Adverbs as a Word Class

Worksheet 1: Defining the Class — What Adverbs Modify

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B1 (CEFR)

Reference: The Adverb's Four Jobs

An adjective has one job: it modifies a noun. An adverb is more flexible — this flexibility is what defines the class.

It modifies…	Example	Test question
a **verb**	He explained the rules **patiently**.	Explained how?
an **adjective**	The film was **surprisingly** good.	Good to what degree?
another **adverb**	She reacted **remarkably** quickly.	Quickly to what degree?
a **whole sentence**	**Unfortunately**, the train was cancelled.	What is the speaker's attitude?

The fourth type is often separated by a comma and can usually be moved to the start or end of the sentence.

Part A – Identify the Target

> **The adverb is in bold. Write the word or unit it modifies, and choose V (verb), ADJ (adjective), ADV (adverb) or S (whole sentence).**

#	Sentence	Modifies…	V / ADJ / ADV / S
1	She responded **immediately** to my message.		
2	The instructions were **completely** clear.		
3	**Obviously**, nobody expected that result.		
4	He learns **extremely** fast.		
5	The meeting ended **abruptly**.		
6	Her argument was **almost** convincing.		
7	**Personally**, I would refuse the offer.		
8	They finished the work **incredibly** efficiently.		

Part B – Not All -ly Words Are Adverbs

Adjective + *-ly* = adverb (*quick* → *quickly*). But noun + *-ly* = **adjective** (*friend* → *friendly, cost* → *costly, hour* → *hourly*). And some words are both: *daily, weekly, early*.

Write ADJ, ADV or BOTH. For BOTH, give one example sentence for each use.

#	Word	ADJ / ADV / BOTH	Example(s)
1	likely		
2	daily		
3	rarely		
4	costly		
5	early		
6	seriously		

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Flat Adverbs and Confusing Pairs

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B1 (CEFR)

Reference: Two Adverbs, Two Meanings

Some adjectives have **two** adverb forms: a **flat adverb** (same as the adjective) and an **-ly adverb** with a *different meaning*. They are not interchangeable.

Adjective	Flat adverb (literal)	-ly adverb (different meaning)
hard	**hard** = with effort *She works hard.*	**hardly** = almost not *She hardly works.*
late	**late** = not on time *He arrived late.*	**lately** = recently *He has been ill lately.*
near	**near** = close to *Don't go near the edge.*	**nearly** = almost *I nearly fell.*
high	**high** = at a height *The bird flew high.*	**highly** = very / to a great degree *She is highly respected.*
free	**free** = without paying *Children travel free.*	**freely** = without restriction *He spoke freely.*
deep	**deep** = far down *They dug deep.*	**deeply** = intensely *I deeply regret it.*

Part A – Choose and Justify

> **Circle the correct form. Then explain the difference in meaning in a few words.**

#	Sentence	Why?
1	I could (hard / hardly) hear the announcement.	
2	Have you seen any good films (late / lately)?	
3	The candidate is (high / highly) qualified.	
4	We (near / nearly) missed the connection.	
5	Students under 12 can enter the museum (free / freely).	
6	He was (deep / deeply) offended by the remark.	
7	They train (hard / hardly) six days a week.	
8	The plane was flying too (low / lowly).	

Part B – Meaning Shift

Explain the difference in meaning between the two sentences in each pair.

1. **a.** He works hard. **b.** He hardly works.

2. **a.** She arrived late. **b.** She has arrived lately.

3. **a.** The dog came near. **b.** The dog nearly came.

4. **a.** Prisoners may write free. **b.** Prisoners may write freely.

Part C – Informal Flat Adverbs

In informal English, some adverbs drop the -ly: *Drive slow. Come quick. Think different.* In formal writing, use the -ly form.

Rewrite each informal sentence in formal English.

1. Go slow round the bend.

2. She sure knows her subject.

3. Come quick — something's happened.

4. He plays real good for his age.

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Linking Verbs and the Adjective Boundary

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B1 (CEFR)

Reference: The Linking Verb Test

After a **linking verb**, English uses an **adjective**, because the word describes the *subject*, not the action. After an **action verb**, use an **adverb**.

Linking verbs	Adjective (describes subject)	Adverb (describes action)
be, seem, become, appear, look, feel, sound, taste, smell, get, remain, stay	The soup tastes **good**. He looks **nervous**. She stayed **calm**.	He tasted the soup **carefully**. He looked at me **nervously**. She spoke **calmly**.

