Many adjectives can be used either before the noun they describe, or following linking verbs such as *be*, *appear*, *become*, *feel*, *get*, and *seem*. Compare:

(1) a. The high price surprised me.

b. The price seemed high.

Some adjectives are not used before the noun they describe, e.g. *afraid*, *alike*, *alive*, *alone*, *ashamed*, *asleep*, *awake*, *aware*, *content*, *glad*, *sorry*, *unsure*, *unwell*, *upset*.

(2) a. The animal was alive.

b. \*the alive animal (cf. the living animal, the live animal)

c. ill health, terminally ill patient

d. an upset stomach

Some adjectives are generally not used after the noun they describe, e.g. *maximum*, *minimum*, *countless*, *northern*, *general*, *occasional.*

(3) a. the minimum requirements

b. \*These requirements are minimum.

Some adjectives are used in both positions with different meanings.

(4) a. A legal process

b. This is not legal.

c. The Western Hemisphere

d. This looks very western. (= typical of the West)

e. a sorry excuse (= a poor excuse); a sorry situation (= an unfortunate situation)

(5) a. the ***present*** circumstances (= now)

the people ***present*** (= who are here)

b. an ***involved*** explanation (= complicated)

the people ***involved*** (= who took part)

c. a ***concerned*** expression ( = worried)

the people ***concerned*** (= affected)

d. a ***responsible*** person (= sensible)

the people ***responsible*** (= who did it)

Adverbs are normally formed by adding the ending *-ly* to the adjective. This does not apply only to adjectives that end in *-ly*.

(6) a. slow – slowly

b. friendly – in a friendly way (also: *fatherly*, *brotherly*, *orderly*, etc.)

Some adjectives have the same form when they are adverbs:

(7) a. I was the first person there./I arrived first.

b. That's a fine distinction./That suits us fine.

c. The truck hit the low bridge./The plane swooped low.

We usually put an adverb after an object:

(8) She plays the piano **very well**.

Adverbs and adverbial phrases usually go at the end of the sentence, and usually in the order ‘how’ + ‘where’ + ‘when’:

(9) They were playing quietly in the garden last night.

We can move one of these adverbs to the beginning of the sentence for emphasis or focus:

(10) Last night, they were playing quietly in the garden.

Adverbs of manner can also go before the verb:

(11) The villagers **slowly** walked round the square.

Some adverbs have two forms: an *-1y* form and one that looks like an adjective. These two forms may have different meanings:

(12) a. He arrived late. = not on time

I haven't seen him lately. = recently

c. We're flying direct. = by the shortest route

1'll tell you directly. = immediately (This usage is rather old-fashioned.)

b. The dancer leapt high.

He's highly thought of.

d. It was raining hard.

It hardly matters now.

e. I like diving deep.

f. We deeply regret the move.

g. You've got it all wrong.

The letter was wrongly addressed.

h. Be there at 12 sharp.

I was sharply reprimanded.

In informal spoken English, we use some adjectives as adverbs with no change of form, although an *-ly* version exists, e.g. *loud*, *cheap*, *quick*, *slow*, *kind*.

(13) The boy shouted as loud as he could to a passing yacht.

Fixed phrases with adverbs in the form of adjectives:

(14) take it easy = relax

hold tight = wait patiently

sleep tight = sleep well

his jokes fell flat = his jokes failed to be funny

go strong = continue to be healthy and vigorous

feel free (to do sth) = do not hesitate to do sth

stop short = stop abruptly

We normally use adverbs to describe the way in which the action is performed. Otherwise we use adjectives:

(15) a. I got the answer right.

It’s easy, as you rightly say.

b. I think you're wrong.

He was wrongly convicted.

c. She looks pretty.

She sang prettily.

d. Now wipe it clean./It broke clean in two.

e. The situation was resolved cleanly.

But:

e. Close the lid tight(ly). <== Here, most people would say *tight* to focus on the result.

Hold the bar tight(ly).

Exercises

I. Fill each of the blanks with a suitable adjective from the list.

devoid free certain inclined liable concerned filled elect

1. Those \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the political implications of the new policy are very worried.

2. The outgoing President was accompanied by the President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. I'm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to think that it would be better to finish this later.

4. These buildings are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to collapse in a strong earthquake.

5. I was absolutely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I'd left it on the table.

6. The landscape was completely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of any sign of human habitation.

7. Please feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to use the phone if you need to.

8. The ex-prisoner is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with remorse for what he has done.

II. Choose the appropriate adjective or adverb.

1. They drove under a low/lowly bridge.

2. She has travelled wide/widely.

3. Make sure you're here at seven o'clock sharp/sharply.

4. She loved him dear/dearly.

5. We'll be there short/shortly.

6. Three-toed sloths live deep/deeply in the Amazon forest.

III. Circle the adjectives listed a, b, c or d, that can fill each gap. One, two, three or all of them may be possible.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ child was comforted by his aunt.

a. sick b. afraid c. frightened d. ill

2. They had stories \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ about their travels through India.

a. unlikely b. galore c. aplenty d. countless

3. A speedy solution is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. main b. principal c. chief d. crucial

4. He was taken \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by the ferocity of the criticism.

a. aback b. unawares c. surprised d. unaccustomed

5. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_train is almost never on time.

a. last b. late c. early d. later

6. This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reward for twenty years of loyal service.

a. due b. scant c. meagre d. proper

IV. Use the correct conjunction or preposition. Choose from the box below and repeat as many times as you need.

that to with at of on for in by about

1. I am relieved \_\_\_\_\_ see that they are pleased \_\_\_\_\_\_ their accommodation. It seems entirely compatible \_\_\_\_\_\_ their wishes.

