

# THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER

## USING ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS CORRECTLY

*Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives & adverbs.*

Adjectives	Examples	Adverbs	Examples
<u>Nouns</u>	The <i>busy</i> <u>boy</u> rested.	<u>Verbs</u>	The boy <u>spoke</u> <i>quickly</i> .
<u>Pronouns</u>	<u>She</u> felt <i>triumphant</i>	<u>Adjectives</u>	The boy was very <u>busy</u> .
		<u>Adverbs</u>	The boy spoke very <u>quickly</u> .

### *The -ly ending theory*

*In many cases, adverbs are formed by adding -ly to adjectives*

#### Adjectives

Soft  
Safe  
Gentle  
Beautiful

#### Adverbs

Softly  
Safely  
Gently  
Beautifully

**Problem:** *This theory is not always true.*

Adverbs such as well, very, worse, and often, do not end in -ly. Furthermore, there are adjectives that end in -ly such as friendly and lively (Mary is friendly).

Therefore, the -ly theory is not the best way to identify an adverb.

To determine whether a word is an adjective or an adverb, rely on its meaning within the sentence. Ask yourself: *What question does it answer?*

**Adjectives answer the following questions:**

Which one?	<i>This</i> suggestion is the best I have ever heard.
What kind (s)?	He got rid of his <i>old</i> computer.
How many?	<i>Several</i> students passed the test.

## Adverbs answer the following questions:

When?	I called her <i>yesterday</i> .
Where?	She drives <i>everywhere</i> .
Why?	She is dieting <i>to lose weight</i> .
How?	She is singing <i>beautifully</i> .
How Often?	She rehearses the script <i>every two hours</i> .
To what extent?	They are <i>really good</i> public speakers.

Words as well as phrases and clauses can function as adjectives or adverbs in sentences.

### Adjective phrases and clauses:

The phrases and clauses in **boldface** and *italics* are adjectives, and the nouns underlined are the words they modify.

The deserts **of the Southwest**, once *inhabited by American Indians*, are now popular areas for business and recreation.

The house **where he was born** has been made a national shrine.

### Adverb phrases and clauses:

The phrases and clauses in **boldface** and *italics* are the adverbs; the verbs, adjectives or adverbs underlined are the words they modify.

He was true **to his word**.

He plays basketball **whenever he can**.

She practices **with diligence**.

She is confident **that she will win**.

We threw the ball far **to the left**.

He played better **than I did**.