Address the letter “To **Whom** It May Concern.” (*Whom* is the object of the preposition *to*.)

**Whom** did you see at the opera? (*Whom* is the object of the verb

*see*.)

Are there any singers **whom** you would recommend? (*You* is the subject of the verb *recommend*; *whom* is the object of that verb.)

The job goes to **whomever** you call ﬁrst. (*Whomever* is the object of the verb *call*. *You* is the subject. Compare this sentence with the one using *whoever*.)

## Verbs

*Verbs* are words or groups of words that express action or a state of being or condition. They provide the power or drive for sentences.

They **smashed** through the door. (action)

The ambassador **ﬁled** a formal protest. (action) Shawn **seems** unhappy today. (state of being) The truck **looks** almost new. (condition)

Verbs that express a state of being or condition are called *linking verbs*. These verbs link the subject with a noun, pronoun, or adjective that describes or identiﬁes it. The word or words linked to the subject are referred to as a *subject complement*. In general, a verb is a linking verb if it can be substituted for some form of the verb *seem*.

You **look** (*seem*) calm enough—are you?

She **felt** (*seemed*) ill at ease in the doctor’s ofﬁce.

The most common linking verb is *be* and its forms *am, is, are, was, were, being*, and *been*. Other common linking verbs include the following.

##### Common Linking Verbs

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| appear | grow | remain | sound |
| become | hear | seem | stay |
| feel | look | smell | taste |

*Basic Verb Forms*

A few verb forms are the basis for all verb tenses and phrases. These forms are as follows:

**Base form:** Children **play** in the park.

**Inﬁnitive:** Tell them **to play** here.

**Past tense:** They **played** all day yesterday.

**Past participle:** He has **played** too long.

**Present participle:** I am **playing** with her today.

**Gerund (noun form): Playing** is children’s “work.”

*Auxiliary Verbs*

The past and present participles of the verb are also part of a word group that comprises a complete verb form: *has played*, *am playing*. The verbs used with these participles are called *auxiliary verbs* (also known as *help- ing verbs*). They signal a change in tense (*he walked, he has walked*) or a change in voice (*we told, we were told*). Following is a list of the most com- monly used auxiliary verbs.

###### Auxiliary Auxiliary + Main Verb

has/have The jury **has rendered** a verdict.

The defendants **have heard** the sentence.

is/are The satellite **is boosting** the signal.

They **are receiving** it in Hawaii. can/could He **can operate** in the morning.

The patient **could come** home in a week. should/would The ﬂight **should land** in New Jersey.

We **would like** to arrive in New York.

do/did I **do remember** you.

We **did meet** last week.

will/shall I **will tell** them to take the furniture away.

**Shall** we **buy** the stuffed moose?

must/ought They **must report** any suspicious activity.

She **ought to call** the security guard.

### *Verb Tenses*

Verb tenses allow us to talk about time, to place an action or state of being in the past, present, or future (*I called, I call/I am calling, I will call*). They also allow us to talk about intention, what would, could, or should be done (*I would have called, I can call, I will have called*).

Learning to use the right verb tense is important to convey intentions and the time of an action or state of being accurately and clearly. The var- ious tenses in English are formed using the basic elements of the verb.

**Base form:** march

**Past tense:** marched **Present participle:** marching **Past participle:** marched

**Auxiliary verbs:** am (was) marching, have (had) marched, will

march

English has regular and irregular verbs. Learn the basic verb forms of these words to create the proper tenses and to avoid mixing tenses in writing.

### *Regular Verbs*

*Regular verbs* follow the same pattern when moving from one tense to another. English has six basic tenses: *present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect*, and *future perfect*. In addition, the progressive and conditional forms are used for special functions. The *progressive form* (*I am singing, I was singing, I will be singing*) is used to indicate continuity of action rather than its completion. For example, compare *I wrote a letter* with *I was writ- ing a letter*. The ﬁrst sentence simply states that an action was completed in the past, while the second sentence implies that the action is connected to another event. Adverbs are often used with progressive forms to stress the continuous nature of the action or state of being (*He is* **always** *singing in the shower*). Progressive forms can be used with all six tenses. The *con- ditional form* (*I can sing, I could sing, I could have sung*) conveys intention to do or be something.