2. I am almost embarrassed \_\_\_\_\_\_ admit that I feel extremely ashamed \_\_\_\_\_\_ my fellow- countrymen on occasions such as this, particularly when they seem utterly devoid \_\_\_\_\_\_ any manners at all.

3. I'm afraid \_\_\_\_\_\_ speak to her about this because I'm frightened \_\_\_\_\_\_ upsetting her.

4. It is probable \_\_\_\_\_\_ he will prove to be the most likely person \_\_\_\_\_\_ the job and the one most likely \_\_\_\_\_\_ do it properly.

5. I am aware \_\_\_\_\_\_ your deficiencies and the areas you are lacking practice \_\_\_\_\_\_ just as I am aware \_\_\_\_\_\_ you share these weaknesses with many others.

6. I know he's very sure \_\_\_\_\_\_ himself and is intent \_\_\_\_\_\_ proving he can pass, but we are not convinced \_\_\_\_\_\_ his success can be taken \_\_\_\_\_ granted.

7. I was interested \_\_\_\_\_\_ read that many fans had expressed amazement \_\_\_\_\_\_ the result. Isn't it amazing \_\_\_\_\_\_ so many people take an interest \_\_\_\_\_\_ such obscure sports?

8. I know I should be ashamed \_\_\_\_\_\_ admit that I am saddened \_\_\_\_\_\_ young Paula's being written out of my favourite soap. It's a pretty awful thing \_\_\_\_\_\_ have to admit, but I really am upset \_\_\_\_\_\_ she's leaving.

V. Transform the following sentences as shown in the example, namely by changing the nouns with adjectives into their corresponding verbs with adjectives, adverbs or adverb phrases, as required. In each sentence the adjective, adverb or adverb phrase will come last.

1. He gave a bitter smile.

2. There has been a drastic fall in the dollar.

3. The Stock Exchange's reaction was quite calm.

4. To a European, Chinese has a strange sound.

5. These almonds have a bitter taste.

6. Why did she give me a stern look?

7. Try and give an intelligent answer.

8. Your action was a cowardly one.

9. The boy had a slight limp.

10. The little girl had rather a sad look.

11. Her mother had given her a hard slap.

12. Her movements were clumsy.

13. She has an ugly walk.

14. She's a good tennis player.

15. The sports committee has monthly meetings.

16. What they said had a deep effect upon me.

17. The room had a nice, cosy look.

18. The flowers had a fragrant smell.

19. I said that her behaviour had been extremely silly.

20. She gave me a sly glance.

21. An early start would be advisable.

22. I'm sure her parents will give me a warm welcome.

23. Your argument isn't logical.

VI. Underline the correct word.

1. I remarked that it was better to approach Ken (direct/directly) and not through his secretary. His secretary laughed (loud/loudly) at the remark. I think really she was (deep/deeply) offended by what I said.

2. Old Mr Elkins is still going (strong/strongly) although he’s over ninety. He says he’d like to reach a hundred, but admits he may be aiming a bit (high/higher). However, there’s a (wide/widely) held belief in the village that he’ll get there.

3. Georgina was about to say something but stopped (short/shortly), and her eyes opened (wide/widely) with amazement. Somewhere in the house a horse neighed (loud/loudly).

4. He told me to turn (sharp/sharply) left just past the station. If he told you that, he told you (wrong/wrongly). But you got there in the end even though you were (wrong/wrongly) directed.

5. (Faint/Faintly) in the distance we heard the noise of thunder. Then the radio went (faint/faintly) and we could (hard/hardly) hear the news. We shut all the windows (tight/tightly) and waited for the storm.

6. Marilyn's leaving (short/shortly) for the United States on a business trip. As she (right/rightly) says, there’s nothing like personal contact for promoting one’s products. Her suitcase is so (tight /tightly) packed with samples there’s not even place for a toothbrush. She refuses to take two suitcases because she wants to travel (light/lightly).

7. Ken was driving along at about eighty miles an hour when a stone went clean/cleanly through the windscreen and hit him in the face. Afterwards he talked light/lightly of the affair, but he was lucky to escape with his life.

8. There's a lot more to Willie than one would think: still waters run deep/deeply, as they say. I've been following his career close/closely, and think high/highly of his ability as an architect. But he's inclined to work too hard/hardly, and the doctor has recently advised him to go slow/slowly.