The test: can you replace the verb with *be* and keep the meaning? *The soup tastes good → The soup is good.* ✓ It is a linking verb, so use the adjective.

Part A – Apply the Test

#	Sentence	Linking or action?	Correct form
1	Your plan sounds (sensible / sensibly).		
2	He sounded the alarm (immediate / immediately).		
3	The situation grew (serious / seriously).		
4	The company grew (rapid / rapidly) last year.		
5	She remained (silent / silently) throughout.		
6	He waited (silent / silently) by the door.		
7	The milk has gone (bad / badly).		
8	The interview went (bad / badly).		

Part B – Feel Bad or Feel Badly?

"I feel **bad** about it" = I am sorry. (adjective, standard)
"I feel **badly**" literally = my sense of touch is poor. Many speakers now use it to mean 'I am sorry', but it is widely criticised in formal writing.

Decide whether each sentence is (a) standard, (b) informal but common, or (c) a clear error. Justify briefly.

1. "I feel badly about missing your birthday." (a) / (b) / (c)

2. "The patient felt the fabric badly because of the nerve damage." (a) / (b) / (c)

3. "This new jacket looks expensively." (a) / (b) / (c)

4. "She appeared suddenly at the door." (a) / (b) / (c)

5. "He appeared confident during the presentation." (a) / (b) / (c)

Part C – Both Are Possible

> **Both forms are grammatical here, but the meaning changes. Explain both meanings.**

1. She looked **nervous**. / She looked **nervously** at the examiner.

2. The chef tasted the sauce **slowly**. / The sauce tasted **slow**. *(Which one fails? Why?)*

3. He turned **pale**. / He turned **quickly**.

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Analysis, Editing and Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B1 (CEFR)

Part A – Reading and Analysis

Maya had been training hard for almost a year, but lately she had begun to doubt herself. Frankly, the results simply did not justify the effort. She trained daily, she ate sensibly, and she slept well — yet she had hardly improved at all. Her coach remained surprisingly calm. "Progress rarely looks the way you expect," he said quietly. "You are getting stronger. You just cannot see it yet."

She thought about this deeply on the way home. Perhaps he was right. Perhaps she was judging herself far too harshly. The next morning, unusually, she arrived early at the gym and trained better than she had in weeks.

Questions

1. Find **four** adverbs that modify a **verb**, and **two** that modify a whole **sentence**.

   _____

   _____

2. The text contains *hard* and *hardly*, and *lately*. Explain what each contributes to the meaning.

   _____

   _____

3. Find an -ly word in the text that is functioning as an **adjective**.

   _____

4. "He remained surprisingly calm." Which word does *surprisingly* modify, and which word does *calm* modify?

   _____

5. Rewrite "she slept well" using an adjective instead of an adverb, keeping the meaning.

   _____

Part B – Editing

> **This paragraph contains six adverb/adjective errors. Underline and correct them.**

My first week at the new office went quite bad. I arrived lately on Monday because the traffic was terribly, and my manager looked angrily when I walked in. I work very hardly, but I am not confident yet, so I speak too quiet in meetings. Everyone else seems incredible relaxed. Still, I am learning quick, and I think things will improve.

#	Error	Correction
1		
2		

3		
4		
5		
6		

Part C – Writing

Write **120–150 words** describing a time when you learned a new skill. You must include:

- two adverbs modifying a **verb**;
- one adverb modifying an **adjective**;
- one adverb modifying **another adverb**;
- one adverb modifying the **whole sentence**;
- one correct use of *hard*, *late* or *near* (flat adverb).

Word count: _____ Requirements met: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — B1 Level, Adverbs as a Word Class

Worksheet 1 – Part A

#	Modifies	Type
1	**responded**	**V**
2	**clear**	**ADJ**
3	**the whole sentence**	**S**
4	**fast**	**ADV**
5	**ended**	**V**
6	**convincing**	**ADJ**
7	**the whole sentence**	**S**
8	**efficiently**	**ADV**

Worksheet 1 – Part B

#	Word	Class	Notes / examples
1	likely	**ADJ**	**A likely outcome.** ***(As an adverb it needs 'most/very': most likely.)***
2	daily	**BOTH**	**a daily newspaper (ADJ) / She swims daily (ADV)**
3	rarely	**ADV**	**He rarely complains.**
4	costly	**ADJ**	**a costly mistake** ***(no adverb form)***
5	early	**BOTH**	**an early start (ADJ) / We left early (ADV)**
6	seriously	**ADV**	**Take it seriously. / Seriously, it's fine.** ***(both are adverb uses)***

