

# Adjectives and Adverbs: Fixed Forms & Modifiers

INTERMEDIATE

## Focus: Fast, hard, and late; Late vs. Lately; Hard vs. Hardly; Adverbial Modifiers

At the Intermediate (B1) level, it is important to distinguish between adverbs that keep the same form as adjectives and those that change their meaning entirely when **-ly** is added. We also look at how to modify adjectives to make descriptions stronger.

### 1. Fixed-Form Adverbs (Adjective = Adverb)

Some words have the same form for both the adjective and the adverb. We do **not** add *-ly* to these when describing the action.

- **Fast:**
  - *Adjective:* It is a **fast** car.
  - *Adverb:* He drives **fast**. (NOT: fastly)
- **Hard:**
  - *Adjective:* The exam was **hard**.
  - *Adverb:* She works **hard**. (with energy/effort)
- **Late:**
  - *Adjective:* The bus is **late**.
  - *Adverb:* He arrived **late**. (not early)

### 2. Confusing Pairs: Changed Meanings

When we add **-ly** to *hard* or *late*, the meaning changes completely.

#### A. Hard vs. Hardly

- **Hard** (Adverb): With effort or energy.
  - *Ex:* He kicked the ball **hard**.
- **Hardly** (Adverb): Almost not; scarcely; very little.
  - *Ex:* I **hardly** know him. (I almost don't know him).
  - *Position:* Usually comes **before the main verb** or after *to be*.

#### B. Late vs. Lately

- **Late** (Adverb): Not on time.
  - *Ex:* She came home **late** last night.
- **Lately** (Adverb): Recently (often used with Present Perfect).
  - *Ex:* Have you seen any good movies **lately**?

### 3. Structures with 'Hardly'

*Hardly* often combines with other words to create negative meanings without using "not".

- **Hardly ever:** Almost never.
  - *Ex:* We **hardly ever** go to the cinema these days.
- **Hardly any / anybody / anything:** Almost none/no one/nothing.
  - *Ex:* There was **hardly any** food left in the fridge.

### 4. Adverbial Modifiers

We use adverbs to modify (describe) adjectives or other adverbs. This adds emphasis or detail.

- **Structure: Adverb + Adjective**
  - *Ex:* The test was **incredibly** difficult. (Not just "difficult")
  - *Ex:* She was **extremely** tired.

## Practice Exercises

### Instructions

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the word in parentheses.

- Decide if you need an adjective or an adverb.
- Decide if the meaning requires the fixed form (e.g., *late*) or the changed form (e.g., *late*ly).
- Watch out for the word **hardly** and its common collocations (hardly ever/any).

1. I haven't seen my parents \_\_\_\_\_ because I've been so busy at work. (late)
2. The train was moving so \_\_\_\_\_ that we arrived an hour early. (fast)
3. Can you speak a bit louder? I can \_\_\_\_\_ hear you. (hard)
4. The students studied \_\_\_\_\_ for the final exam. (hard)
5. The restaurant was \_\_\_\_\_ expensive, so we only ordered appetizers. (incredibly)
6. There were \_\_\_\_\_ tourists in the museum; it was almost empty. (hardly / any)
7. Why do you always arrive \_\_\_\_\_ for class? (late)
8. He was \_\_\_\_\_ injured in the car accident. (serious)
9. My neighbor plays music very loudly; I can \_\_\_\_\_ sleep at night. (hard)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ (you / go) to the gym \_\_\_\_\_ ? (late / question form)
11. It is \_\_\_\_\_ impossible to park in the city center on Saturdays. (absolute)
12. She speaks five languages \_\_\_\_\_ well. (fluent)
13. We \_\_\_\_\_ eat out; we prefer cooking at home. (hardly / ever)
14. The instructions were \_\_\_\_\_ confusing, so nobody understood them. (terrible)
15. Even though he tried \_\_\_\_\_ , he couldn't fix the broken computer. (hard)

## **Answer Key**

1. lately
2. fast
3. hardly
4. hard
5. incredibly
6. hardly any
7. late
8. seriously
9. hardly
10. Have you gone / lately *OR* Have you been going / lately
11. absolutely
12. fluently
13. hardly ever
14. terribly
15. hard