

Adverbs are modifiers, just like adjectives. However, they give more definite meaning to verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs, and sometimes to a whole sentence.

1. When the predicate refers to the action of the verb, use an adverb:
We will deliver the flowers *quickly*.
2. There is an easy way to pick out adverbs: they answer the questions: *how, when, where, why, to what extent?*

The girls danced *well* on *extremely* light feet. Answers, “how did the girls dance?”
The verb is *danced*, and the adjective is *light*.

I will *never* go out with him. Answers, “when will she go out with him?” The verb is *go out*.

Jane left *to end the meeting*. Answers, “why did Jane leave?” The verb is *left*. As you can see, a phrase can also be an adverb!

He is *very* odd. Answers, “to what extent is he odd?” The adverb is *very*.

3. Another easy way to spot an adverb is to look for the *-ly* or *-ally* at the end. For example, *barely, closely, nearly, sadly, comically, rhetorically*.
I *barely* made it on time.
We issue financial statements *yearly*.
Rhetorically speaking, she asked a question.

However, some adjectives also end in *-ly*: *friendly, lovely*.

His *friendly* smile made him seem approachable.

She sewed her *lovely* dress.

Also, *fast, long, and hard* can be either adverbs or adjectives:

A *fast* runner (adjective) vs. runs *fast* (adverb).

Again, ask *how, when, where, why, to what extent?*

4. The other words to watch are: *always, very, well, only, too, soon, now*:
I *always* stretch before I run.
The voters can *only* choose one candidate.
5. Some adverbs are conjunctions that join two sentences and modify one of them. They include: *hence, however, moreover, otherwise, still, therefore, thus*. A semicolon goes before the conjunctive adverb and a comma goes after it:
We slept in; *however*, we still arrived on time.

Not to add confusion, but adverbs, like adjectives, also come in degrees: positive, comparative, and superlative:

1. Positive: expresses a quality.
The band played *loudly*.

2. Comparative: used when comparing two things. If the adverb doesn't end in *ly*, add "*er*" to the end of the adverb or use "*more*" or "*less*" before the adverb:
I run *faster* than she does.
He sings *more* soulfully when she is around.
3. Superlative: used when comparing three or more things. If the adverb doesn't end in *ly*, add "*est*" to the end, or use "*most*" or "*least*" before the adverb:
I ran the *fastest* of anyone on my team.
Out of all the members of the band, he sings *most* soulfully.

Adverbs add quality to a sentence. Remember that adverbs are easy to spot if you ask the questions *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *to what extent*? If you see too many, you may want to rewrite your sentence so you don't overuse them.