modifying the verb "ran."

From his expression, one could tell he was **very** confused.
In this sentence, the adverb "very" is modifying the adjective "confused."

After taking medicine, I felt **much** better.
In this sentence, the adverb "much" is modifying the adverb "better."

Adverbs are usually unessential to a sentence. In order to tell if a word is an adverb, a frame sentence for adverbs can be used. Any single word that can fit into the blank of the frame sentence must be an adverb.

Frame sentences: The man told his story _____.
The woman walked her dog _____.

Most adverbs have three forms: positive, comparative, and superlative. These forms tell the degree of the adverb.

The positive form is the most basic form.

Examples: She ran *quickly*.
She ran *gracefully*.

The comparative form is used to compare two things. It often ends with {-er}, or it uses the word *more* paired with another adverb.

Examples: She ran *quicker* than her friend.
She ran *more gracefully* than her friend.

The superlative form is used to compare three or more things. It often ends with {-est}, or it uses the word *most* paired with another adverb.

Examples: She ran the *quickest* in the race.
She ran the *most gracefully*.

NOTE: Adjectives can also be used as comparatives and superlatives, but they are different from adverbs because adjectives only modify nouns.

Exercises

Underline the adverb(s) and the word(s) that it's/they're modifying in each sentence:

1. I excitedly told her the good news.
2. The old lady chased away the squirrels angrily.
3. Jessica eloquently gave a speech that was surprisingly informative.
4. The little girl skipped gracefully as she blissfully ate an ice cream cone.
5. Jacob was seemingly guilty when he looked away nervously.
6. Because he is smarter, Anthony performed better than me on the test.

Answers (adverb, word modified):

1. excitedly, told
2. angrily, chased
3. eloquently, gave; surprisingly, informative
4. gracefully, skipped; blissfully, ate
5. seemingly, guilty; nervously, looked
6. better, performed

Sources Referenced

Klammer, Thomas, Muriel Schulz, and Angela Della Volpe. *Analyzing English Grammar*. 5th ed. New York: Pearson Education, 2005. 81-84. Print.

Lunsford, Andrea. *The Everyday Writer*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. Print.