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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Adverb position 1



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### Callum

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Callum.

#### Catherine

And me, **Catherine**. Hello.

#### Callum

In this programme we're talking about adverbs and where they should go. Catherine, remind us what adverbs are.

#### Catherine

Certainly, Callum. Adverbs are words or phrases that we use to give more information about verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. We use them to express how someone does something or how something happens.

#### Callum

In today's programme we're going to focus on how they are used with verbs. Listen out for the adverbs **usually**, **really**, **hardly** and **ever**. Here's Finn.

#### Finn

I **usually** drive to work.

I don't **really** like cheese.

I can **hardly** believe what happened at the concert.

Have you **ever** been to Scotland?

#### Callum

Now, let's look more closely at where to put the adverb.

#### Catherine

Adverbs can usually be placed in one of three positions.

#### Callum

The first position is at the very beginning of the sentence, before the subject.

**Finn**

**Usually** I drive to work.

**Catherine**

The second position is before the main verb.

**Finn**

I **usually** drive to work.

**Callum**

And the third position is after the direct object or complement of the verb.

**Finn**

I drive to work **usually**.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Callum**

Today we're talking about where to put adverbs when we are using them to give more information about verbs.

**Catherine**

We've seen that there are three positions where adverbs typically go.

**Callum**

So is it the case that you can put any adverb in any of these positions?

**Catherine**

Callum, if it was that simple it would be fantastic! Many adverbs can indeed go in any of these positions, depending on style and context.

**Callum**

I feel there is a 'but' coming.

**Catherine**

But ...

**Callum**

Ah, there it is ...

**Catherine**

But that's not always the case. Some adverbs can't go in certain places and some are more common in particular positions than others.

### Callum

And we also have to consider modals and other auxiliaries, questions and negatives.

### Catherine

We do. So, let's start with the verb **to be**. When the verb **to be** is the main verb of a sentence, we usually put adverbs immediately after the verb.

### Finn

He's **always** on time.

I was **never** happy at school.

### Callum

When there is more than one part to the verb, where does the adverb go?

### Catherine

If there is an auxiliary such as have or has in the present perfect or a modal like can, will, should and so on, the adverb usually goes after the auxiliary and before the main verb.

### Finn

You can **never** predict what mood he's going to be in.

I've **rarely** seen him angry.

I will **always** love you.

### Catherine

And I'll always love you Finn! The same is true in negative sentences. The adverb will come after the negative and before the main verb.

### Finn

I've **never** visited Iceland.

He can't **even** make a cup of tea.

### Callum

And what about questions?

### Catherine

The same is true there. The adverb comes after the question word or auxiliary and before the main verb.

### Finn

Do you **still** live in the same city?

Would you **really** like to come and stay?

Have you **ever** thought about emigrating?

**Callum**

Now, are there any places where can't put an adverb?

**Catherine**

There are. Adverbs don't go between a main verb and its direct object. So, for example, could I say: I play very well tennis?

**Callum**

Well, you could say it, but it wouldn't be right.

**Catherine**

OK. How about this: I play tennis very well.

**Callum**

That's correct, though only grammatically.

**Catherine**

What do you mean?

**Callum**

Well, actually, you play tennis awfully!

**Catherine**

That's true actually Callum.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from the BBC.

**Callum**

We're nearly at the end of today's programme, just time to take our quick quiz on this topic.

**Catherine**

You're going to hear some sentences and you need to decide if the adverbs are in the correct place. Here's the first one.

**Finn**

You always must remember to lock the door when you leave.

**Callum**

This one is ... not right. The adverb **always** should come after the modal 'must' and before the main verb 'remember'. Here's the next one.

**Finn**

I have never learned a foreign language.

**Catherine**

And, this is ... correct. The adverb, in this case **never**, comes between the auxiliary 'have' and the main verb 'learned'. And the final sentence.

**Finn**

She rarely is late.

**Callum**

This is ... not correct. The adverb **rarely** should come after the verb 'to be'.

**Catherine**

So that's our introduction to the position of adverbs.

**Callum**

Do check our website [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com) for more information on this subject.

**Catherine**

And do join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar

**Both**

Goodbye