Worksheet 2 – Part A

#	Answer	Reason
1	**hardly**	= almost not; the announcement was barely audible
2	**lately**	= recently
3	**highly**	= to a great degree (modifies the adjective 'qualified')
4	**nearly**	= almost
5	**free**	= without paying; 'freely' would mean without restriction
6	**deeply**	= intensely (emotional, not physical)

7	**hard**	= with effort; 'hardly' would reverse the meaning
8	**low**	flat adverb; 'lowly' is an adjective meaning humble

Worksheet 2 – Part B

#	Answer
1	**(a) He puts in great effort. (b) He almost never works. The meanings are opposites.**
2	**(a) She was not on time. (b) is odd — 'lately' means 'recently' and needs a repeated or ongoing action, e.g. 'She has been arriving late lately.'**
3	**(a) It approached. (b) It almost came, but did not.**
4	**(a) They pay no postage. (b) They may write without censorship.**

Worksheet 2 – Part C

1 Go slowly round the bend. **2** She certainly knows her subject. **3** Come quickly — something has happened. **4** He plays really well for his age.

> *Item 4 contains two informal features: real for really, and good for well. Award credit for correcting both.*

Worksheet 3 – Part A

#	Verb type	Correct form
1	**linking**	**sensible**
2	**action**	**immediately**
3	**linking**	**serious** *(grew = became)*
4	**action**	**rapidly** *(grew = increased in size)*
5	**linking**	**silent**
6	**action**	**silently**
7	**linking**	**bad** *(gone = become)*
8	**action**	**badly** *(went = proceeded)*

> *Pairs 3/4 and 7/8 show that the same verb can be linking or action depending on meaning. This is the key insight of the worksheet — the verb's use, not the verb itself, decides the form.*

Worksheet 3 – Part B

#	Verdict	Justification
1	**(b)**	**Very common in speech, but 'feel bad' is standard; 'badly' is a hypercorrection.**
2	**(a)**	**Here 'feel' is an action verb (physical sensation), so the adverb is correct.**

3	(c)	'Look' is a linking verb here — 'looks expensive' is required.
4	(a)	'Appeared' = came into view (action verb), so the adverb is correct.
5	(a)	'Appeared' = seemed (linking verb), so the adjective is correct.

Worksheet 3 – Part C

#	Answer
1	'Nervous' describes her state (she was nervous). 'Nervously' describes how she directed her gaze.
2	'The chef tasted the sauce slowly' works — action verb. 'The sauce tasted slow' fails because 'slow' would have to describe the sauce, and a sauce cannot be slow.
3	'Turned pale' = became pale (linking). 'Turned quickly' = rotated quickly (action).

Worksheet 4 – Part A

Q	Answer
1	Verb: trained (hard), slept (well), said (quietly), thought (deeply), arrived (early), improved (hardly), trained (better), eats (sensibly) — any four. Sentence: Frankly, Perhaps (×2), unusually — any two.
2	'training hard' = with great effort; 'hardly improved' = almost not at all; 'lately' = in the recent past. The contrast between 'hard' and 'hardly' is the point of the paragraph: maximum effort, minimum visible result.
3	daily *(here it is an adverb: 'she trained daily'; the adjective in the text is 'calm' / accept 'early' discussion)* — the intended answer is that 'daily' is adverbial here, so a stronger response notes that no -ly adjective appears. Accept a well-argued answer either way.
4	'Surprisingly' modifies the adjective 'calm'; 'calm' modifies (describes) the subject 'he', via the linking verb 'remained'.
5	Her sleep was good. / She was a good sleeper.

Worksheet 4 – Part B (Editing)

#	Error	Correction
1	went quite bad	went quite badly *(action verb)*
2	arrived lately	arrived late
3	was terribly	was terrible *(after 'be')*
4	looked angrily	looked angry *(linking verb — his appearance, not his gaze)*
5	work very hardly	work very hard
6	speak too quiet	speak too quietly

> *There are two further errors for stronger classes: seems incredible relaxed → incredibly relaxed (adverb modifying an adjective), and learning quick → learning quickly. Set the task as "at least six" if you want the challenge.*

Worksheet 4 – Part C: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Range of function	All four modification types attempted and identifiable	0–4
Accuracy	Correct form and spelling; adjective/adverb boundary respected	0–3
Flat adverbs	Correct use of hard / late / near without -ly confusion	0–2
Position	Adverbs placed naturally; sentence adverb correctly fronted	0–3
Coherence & task	120–150 words; narrative is clear and connected	0–3