Following is a complete conjugation of the verb *to watch*. The function of each tense is discussed following the conjugation.

###### Present Tense

**Singular Plural**

**First person:** I watch we watch

**Second person:** you watch you watch

**Third person:** he/she/it watches they watch

**Present progressive form:** I am (you are) watching, etc.

**Present conditional form:** I can (I could) watch, etc.

###### Past Tense (Base Form of the Verb + *d* or *ed*)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Singular** | **Plural** |
| **First person:** | I watched | we watched |
| **Second person:** | you watched | you watched |
| **Third person:** | he/she/it watched | they watched |

**Past progressive form:** I was watching, etc.

**Past conditional form:** I could have watched, etc.

I could have been watching, etc.

**Future Tense (*Will* or *Shall*** + **the Base Form of the Verb)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Singular** | **Plural** |
| **First person:** | I will (shall) watch | we will (shall) watch |
| **Second person:** | you will watch | you will watch |
| **Third person:** | he/she/it will watch | they will watch |

**Future progressive form:** I will (shall) be watching, etc.

###### Present Perfect Tense (*Have* or *Has* + the Past Participle)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Singular** | **Plural** |
| **First person:** | I have watched | we have watched |
| **Second person:** | you have watched | you have watched |
| **Third person:** | he/she/it has watched | they have watched |

**Progressive form:** I have been watching, etc.

###### Past Perfect Tense (*Had* + the Past Participle)

**Singular Plural**

**First person:** I had watched we had watched

**Second person:** you had watched you had watched

**Third person:** he/she/it had watched they had watched

**Progressive form:** I had been watching, etc.

**Future Perfect Tense (*Will Have* or *Shall Have*** + **the Past Participle)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **First person:** | **Singular**  I will (shall) have watched | **Plural**  we will (shall) have |
| **Second person:** | you will have watched | watched  you will have |
| **Third person:** | he/she/it will have watched | watched  they will have |
|  |  | watched |

**Progressive form:** I will have been watching, etc.

### *Functions of the Six Tenses*

The six tenses show differences in the time of an action or a state of being, and using different tenses changes the meaning of a sentence.

**Present Tense.** The present tense is used to express an action or to state a fact that is occurring at the present time. The present tense also can be formed using auxiliary verbs for emphasis or to express intention.

I **live** here.

I **am living** here. (progressive) I **do live** here. (emphatic)

I **can live** here. (conditional)

The present tense also is used to indicate habitual action or something that is true at all times.

She **goes** out every evening.

My grandfather believed that silence **is** (instead of *was*) golden.

Writers occasionally use the present tense when reviewing the contents of a book or describing past events to bring them vividly to life for the reader. This form of the present tense is known as the *literary* or *historical present*.

In his book on Alexander the Great, the Greek historian Arrian

**dismisses** romantic legend and **concentrates** on sifting truth from ﬁction.

**Past Tense.** The past tense is used to express action or to help make a statement about something that occurred in the past and has not contin- ued into the present.

I **lived** there.

I **was living** there while I was in school. (progressive) I **did live** there. (emphatic)

**Future Tense.** The future tense is used to express an action or to help make a statement about something that will occur in the future.

I **will** (**shall**) live there.

I **will be living** there. (progressive)

I **am going to be living** there. (progressive) I **can be living** there. (conditional)

The distinction between *will* and *shall* is no longer observed by most people. The two verbs can be used interchangeably for the simple future tense in the ﬁrst person. However, in some cases, such as when asking for permission or consent, *shall* is the only form used.

*Shall* we go to the movie?

*Shall* I put the box here?

To use *will* in these sentences would change the meaning. However, except for such special uses, *will* and *shall* are equally correct.

I *shall* call him.

I *will* call him.

**Perfect Tenses.** Perfect tenses describe actions or states of being that hap- pened at one time but are seen in relation to another time. For example, *I gave a donation to the Girl Scouts* is a simple statement about a past event and would be used to tell someone what happened in the past. *I have given a donation to the Girl Scouts* connects the past event to the present and can be used to imply a habitual or continuous action.

