

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**.

Let's look at verbs first.

- "She sang *beautifully*." *Beautifully* is an adverb that modifies the verb *sang*. It tells us **how** she sang.
- "The cellist played *carelessly*." *Carelessly* is an adverb that modifies the verb *played*. It tells us **how** the cellist played.
- "The knight fought *bravely*." *Bravely* is an adverb that modifies the verb *fought*. It tells us **how** the knight fought.

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.

Always AVOID using the following:
firstly / secondly / thirdly

List of Common Adverbs

A	bravely	coolly	E	ferociously
abnormally	breathlessly	correctly	eagerly	fervently
abruptly	briefly	crisply	easily	fiercely
absently	brightly	courageously	effectively	finally
absentmindedly	briskly	crossly	elegantly	fondly
absolutely	broadly	cruelly	energetically	foolishly
accusingly	busily	curiously	enormously	fortunately
accidentally			enthusiastically	frankly
acidly	C	D	enticingly	frantically
actually	calmly	daily	entirely	freely
adventurously	carefully	daintily	enviously	frenetically
adversely	carelessly	dangerously	equally	frequently
affectionately	cautiously	darkly	especially	frightfully
afterwards	certainly	dearly	essentially	fully
almost	cheaply	deceivingly	even	fundamentally
always	cheerfully	delicately	evenly	furiously
angrily	cleanly	delightfully	eventually	
annually	clearly	deeply	evidently	G
anxiously	cleverly	defiantly	exactly	generally
arrogantly	closely	deliberately	excitedly	generously
assuredly	clumsily	delightfully	exclusively	gently
awkwardly	coaxingly	desperately	expertly	gleefully
	colorfully	determinedly	extremely	gradually
B	commonly	diligently		gratefully
badly	compassionately	dimly	F	greatly
bashfully	confidently	distinctly	fairly	greedily
beautifully	conspicuously	disgustingly	faithfully	grumpily
bitterly	constantly	doggedly	famously	guiltily
bleakly	continually	doubtfully	far	
blindly	continuously	dramatically	fast	H
blissfully	conveniently	dreamily	fatally	harshly
boastfully			fearlessly	hatefully
boldly				heartily

heavily	longingly	physically	scarcely	unfortunately
helpfully	loosely	playfully	searchingly	unimpressively
helplessly	lovingly	pleasantly	sedately	unnaturally
highly	loudly	pleasingly	seemingly	unnecessarily
hopefully	loyally	politely	selfishly	unwillingly
hopelessly		poorly	separately	utterly
hungrily	M	positively	seriously	upbeat
	madly	possibly	sharply	upliftingly
I	majestically	potentially	sheepishly	upright
immediately	marvelously	powerfully	significantly	upside-down
impulsively	meaningfully	predictably	silently	upward
inadvertently	mechanically	primarily	simply	upwardly
increasingly	meekly	professionally	sleepily	urgently
incredibly	mentally	promptly	slowly	usefully
initially	messily	properly	slyly	uselessly
innocently	mindfully	proudly	softly	usually
inquisitively	miserable	punctually	solidly	utterly
instantly	mockingly		speedily	
intensely	mostly	Q	steadily	V
intently	mournfully	quaintly	sternly	vacantly
interestingly	mysteriously	quarrelsomely	stingily	vaguely
inwardly		queasily	strictly	vainly
irritably	N	queerly	stubbornly	valiantly
	naturally	questionably	substantially	vastly
J	nearly	questioningly	successfully	venomously
jaggedly	neatly	quicker	suddenly	verbally
jealously	negatively	quickly	superstitiously	very
jestingly	nervously	quietly	suspiciously	viciously
jokingly	normally	quintessentially	surely	victoriously
joshingly	notably	quirkily	sympathetically	violently
joyfully		quizzically		virtually
joyously	O		T	vivaciously
jovially	obediently	R	tenderly	voluntarily
jubilantly	obnoxiously	rapidly	tentatively	
judgmentally	obviously	rapturously	terribly	W
justly	occasionally	rarely	thankfully	warmly
	oddly	ravenously	thoroughly	weakly
K	offensively	readily	thoughtfully	wearily
keenly	officially	really	tightly	well
kiddingly	often	reassuringly	totally	wetly
kindheartedly	only	recklessly	tragically	wholly
kindly	openly	regretfully	tremendously	wildly
knavishly	optimistically	regularly	triumphantly	willingly
knottily	originally	relatively	truly	willfully
knowingly	outwardly	reluctantly	truthfully	wisely
knowledgeably	overconfidently	repeatedly	typically	wistfully
kookily	owlishly	reproachfully		woefully
		restfully	U	wonderfully
L	P	righteously	ultimately	wonderingly
lawfully	painfully	rightfully	unabashedly	wondrously
lazily	passionately	rigidly	unaccountably	worriedly
less	partially	roughly	unbearably	wrongly
lightly	patiently	rudely	undeniably	
likely	perfectly		understandably	Z
limply	perpetually	S	unethically	zealously
lively		safely	unexpectedly	zestfully
loftily		sagely	unfairly	

Adverb Imposters!

Words that can look like Adverbs – but are NOT!

Adjective Imposters

bestly	family	likely	pebbly	steely
bodily	fatherly	lively	pimply	surly
bristly	friendly	lonely	prickly	swirly
brotherly	frilly	lovely	quarterly	timely
bubbly	gentlemanly	lowly	queenly	ugly
burly	ghastly	manly	rascally	ungainly
chilly	ghostly	mannerly	saintly	unlikely
comely	giggly	matronly	scaly	unruly
costly	girly	mealy	scholarly	weekly*
courtly	gnarly	measly	shapely	westerly
cowardly	gravelly	melancholy	sickly	wifely
crinkly	grisly	miserly	silly	wily
crumbly	heavenly	monthly*	sisterly	wobbly
crumpley	hilly	motherly*	slatternly	womanly
cuddly	holy	neighborly	slovenly	wooly
curly	homely	nightly*	sly***	worldly
daily*	hourly*	northeasterly	smelly	wriggly
dastardly	husbandly	northerly	southerly	wrinkly
disorderly	jelly	northwesterly	sparkly	yearly*
deadly	jolly	oily	spindly	
deathly	kindly**	only*	sprightly	
early	kingly	orderly	squiggly	
easterly	knightly	otherworldly	squirrelly	
elderly	leisurely**	pearly	stately	

Verb Imposters

apply	comply	imply	rally	sully
belly	dally	multiply	rely	supply
bully	fly	ply	reply	tally

Noun Imposters

ally	bully	gadfly	mayfly	tally
anomaly	butterfly	gully	monopoly	underbelly
assembly	doily	hillbilly	panoply	Willy
barfly	dolly	holly	potbelly	
belly	dragonfly	homily	rally	
Billy	family	horsefly	reply	
blowfly	firefly	jelly	Sally	
botfly	fly	lily	supply	

* Some words that deal with time are “double agents”.
They can go both ways, depending on how you use them:

She brushes her teeth *nightly*. (adverb)
It is time for your *nightly* snack. (adjective)

** These words are also double agents.

*** *sly* becomes an adverb by adding another “-ly” to it, as in “slyly”.