

Five Things to Know about Adverbs

Prepared by Elsa Pla (www.writecook.com)

1- Adverbs are words that modify (give information about) verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Adverbs can come before or after the word they modify.

Examples of adverbs:

Finish your breakfast quickly and go feed the chickens. (“Quickly” modifies the verb “finish.”)

Roosters are often annoying. (“Often” modifies the adjective “annoying.”)

They crow quite loudly during the night. (“Quite” modifies the adverb “loudly.”)

Many adverbs end in “ly,” but not all words ending in “ly” are adverbs. For example, “lovely” ends in “ly” but it’s an adjective, not an adverb.

2- Adverbs tell –

HOW (quickly, loudly, softly, well, etc.)

Example: Finish your breakfast quickly, please.

WHEN (early, later, tomorrow, yesterday, etc.)

Example: Don’t worry; you’ll go to bed early tonight.

HOW OFTEN / HOW LONG (often, never, rarely, forever, etc.)

Example: Since we got that rooster, I rarely get enough sleep.

WHERE (there, here, nearby, outside, etc.)

Example: The rooster stands there, next to my window.

TO WHAT DEGREE (very, quite, completely, scarcely, etc.)

Example: It crows quite loudly.

3- **Comparative adverbs** are used to compare two (same or different) people, places, things, or ideas (or to compare one person, place, thing, or idea with itself).

Most one-syllable adverbs show comparison by adding the suffix “er.”

Example: I woke up later than I usually do.

Most two-or-more-syllable adverbs show comparison by using the modifiers “more” or “less.”

Examples: That’s why you have to eat your breakfast more quickly than usual. I wish that rooster were less noisy.

4- **Superlative adverbs** are used to compare three or more people, places, things, or ideas. They express an extreme quality. To form superlative adverbs, add the suffix “est” to one-syllable adverbs or use the modifiers “most” or “least” with two-or-more-syllable adverbs.

Examples: Of all the days we've been on vacation, today I woke up latest.

That rooster is the most annoying animal in the world.

Note: Some adverbs use different words to show comparison.

Adverb:	Comparative:	Superlative:
well	better	best
badly	worse	worst

5- Adverbs are very useful. They help provide precise information and can be used to add emphasis to a statement. However, *they should not be used as "crutches" for weak verbs*. For example, instead of "he ran quickly," use "he sprinted" or "he dashed."

Bibliography:

Kemper, Dave, Patrick Sebranek, and Verne Meyer. *Write Source*.
Wilmington: Great Source Education Group, 2005.

Glencoe/McGraw Hill. *Grammar and Composition Handbook*. Columbus: The
McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 2002.