***Present Perfect Tense.*** The present perfect tense is used to express an action or to help make a statement about something occurring at an indef- inite time in the past or something that has occurred in the past and con- tinues into the present.

I **have lived** here for a long time.

I **have lived** here for three months. (The speaker is still living there.) I **have been living** here for three months. (progressive)

I **could have been living** here instead of where I am now. (conditional)

***Past Perfect Tense.*** The past perfect tense is used to express an action or to help make a statement about something completed in the past before some other past action or event.

After I **had lived** here for three months, they raised the rent.

After I **had been living** here for three months, they raised the rent. (progressive)

***Future Perfect Tense.*** The future perfect tense is used to express an action or to help make a statement about something that will be completed in the future before some other future action or event.

By this October, I **will have lived** here for six months.

By this October, I **will have been living** here for six months. (progressive)

### *Irregular Verbs*

*Irregular verbs* follow no ﬁxed rules for forming the various past, present, and future tenses. You simply have to memorize them or consult your dic- tionary. Some of the most commonly used irregular verbs are listed in Appendix A. Here are a few examples of common irregular verbs that show the variety of their forms.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Base** | **Past** | **Past** | **Present** |
| **Form** | **Tense** | **Participle** | **Participle** |
| be | was | been | being |
| break | broke | broken | breaking |
| ﬂy | ﬂew | ﬂown | ﬂying |
| lie (as in *recline*) | lay | lain | lying |
| ring | rang | rung | ringing |

### *Common Errors in Using Verb Tenses*

People often mix their tenses or use the wrong verb form when speaking. Although these errors may be overlooked in conversation, they are painfully evident in written communication. They often confuse the reader and affect the tone of the message. Study the following incorrect and cor- rect sentences:

1. Use the correct verb form with each tense.

**Incorrect:** He checked on the order and **has went** to pick it up.

**Correct:** He checked on the order and **has gone** to pick it up. (*Gone* is the past participle of the verb *to go* and is the correct form to use with the auxiliary verb *has*. *Went* is the past tense form and is incorrect.)

**Incorrect:** I **done** the work last night and handed it in this morning.

**Correct:** I **did** the work last night and handed it in this morning. (*Done*, the past participle, is incorrect—the verb should be in the simple past tense *did*.)

**Incorrect:** Barb and Louise **have ordered** the tickets, **wrote** their friends about the concert, and **gave** away pictures of the band.

**Correct:** Barb and Louise **have ordered** the tickets, **written** their friends about the concert, and **given** away pictures of the band. (The auxiliary verb *have* requires the past participle for each verb in this sentence—*have ordered*, [*have*] *written*, [*have*] *given*. *Wrote* and *gave* are past tense forms of the verbs and are incorrect.)

**Incorrect:** The book **is** fascinating reading. It **provided** a detailed study of how cultures **were created**.

**Correct:** The book **is** fascinating reading. It **provides** a detailed study of how cultures **are created**. (The writer refers to the book in the present tense in the ﬁrst sentence. All references that follow should also be in the literary or historical present tense.)

1. When describing two events in the past that did not occur at the same time, use the past perfect tense to refer to the event or action in the more distant past.

**Incorrect:** I suddenly **remembered** (past) that I **left** (more distant past) my purse at the ofﬁce.

**Correct:** I suddenly **remembered** (past) that I **had left** (past perfect) my purse at the ofﬁce. (Because leaving the purse at the ofﬁce preceded remembering the fact, the past perfect form of *had left* should be used.)

**Incorrect:** Apartments **now existed** (past) where a city dump

**was** (more distant past). (Using the past tense for both verbs suggests that the apartments and city dump are there together.)

**Correct:** Apartments **now existed** (past) where a city dump **had been** (past perfect). (The past perfect makes it clear that the city dump preceded the apartments.)

1. Do not use *would have* in “if clauses” that express the earlier of two past actions. Use the past perfect.

**Incorrect:** If he **would have thought** of it, he would have asked you to ride with us.

**Correct:** If he **had thought** of it, he would have asked you to ride with us.

**Incorrect:** If I **would have studied** harder, I’d have passed the course.

**Correct:** If I **had studied** harder, I’d have passed the course.

1. Use the present inﬁnitive (*to play, to see*, etc.) to express action

*following* another action.

