

Adjective or adverb? (1)

1 Introduction

Vicky: *I like that song that Natasha sang.*

Rachel: *Yes, it's a **nice** song. And she sang it **nicely**, too.*

An adjective (**nice**) describes a noun (**song**).

*The man had a **quiet** voice.*

*Claire wears **expensive** clothes.*

*The runners made a **slow** start.*

An adverb (**nicely**) describes a verb (**sang**).

*The man **spoke** **quietly**.*

*Claire **dresses** **expensively**.*

*They **started** the race **slowly**.*

We do NOT say *She sang it ~~nice~~.*

We can use adverbs in other ways. An adverb like **really** or **very** can be combined with an adjective (**hot**) or another adverb (**carefully**) (see Unit 115).

*It was **really** **hot** in the sun. Andrew checked his work **very** **carefully**.*

An adverb like **fortunately** or **perhaps** says something about the whole situation.

***Fortunately** nothing was stolen. **Perhaps** Sarah is working late.*

2 The -ly ending

We form many adverbs from an adjective + -ly. For example **politely**, **quickly**, **safely**.

But there are some special spelling rules.

1 We do not leave out **e**, e.g. **nice** → **nicely**

Exceptions are **true** → **truly**, **whole** → **wholly**.

2 -y → -ily after a consonant, e.g. **easy** → **easily**, **lucky** → **luckily**

Also **angrily**, **happily**, **heavily**, etc.

3 -le → -ly, e.g. **possible** → **possibly**

Also **comfortably**, **probably**, **reasonably**, **sensibly**, **terribly**, etc.

4 -ic → -ically, e.g. **dramatic** → **dramatically**

Also **automatically**, **scientifically**, etc. (Exception: **publicly**)

3 Looked nice and looked carefully

Compare these two structures.

LINKING VERB + ADJECTIVE

*Tom **was** **hungry**.*

*The children **seemed** **happy**.*

*My soup **has got** **cold**.*

An adjective can come after a linking verb such as **be** (see Unit 104.2).

ACTION VERB + ADVERB

*Paul **ate** **hungrily**.*

*The children **played** **happily**.*

*The man **stared** **coldly** at us.*

We use an adverb when the verb means that something happens.

Some verbs like **look**, **taste** and **appear** can be either linking verbs or action verbs.

LINKING VERB + ADJECTIVE

*Mike **looked** **angry**.*

*The medicine **tasted** **awful**.*

*The man **appeared** (to be) **drunk**.*

ACTION VERB + ADVERB

*He **looked** **carefully** at the signature.*

*Emma **tasted** the drink **nervously**.*

*A waiter **appeared** **suddenly**.*

▷ page 380 American English

Practice

A Adverbs (1–2)

This is part of a story about a spy called X. Put in adverbs formed from these adjectives:

bright, careful, fluent, immediate, patient, punctual, quiet, safe, secret, slow

The journey took a long time because the train travelled so (1) slowly. It was hot, and the sun shone (2) from a clear sky. X could only wait (3) for the journey to end. When the train finally arrived, he had no time to spare, so he (4) took a taxi to the hotel. Y was on time. She arrived (5) at three. No one else knew about the meeting – it was important to meet (6) 'I had a terrible journey,' said Y. 'But luckily the pilot managed to land (7) Her English was good, and she spoke very (8) X was listening (9) to every word. They were speaking very (10) in case the room was bugged.

B The -ly ending (2)

Look at the information in brackets and put in the adverbs. Be careful with the spelling.

- ▶ (Emma's toothache was terrible.) Emma's tooth ached terribly.
- 1 (Henry was angry.) Henry shouted at the waiter.
- 2 (I'm happy sitting here.) I can sit here for hours.
- 3 (The switch is automatic.) The machine switches itself off
- 4 (The debate should be public.) We need to debate the matter
- 5 (Everyone was enthusiastic.) Everyone discussed the idea
- 6 (We should be reasonable.) Can't we discuss the problem?
- 7 (The building has to be secure.) Did you lock all the doors?

C Adverb or adjective? (1–2)

Decide what you need to say. End your sentence with an adverb ending in -ly.

- ▶ Tell the police that you can't remember the accident. It isn't very clear in your mind.
I can't remember the accident very clearly.
- 1 Tell your friend that United won the game. It was an easy win.
.....
- 2 Tell your boss that you've checked the figures. You've been careful.
.....
- 3 Tell your neighbour that his dog barked at you. It was very fierce.
.....
- 4 You are phoning your friend. Tell him about the rain where you are. It's quite heavy.
.....

D Adverb or adjective? (1–3)

Vicky is telling Rachel about a dream she had. Choose the correct forms.

I had a (1) strange/strangely dream last night. I was in a garden. It was getting (2) dark/darkly, and it was (3) terrible/terribly cold. My head was aching (4) bad/badly. I was walking out of the garden when (5) sudden/suddenly I saw a man. He was sitting (6) quiet/quietly on a seat. He seemed very (7) unhappy/unhappily. He looked up and smiled (8) sad/sadly at me. I don't know why, but I felt (9) curious/curiously about him. I wanted to talk to him, but I couldn't think what to say. I just stood there (10) foolish/foolishly.