

Common Adverbs with Two Forms and Different Meanings

Below are common adverbs that have two forms – one with the suffix **-ly** and one without. These forms often have distinct meanings, and cannot be used interchangeably.

1. Hard / Hardly

- **Hard** = with effort, intensely

*She trains **hard** for every competition.*

- **Hardly** = barely, almost not

*He could **hardly** believe his eyes.*

2. Late / Lately

- **Late** = not on time

*The bus was **late** again.*

- **Lately** = recently

*I haven't seen him **lately**.*

3. Near / Nearly

- **Near** = close in distance or time

*The school is **near** my house.*

- **Nearly** = almost

*She **nearly** missed the train.*

4. High / Highly

- **High** = at a great height

*The balloon rose **high** into the sky.*

- **Highly** = very, to a great degree

*It's a **highly** recommended film.*

5. Deep / Deeply

- **Deep** = far down or inward (literal)

*They dug **deep** into the ground.*

- **Deeply** = intensely or profoundly (emotional/abstract)

*She was **deeply** touched by the gesture.*

6. Wide / Widely

- **Wide** = to a great width

*He opened the door **wide**.*

- **Widely** = extensively, broadly

*The theory is **widely** accepted.*

7. Right / Rightly

- **Right** = exactly, correctly, or immediately

*He guessed **right**. / They met **right** after the lesson.*

- **Rightly** = justifiably or correctly in opinion

*She was **rightly** praised for her courage.*

8. Short / Shortly

- **Short** = abruptly, suddenly

*He stopped **short** and stared.*

- **Shortly** = soon, in a little while

*The manager will arrive **shortly**.*

9. Fair / Fairly

- **Fair** = honestly or justly (rare/poetic)

*He played **fair**.*

- **Fairly** = moderately or to some degree

*The test was **fairly** difficult.*

10. Most / Mostly

- **Most** = to a greater degree or more times than anything else

What she likes **most** is ice cream.

- **Mostly** = mainly or generally

The crowd was **mostly** friendly.

Choose the best word to complete each sentence. Use each adverb pair once.

1. I could _____ hear what he was saying over the loud music.
2. They worked _____ all summer to save money for a trip.
3. She opened the window _____ to let in the cool breeze.
4. The professor is _____ respected in academic circles.
5. I haven't seen him _____ – has he moved away?
6. The bus will be here _____. Don't worry.
7. There are penalties if loan payments are _____.
8. He spoke _____ of her performance, saying it was the best he'd seen.
9. She stopped _____ when she saw the shadow move.
10. What annoyed him _____ was the way she wouldn't even listen.
11. The team played _____ in spite of the hostile crowd.
12. I _____ managed to finish the exam on time. I'd just have needed a few more minutes.
13. No one was _____ enough to hear the crash.
14. He kicked the ball _____ into the air, over the heads of the crowd.
15. The explorer dug _____ into the frozen ground.
16. She was _____ affected by the speech.
17. The house had a _____ large garden.
18. He _____ writes novels, but he's published a book of poetry too.
19. You were _____ punished for breaking the rules.
20. He got the answer _____ without any help.

Bonus Challenge: Fill in the blanks with your own examples using two different forms from the list!

A. _____

B. _____