**Incorrect:** I was disappointed because I had hoped **to have gone**

with you. (Did the speaker hope *to have gone* or *to go*?)

**Correct:** I was disappointed because I had hoped **to go** with you. (The present inﬁnitive *to go* is the correct form because the action it expresses follows the verb *had hoped*.)

**Incorrect:** She intended **to have visited** all her relatives. (Did she intend *to have visited* or *to visit*?)

**Correct:** She intended **to visit** all her relatives.

1. Use the perfect inﬁnitive (*to have written*, *to have seen*, etc.) to express action before another action.

**Correct:** He was happy **to have seen** Ralph. (The speaker saw Ralph ﬁrst; then he was happy about seeing him.

Therefore the perfect inﬁnitive *to have seen* is the proper form to use.)

1. In participial phrases, use *having* with the past participle to express action before another action.

**Incorrect: Giving** my bike to Angela, I couldn’t ride to the beach later that day. (The present participle *giving* is incorrectly used to express an action completed before the second action in the sentence.)

**Correct: Having given** my bike to Angela, I couldn’t ride to the beach later that day.

**Incorrect: Painting** the front porch, he slept the rest of the day.

**Correct: Having painted** the front porch, he slept the rest of the day. (He had to paint the porch before he could go to sleep. This could also be expressed by saying *After painting the front porch, he slept all day*.)

### *Mood*

Verbs can be used to express differences in the intention or *mood* of the speaker or writer. There are three moods in English: indicative, impera- tive, and subjunctive. Each has a speciﬁc function.

The *indicative mood* is used when the speaker or writer wishes to make a statement or ask a question.

He **is leaving** tomorrow.

**Does** this plane **ﬂy** to London?

The *imperative mood* is used for commands or requests.

**Call** Fredericks and **cancel** that shipment. Please **return** the book to the library.

**Turn** right at the corner, and then **go** left.

The *subjunctive mood* uses a different form of the past and present to express matters of urgency, formality, possibility, or speculation.

**Urgency:** I demanded that she **see** me immediately. (The indicative mood would use the form *sees* or *can see*— for example, I want to know if she *can see* me immediately.)

**Formality:** He recommended that the zoning law **be** adopted. (The indicative mood would use *is adopted*—for example, the vote is 44 to 3; the law *is adopted*.)

**Possibility:** If I **were** to sign the contract, we could not sell our own CDs. (The phrase *If I were to sign* expresses a future possibility. It has no reference to the past, even though *were* is a past tense verb form. Compare this sentence to *Because I signed the contract, we could not sell our own CDs*. In this sentence, the indicative mood describes an action that took place in the past.)

**Speculation:** If he **were** king, he would make football the national pastime. (The subjunctive mood expresses something that is not true, a statement contrary to fact. The indicative mood, on the other hand, simply states a fact—for example, *If he was the king, then his brother was a prince.*)

### *Active and Passive Voices*

If the subject of a sentence performs an action, the verb is in the *active voice*. If the subject receives the action, the verb is in the *passive voice*.

**Active voice:** She **sold** a box of candy. (The subject *she* performs the action.)

**Passive voice:** She **was sold** a box of candy. (The subject *she*

receives the action.)

**Active voice:** We **have delivered** the mail. (The subject *we*

performs the action.)

**Passive voice:** The mail **was delivered** by us. (*Mail* is now the subject and receives the action.)

The active voice adds interest and liveliness to a message. In general, use the active voice. Avoid weak and awkward passive verb constructions or long passages in which all the verbs are passive.

The passive voice, however, does have its contribution to make. It can be used to express an action in which the actor is unknown, when a more objective or diplomatic tone is required, or when it is desirable not to dis- close the actor.

**Active voice:** Jim **locked** the front door before we left home.

**Passive voice:** The front door **had been locked** before we left home.

**Active voice:** Our sales manager **made** a mistake in completing your order.

**Passive voice:** A mistake **was made** in completing your order. **Active voice:** We **have examined** your application and **must decline** your request for credit.