9. When I took my driving test, the examiner said I had done everything right/rightly except reversing, when I had turned too sharp/sharply and mounted the pavement. He strong/strongly recommended me to practise in a smaller car than the one I'd been using.

10. Denis thinks up the most ludicrous schemes, which all fall flat/flatly. Helen's parents are flat /flatly opposed to any idea of her marrying him. They say he was direct/directly involved in the recent financial scandal at the Town Hall.

11. The struggles my parents had in the early years of their marriage brought them closer/more closely together. Things often went bad/badly for them in those days, but look at them now! Things turned out right /rightly in the end.

VII. Complete each pair of sentences using one of the listed adverbs. Put the adverb in front position (as a comment adverb) in one sentence, and in end position (as an adverb of manner) in the other.

clearly curiously frankly honestly plainly seriously

1. a. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the house has two chimneys \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, although there's only one fireplace.

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Esther looked at him \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, trying to work out whether he was being serious or not

2. a. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I was brought up to earn money \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not to steal it from others.

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I'm perfectly capable of putting up the shelf myself.

3. a. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, she admitted \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that she felt she wasn't doing a good job.

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I went to sleep during his lecture \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it was so boring.

4. a. Thanks for looking after the children for me. That's okay. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I don't know what I'd have done \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ if you hadn't been around to help.

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I tried to speak \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to him about his bad behaviour, but he kept making me laugh.

5. a. The chief executive of Eclom has phoned me every day this week to ask whether I've made my mind up. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, he wants me to take the job \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I'd had very little sleep and was having difficulty thinking \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

6. a. Lucas fidgeted in his seat and kept looking nervously at the door. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, he was feeling ill at ease \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ she always dressed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at work in a white blouse and grey skirt.

VIII. Cross out any adverbs or adverbials that are incorrect/unlikely in these sentences.

1. Asthma rates in cities do not enormously/significantly differ from those in rural areas.

2. Now that Lorna has moved to Kuala Lumpur, I from time to time/rarely see her.

3. I could see them easily/scarcely in the bright sunshine.

4. It was snowing and I was almost/by an hour late for the interview.

5. Carmen had often/on many occasions spoken at meetings before, so it was no surprise when she stood up.

6. I play chess with Lorenzo hardly ever/every week.

7. Although he had to lift heavy boxes in the factory, he greatly/rarely suffered from backache.

8. I forgot about the meeting nearly/entirely and my boss was really angry with me.

IX. Which of the positions marked with ^ can the adverb or adverbial in brackets go in?

1. ^ He ^ moved to New Zealand ^. (the following year)

2. ^ The children ^ walked along the road ^. (in single file)

3. ^ We ^ see Alex ^ any more. (seldom)

4. ^ He ^ complained to his physics teacher ^. (unhappy with the result)

5. ^ I ^ agree with you ^. (entirely)

6. ^ I ^ meet ^ Emma at school. (often)

X. Rewrite these sentences with the adverbs in more appropriate positions.

1. We thought we had started early our hike, but already other people had left the campsite.

2. The workers get paid usually weekly, but they haven't been yet paid for last week.

3. Still the students hadn't completed all their work when they had to leave yesterday here.

4. Alice lived recently here, but she doesn't here any more live.

5. We used to hear hardly ever them, but they've become lately noisy really.

XI. Rewrite each of the sentences with one of these adverbs instead of *just*, plus any other necessary changes.

almost exactly now only (x2) simply very recently

Example: They just weren't paying attention.

They simply weren't paying attention

1. The couple had just got married.

2. The baby looks just like her mother.

3. He isn't just an athlete, he's a scholar too!

4. Wait for us, we're just coming.

5. Lunch is just about ready.

6. Wear this silly hat. It's just for fun.

XII. Rewrite each sentence with one pair of adverbs added in appropriate positions.

carefully/tomorrow completely/yesterday enough/really too/very much

1. I forgot my brother's birthday.

2. The piano is large and our doorway isn't wide.

3. We enjoyed the trip, but it was expensive.

4. I'll read the report.

XII. Complete the sentences with the appropriate phrasal verb (A-B)

1. People will get into a fight, even though they don't want to fight, because they don't want to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. There's something that has come to my attention that I need to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. It's widely acknowledged in palaeontological circles that the extinction of the dinosaurs was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by a comet striking the surface of the Earth approximately 66 million years ago.

4. The company was growing, but some things did not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

5. It took Mark about a month to realize that he had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this misery \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ himself.

6. Undergraduates commonly noted that they customarily read emails but do not respond. This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by the fact that most receive more emails than they send.

7. It took 2 months of difficult negotiations to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the trade unions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to supporting the reform proposed by the government.

8. We would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our conversations when the boss came into the room.

9. After I told Angie the bad news, she could hardly look at me without \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

10. I’m sorry I’m late but I didn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being stuck in traffic for so long.