

What is an adverb?

An adverb is what it sounds like. It adds to a verb. Adverbs are words that tells when, where, why, how, or to what extent something is done.

In the examples below, the adverb is underlined, and the verb is in bold.

He **runs** fast.

She **sings** beautifully.

The dog quietly **whimpered** after being scolded for chewing the new shoe.

The -ly Rule

Most adverbs are easy to spot. Think of all the words you know that end in -ly. Most of those words are adverbs.

Most descriptive words have two forms, the root word is the adjective form, and the form ending in -ly is the adverb form of the word.

They **paint** wonderfully.

They are a wonderful **painter**.

Take a look at the examples above. In the first sentence, wonderfully is an adverb because it tells us how they paint. In the second sentence, wonderful is an adjective because it is telling us what kind of painter they are. Painter is a noun, not a verb.

However, some adverbs don't follow this rule.

Often can describe the frequency something is done in, but "oftenly" isn't a word. Something can never be done, but "neverly" isn't a word. You can almost do something, but "almostly" isn't a word.

Most of the time, these rule breaker adverbs will "sound" wrong to you if you attempt to add -ly to an adverb where it does not have that as an option. But when in doubt, look it up. Dictionaries have the different possible variances of words, so they are a good tool to have and know how to use.