**Passive voice:** Your application **has been reviewed** and at this time your request for credit **must be declined**.

In the ﬁnal example, the passive voice emphasizes the recipient of the action and minimizes the writer’s role. Using the passive voice can make the decision seem less personally directed toward the reader. The speaker can then discuss the reasons for declining the application.

### *Subject-Verb Agreement*

Just as pronouns must agree with their antecedents in person, case, and number, verbs also must agree with their subjects in person and in number. The *ﬁrst person subject* is the person or persons speaking in a sentence (*I, we*). The *second person subject* is the person or persons addressed (*you, you*). The *third person subject* refers to the person or thing spoken about

and may be any noun or third-person pronoun (*he, she, it, they*).

###### Agreement in Person

**First: I am** hot. **We are** cold.

**Second: You look** fantastic.

**Third:** The **car rusts. She drives** fast. **They laugh** a lot.

Verbs must agree with their subjects in number. Therefore, a singular subject takes a singular verb; a plural subject takes a plural verb.

###### Agreement in Number Singular Plural

The **window is** open. The **windows are** open.

**She walks** quickly. **They walk** quickly.

**I am** going home. **We are** going home.

You **can come** along. All of you **can come** along.

### *Special Subject-Verb Agreement Cases*

Compound subjects, collective nouns, and plural nouns used as titles of courses or subject areas can create confusion regarding subject-verb agree- ment. Following are guidelines for using a singular or plural verb in such cases.

**Compound Subjects Joined by *and*—Singular Verb.** Use the singular verb for compound subjects joined by *and* (1) when the subject is consid- ered a unit (research and development) and (2) when both parts of the subject are modiﬁed by *each* or *every*.

The **secretary and treasurer has** ﬁled the minutes. (The secretary and treasurer is one person.)

**Each** player and **every** team **receives** a prize for competing in the games.

**Compound Subjects Joined by *and*—Plural Verb.** Except for the cases already noted, compound subjects joined by *and* take a plural verb.

**Rain and snow were** falling at the same time.

**Tom and Samira have** resigned as coleaders.

There **are one book and two paintings** on the ﬂoor.

**Are the computer and the printer** compatible?

**Compound Subjects Joined by *or* or *nor*—Singular Verb.** Use the sin- gular verb (1) if the subject next to the verb is considered singular or (2) if both parts of the subject are singular.

The **drawers or the closet** is the place to look.

**Is** the **cat** or the **ferret** in the garage?

**Neither** Alan **nor** Julie **remembers** seeing my PalmPilot.

**Compound Subjects Joined by *or* or *nor*—Plural Verb.** The plural verb is used if the subject nearest the verb is plural or if both parts of the subject are plural.

The **closet or the drawers are** the place to look.

The **directors or the producers receive** all the credit.

**Neither** the girls **nor** their teachers **were** aware of the approaching high tide.

**Plural Nouns—Singular Verbs.** Plural nouns used as the titles of courses or subject areas or as measurements or units of quantity (dollars, pounds, inches) take a singular verb.

**Humanities has** a long reading list.

I weighed myself, and **twelve pounds has** to go!

**Five hundred miles seems** a long way to drive in one day.

**Is $2,500** too much for this rug?

**Collective Nouns—Singular or Plural Verbs.** To emphasize the col- lective noun as a unit, use the singular verb. To refer to individuals within the group, use the plural verb.

The **ﬂeet sails** tomorrow at 4:30.

The **Seventh Fleet have** three days to repair their vessels. Everyone knows how hard the **council works.**

The **council are** divided about the tax-reform issue. When **is the team** going to play its next home game? The **team need** to recuperate from their injuries.

**Prepositional Phrases and Other Matters Set Off from the Subject.** Prepositional phrases following the subject or material set off from the subject by commas generally does not inﬂuence subject-verb agreement. To decide whether to use a singular or plural verb form, simply block out the prepositional phrase or additional material and look only at the sub- ject and verb.

**None** of the facts **has been proved** true. (*None* of the facts *has.*)

**Any** of these students **writes** well. (*Any* [one] of these students

*writes.*)

Many **ﬂowers**, such as the tulip, **grow** in northern climates. (Many

*ﬂowers*, such as the tulip, *grow.*)

My **house**, unlike those houses, **looks** brand new. (My *house*, unlike those houses, *looks.*)

The exception to this rule occurs when the word *all* is followed by a sin- gular or plural noun or pronoun. In this case, the prepositional phrase or material following *all* will determine whether to use a singular or plural verb.

