

ADVERBS OF DEGREE



- Adverbs of degree usually modify verbs.
- Some adverbs of degree can modify adjectives, other adverbs, or clauses.

1. We use adverbs of degree to modify verbs. They make the verb stronger or weaker.

I totally disagree.

I can nearly swim.

2. Some adverbs can come in front of a main verb, after a main verb, or after the object if there is one.

badly	greatly	strongly
completely	seriously	totally

Mr Brooke strongly criticized the Bank of England.

I disagree completely with John Taylor.

That argument doesn't convince me totally.

Some adverbs are mostly used in front of the verb.

almost	largely	nearly	really	quite
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He almost crashed into a lorry.

Note that 'really' is used at the beginning of a clause to express surprise, and at the end of a clause as an adverb of manner.

Really, I didn't know that!

He wanted it really, but he was too shy to ask.

'A lot' and 'very much' come after the main verb if there is no object, or after the object.

She helped a lot.

We liked him very much.

'Very much' can come after the subject and in front of verbs like 'want', 'prefer', and 'enjoy'.

I very much wanted to take it with me.

3. Some adverbs of degree go in front of adjectives or other adverbs and modify them.

awfully	fairly	quite	really
extremely	pretty	rather	very

...a fairly large office, with filing space.

Note that we can use 'rather' before or after 'a' or 'an' followed by an adjective and a noun.

Seaford is rather a pleasant town.

He told me a rather long and complicated story.

When 'quite' means 'fairly', you put it in front of 'a' or 'an' followed by an adjective and a noun.

My father gave me quite a large sum of money.

However, when 'quite' means 'extremely', you can put it after 'a'. You can say 'a quite enormous sum'.

4. We use some adverbs of degree to modify clauses and prepositional phrases.

entirely	just	largely	mainly	partly	simply
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Are you saying that simply because I am here?

I don't think it's worth going just for a day.

5. We use 'so' and 'such' to emphasize a quality that someone or something has. 'So' can be followed by an adjective, an adverb, or a noun group beginning with 'many', 'much', 'few', or 'little'.

John is so interesting to talk to.

Science is changing so rapidly.

I want to do so many different things.

'Such' is followed by a singular noun group with 'a', or a plural noun group.

There was such a noise we couldn't hear.

They said such nasty things about you.

WARNING: 'So' is never followed by a singular noun group with 'a' or a plural noun group.

6. We use 'too' when you mean 'more than is necessary' or 'more than is good'. We can use 'too' before adjectives and adverbs, and before 'many', 'much', 'few', or 'little'.

The prices in that shop are too high.

I've been paying too much tax.

We use 'enough' after adjectives and adverbs.

I waited until my daughter was old enough to read.

He didn't work quickly enough.

Note that 'enough' is also a determiner.

We've got enough money to buy that car now.

7. We use emphasizing adverbs to modify adjectives such as 'astonishing', 'furious', and 'wonderful', which express extreme qualities.

absolutely	entirely	purely	really	totally
completely	perfectly	quite	simply	utterly

I think he's absolutely wonderful.

