



Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases

Why do we need to know about adverbs? Adverbs and adverbial phrases can add description and voice to your writing, but there are certain genres and disciplines in which it is preferable to eliminate them in favor of a stronger verb or more concise language. We need to know what they are in order to determine whether to keep or eliminate them.

What are adverbs?

An adverb provides information about where, what, when, and how something happens. Adverbs (underlined here) modify a verb, adjective, or a sentence. To modify means to alter, qualify, or limit the meaning of.

When (modifies or clarifies time)	Panera is <u>always</u> tasty. <u>Yesterday</u> she screamed.
Where (modifies or clarifies location)	Walk over <u>here</u> . We sat <u>inside</u> . She's over <u>there</u> .
How (modifies or clarifies the manner)	<u>Slowly</u> , they walked over. He painted <u>brilliantly</u> .
How Much (modifies or clarifies the amount)	He <u>really</u> loves her. Let's look at <u>just</u> adverbs. <u>A lot</u> of people work.
Commonly used adverbs	Words ending in -ly (<u>eventually</u> , <u>probably</u> , <u>frankly</u> , etc.) <u>Maybe</u> <u>Perhaps</u> <u>Very often</u> <u>Sometimes</u>

Speaking and Writing Center [1]: Note that the table below does not include every adverb. Ask yourself the question, "is this word modifying a verb, an adjective, or another adverb?" if you are having trouble identifying adverbs.

Speaking and Writing Center [2]: Adverbs do not modify nouns, that would be adjectives

Speaking and Writing Center [3]: "Always" here is modifying the adjective "tasty" by indicating how often Panera is tasty.

Speaking and Writing Center [4]: "Inside" here is modifying the verb "sat" by indicating where we sat.

Speaking and Writing Center [5]: "Brilliantly" here is modifying the verb "painted" by indicating how well he painted.

Speaking and Writing Center [6]: "Really" here is modifying the verb "loves" by indicating how much he loves.

Speaking and Writing Center [7]: According to this chart, is commonly an adverb? Of course it is! "Commonly" modifies the adjective "used".



What are **adverbial phrases**?

Adverbial phrases are groups of words that function like an adverb. Adverbial phrases (highlighted in blue) can expand on the when, where, how, and why in a sentence. These phrases do not contain a subject and a verb.

Speaking and Writing Center [8]: Adverbial phrases are italicized in this document for emphasis.

Adverbial phrases may or may not be appropriate depending on the context. They may be appropriate while writing an English paper and may be inappropriate in a business communication assignment.

Adverbial phrases can occur at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence. Ask yourself, is this phrase modifying when, how, where, or why? If yes, then you **most likely** wrote an adverbial phrase.

Speaking and Writing Center [9]: "Most likely" modifies "wrote"! This is an example of an adverbial phrase in context. ("in context" is also an adverbial phrase because it modifies where we see an adverbial phrase).

When (modifies or clarifies time)	<i>Every week</i> we painted. She will respond <i>in a second</i> . <i>Before her class</i> , she studied.
Where (modifies or clarifies location)	The sun sets <i>in the west</i> . He's stepping <i>on my toes</i> . <i>Inside the kitchen</i> , they talked.
How (modifies or clarifies the manner)	She writes <i>in a quick manner</i> . I can watch them <i>like a hawk</i> , if I put on glasses.
Why (modifies or clarifies the reason)	She makes jokes <i>to impress her dad</i> . I go to the store <i>to buy milk</i> .
Adverbial phrases are commonly used to express the author's meaning.	He holds babies <i>with care</i> . <i>In an hour</i> I will go to the store. He eats an Italian sub <i>every month</i> . I left the store <i>somewhat happy</i> .

Speaking and Writing Center [10]: "Every week" here is modify "painted" to show how often we painted.

Speaking and Writing Center [11]: "On my toes" clarifies where he is stepping (whether you mean this literally or metaphorically).

Speaking and Writing Center [12]: "In a quick manner" modifies the way she is writing.

Speaking and Writing Center [13]: "To buy milk" tells the reader why you are going to the store.



Example Paragraph:

This paragraph shows examples of adverbs and adverbial phrases within the context of a full statement. Make sure you understand why the adverbs/adverbial phrases are adverbs/adverbial phrases. Also note, most of these could be eliminated without changing the basic meaning.

Sometimes students at the University of Mary Washington have assignments. Procrastinators complete assignments late whereas organized students complete them in a timely fashion. Every week students should plan their week to stay organized. A lot of students love it here, even if they procrastinate on assignments. Eventually, students will learn a lot of time management skills. Students should come to college somewhat organized, but no worries if they do not. Peer academic consultants will gladly help students get more organized to help them with their studies. You could even go tomorrow!

Speaking and Writing Center [14]: Adverb indicating when it is that students have assignments.

Speaking and Writing Center [15]: Adverbial phrase indicating how the students complete assignments.

Speaking and Writing Center [16]: Adverbial phrase indicating when/how often the students plan their week.

Speaking and Writing Center [17]: Adverbial phrase indicating why students should plan their week.

Speaking and Writing Center [18]: Adverb indicating how many students love the school.

Speaking and Writing Center [19]: Adverb indicating when students will learn.

Speaking and Writing Center [20]: Adverb indicating how many time management skills the students will learn.

Speaking and Writing Center [21]: Adverbial phrase indicating the degree of organization.

Speaking and Writing Center [22]: Adverb indicating how the consultants will help.

Speaking and Writing Center [23]: Adverb indicating when you could go.