**All** of my apple pie **was eaten**. (Singular *pie* takes the singular verb

*was eaten*.)

**All** of my apple pies **were eaten**. (Plural *pies* take the plural verb *were eaten*.)

## Adjectives

*Adjectives* modify nouns, pronouns, and other adjectives. They provide pertinent information about the words they modify by answering the ques- tions *What kind? How many? Which one? How much?* Adjectives can add precision, color, and a dash of originality to writing.

The zoo has a **two-year-old male** leopard. (What kind?) There may be **ten** planets in our solar system. (How many?) He gave her **that** hat over there. (Which one?)

I have a **bigger** TV than he does. (How much?)

### *Demonstrative Adjectives*

The demonstrative adjectives *which, what, this, these, that,* and *those* are used to emphasize which items are being singled out and their distance from the speaker. Unlike the pronoun forms of these words, demonstra- tive adjectives are never used alone.

I feel sorry for **those** people caught in the ﬂood. (Pronoun form: I feel sorry for *those* caught in the ﬂood.)

Take **this** car here and **that** car over by the driveway and park them both in the lot.

I don’t understand **which** person you’re talking about.

He doesn’t know **what** schedule the driver is using this week.

### *Limiting Adjectives*

Many adjectives are used to identify or number the nouns they modify. In nearly all cases, the limiting adjective comes before the noun. Following is a list of some of the more common of these adjectives.

**Limiting Adjective Noun**

a/an a mango, an orange

the the hammer, the screwdrivers

few few ideas

many many calls

every every week

each each person

both both lights

several several cards

some some cake

any any window

most most people

one one country

Limiting adjectives *a, an,* and *the* are also known as *articles*. *A* and *an* are *indeﬁnite articles* and refer to an unspeciﬁed item in a class (*a box*, *an apple*). *The* is a *deﬁnite article* and refers to one or more speciﬁc items in a class (*the box*, *the apples*).

### *Comparisons*

Adjectives also are used to show comparisons between or among persons, places, or things. The positive, comparative, and superlative forms repre- sent different degrees of a quality or characteristic.

The *positive* form is the base word (*low, cautious*). The *comparative* is formed by adding the sufﬁx *er* or the word *more* (*lower, more cautious*). The *superlative* requires the sufﬁx *est* or the word *most* (*lowest, most cautious*).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive** | **Comparative** | **Superlative** |
| careful | more careful | most careful |
| incredible | more incredible | most incredible |
| proud | prouder | proudest |
| fast | faster | fastest |
| few | fewer | fewest |

There are several irregular comparative forms as well.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| bad | worse | worst |
| far | farther | farthest |
| good | better | best |
| less | lesser | least |

When comparing two items, use the positive and comparative forms.

For more than two items, use the superlative.

The black puppy is **smaller** than its brother. (comparative) The brown puppy is the **smallest** of the eight. (superlative)

Jan has a **good** grade point average, Brian has a **better** one, while Joan has the **best** average of all. (positive, comparative, superlative)

That movie was **more** boring than a test pattern. (comparative) He has the **most** expensive satellite dish on the block. (superlative)

### *Compound Adjectives*

*Compound adjectives* generally are hyphenated when they precede the noun they modify. When they follow the noun, they are not hyphenated.

She wanted a **blue-gray** living room. She even dyed the curtains **blue gray**. That is a **past-due** bill.

The bill is **past due.**

### *Predicate Adjectives*

When an adjective follows a linking verb such as *feel, become, seem, get, is, look,* and *smell*, the word complements the verb and is known as a *predi- cate adjective*. The adjective does not modify the verb but refers to the con- dition of the subject.

She looks **beautiful**.

He seems **unhappy**. Is he **all right**? The water is getting **hot**.

## Adverbs

*Adverbs* modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They answer the ques- tions *When? Where? How?* or *How much?* Adverbs describe an action or state of being in greater detail and can provide a more vivid picture of what is happening.

She **always** signs her name with “Ms.” (When?) They carried the chair **downstairs**. (Where?) Read it again **slowly**. (How?)

