What is an adverb?

A. An **adverb** describes a verb or an adjective. A primary function of adverbs is to modify verbs. Adverbs can describe when, where, or how about an action.

When: *After breakfast*, he goes to work.
Where: He went *upstairs*.
How: He *quickly* ran to the bathroom.

B. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.
She *seldom* wrote after she moved away.
The *severely* wounded man was taken to the hospital.
The witness spoke *very nervously* about the robbery.

C. Many adverbs are formed by adding the suffix -ly to adjectives: quick ~ quickly, happy ~ happily, careful ~ carefully, bitter ~ bitterly:
She swims *quickly*.
He opened the window *carefully*.

D. Adverbs can also modify adjectives, thereby augmenting their meaning:
They are *extremely* sad.

E. Several adverbs express time, for example, tomorrow, today, never, soon, yesterday, yet:
My parents are supposed to arrive tomorrow.
Will you be off the phone soon?
Has Jimmy taken his shower yet?

F. Some adverbs can be placed in the middle of a sentence, and they generally have a set position there. Mid-sentence adverbs stand in front of verbs in the simple present and simple past tenses. They follow forms of be in simple present and simple past tenses, and they stand between an auxiliary verb and a main verb.

BEFORE SIMPLE PRESENT AND PAST TENSES
We seldom have dessert after dinner.
My brother often spent his free time playing his guitar.
I rarely talk on the phone for more than a few minutes.
Tom frequently asks an embarrassing question.
We *desperately* needed to get gas for the car.
FOLLOWING SIMPLE PRESENT AND PAST TENSES OF *be*
Anna is always there on time. Bill was sometimes late for an appointment.
Her husband is never around when she needs him.
The children are apparently in very good health.
BETWEEN AN AUXILIARY VERB AND MAIN VERB
John can never face his parents again.
Anna has always gotten there on time.
They have often traveled abroad.
Do you regularly shop in this store?

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G. You can have more than one adverb or adverbial phrase in one sentence, sometimes describing separate verbs or adjectives:
Hopefully I finish this paper *by tomorrow* or I will be in *really* big trouble.

H. Adverbs can be one word or a group of words. A group of words that function as adverbs is called an **adverbial phrase.**
After the game, the king and pawn go into the same box.
At the end of the day, they wanted to lie down.
We will escape *when the sun rises.*
She said she likes washing the dishes *in the morning.*
He went to the island *to find gold*.
People who say they sleep *like a baby* usually don't have one.

Compare these examples:

- Jack will sit **quietly**.
  (This is a normal adverb. This example has been included to prove that "in silence" is an adverb.)
- I will sit **like a monk meditates**.
  (This is an adverbial clause. It includes a subject ("a monk") and a verb ("meditates").

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1. Let's practice

Write the adverb in each sentence next to the sentences

We hurriedly ran out of the burning building.

I rarely take any breaks in the morning.

Loudly, the teenagers moved through the school corridors.

She finally went to the grocery store after running out of toilet paper.

He often read the Bible in the morning.

The library receives a copy of the newspaper biweekly.

Our manager spoke to us seriously about behavioral issues.

The children ended by playing indoors.

Catherine regularly brings coffee to her co-workers.

I was still stuck in traffic.

Perhaps we will fly to Atlanta next month.

Choose the words that correctly complete each sentence

1. Joseph is a _____ writer. He writes _____

2. Catherine asked me an _____ question. I was unable to answer her question, but my friend Anjali answered it _____

3. Pedro speaks _____ He has a _____ voice.

4. Because the movie had already started, I entered the movie theater _____

5. Sophie _____ liked the boy.

6. Ali speaks Arabic very _____ He has very _____ pronunciation.

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