He objected **strongly** to the judge’s ruling. (How much?)

### *Forming Adverbs*

Most adverbs end in *ly* and can be formed from the adjective. In some cases, however, the adjective and adverb both end in *ly*.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Noun** | **Adjective** | **Adverb** |
| care | careful | carefully |
| collect | collective | collectively |
| coward | cowardly | cowardly |
| hour | hourly | hourly |
| thought | thoughtful | thoughtfully |

### *Types of Adverbs*

Adverbs indicating time, direction, place, or degree may look the same as nouns, prepositions, or adjectives. Following are examples of these types of adverbs, including some that end in *ly*.

##### Adverbs of Time/Frequency (When?)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| always | frequently | occasionally |
| before | never | often |
| eventually | now | once |
| forever | Monday | seldom |

**Adverbs of Place/Direction (Where?)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| across | in | there |
| around | out | through |
| backward | over | under |
| here | sideways | upstairs |

**Adverbs of Degree (How Much?)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| completely | less | nearly |
| entirely | mildly | somewhat |
| excessively | most | thoroughly |
| however | much |  |

**Adverbs of Manner (How?)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| beautifully | equally | thankfully |
| carefully | handily | quickly |
| coldly | hotly | resentfully |
| earnestly | nicely | tirelessly |

*Comparisons*

Adverbs—like adjectives—are used in comparisons. The *positive* is the base word (*fast, softly*). The *comparative* is formed by adding *er* or the word *more* (*faster, more softly*), and the *superlative* by adding *est* or the word *most* (*fastest, most softly*). A few adverbs have irregular forms (*well, better, best*).

He drives himself **hard**. (positive)

He drives himself **harder** than I think he should. (comparative) He drives himself the **hardest** of anyone I know. (superlative)

I work **well** when I’m alone. (positive)

I work **better** when I’m with others. (comparative) I work **best** late at night. (superlative)

The tiger moves **quietly** through the jungle. (positive)

The tiger moves **more quietly** than the deer. (comparative)

The tiger moves the **most quietly** of the three big cats. (superlative)

### *Adverb Position and Meaning*

The position of the adverb can affect the meaning of the sentence. The most common error involves misplacing the adverb *only*. Make sure that the adverb position conveys what you intend to say.

**Unclear:** We **only** walked to the store and not the bank. (Did the speakers only walk and not run? Or did they walk only to the store and not elsewhere? The meaning is unclear.)

**Clear:** We walked **only** to the store and not to the bank.

**Unclear:** She **frequently** calls the magazine editor. (Does she call the magazine editor more frequently than she calls anyone else? Or does she simply call the editor many times [frequently]?)

**Clear:** She calls the magazine editor **frequently**.

In general, avoid splitting the verb phrase when using an adverb. While this rule is not carved in stone, it is a good one to keep in mind.

**Avoid:** I have **also** given the matter my attention. **Better:** I **also** have given the matter my attention. **Avoid:** He had **accurately** ﬁlled out the form.

**Better:** He had ﬁlled out the form **accurately**.

### *Adjective or Adverb?*

Some words function as either adverbs or adjectives, and many writers may confuse them. Among the most troublesome words are *good, well, badly,* and *bad*.

*Good* is an adjective and is always used as an adjective. Never use *good*

to modify a verb.

You’ve done a **good** job. (modiﬁes *job*)

I feel **good**. (predicate adjective referring to the condition of the subject)

*Well* is both an adjective, meaning in good health, and an adverb of manner, answering the question *how* something is done.

I feel **well**. (predicate adjective referring to the condition of the subject)

The reporter handled that story **well**. (modiﬁes the verb *handled*) She writes **well**. (modiﬁes the verb *writes*)

(“She writes **good**” is incorrect.)

The adverb *badly* is often mistaken for the adjective *bad*. *Badly*, an adverb of manner, indicates that something is done ineptly or poorly. It often follows an action verb.

He plays the piano **badly**. (modiﬁes the verb *plays* and answers the question: *How does he play the piano? Badly*.)

They painted the room **badly**. (modiﬁes the verb *painted* and answers the question: *How did they paint the room? Badly*.)