

# Adverbs & Quantifiers with Modals: Word Order

INTERMEDIATE

**Focus: Can/will/must position, Compound verb structures, Word order in negatives, Probability adverbs, Semi-modals, Adverb placement, Infinitive structures, Verb phrase components, Quantifiers, Mid-sentence position**

## 1. General Rule: Mid-Position Adverbs

When a sentence has an auxiliary verb (be, have, do) or a modal verb (can, will, must, should, etc.), adverbs and quantifiers usually go in the "mid-position."

**The Golden Rule:** Place the adverb **after** the first auxiliary or modal verb and **before** the main verb.

- **Structure:** [Subject] + [Modal/Aux] + [**Adverb**] + [Main Verb]
- *Example:* I **can hardly** hear you.
- *Example:* She **has already finished** her work.
- *Example:* You **should always** tell the truth.

## 2. Semi-Modals: 'Have to' and 'Used to'

These verbs behave differently. Adverbs usually go **before** *have to* and *used to*, not after them.

- **Structure:** [Subject] + [**Adverb**] + [have to / used to] + [Verb]
- *Example:* We **often have to** wait for the bus. (NOT: ~~We have to often wait~~)
- *Example:* He **never used to** like coffee.

## 3. Quantifiers: 'All' and 'Both'

The words *all* and *both* follow the standard rule for mid-position adverbs. They are placed **after** the modal or auxiliary verb.

- *Example:* We **are both** ready to go.
- *Example:* They **will all** pass the exam.
- *Example:* You **should both** apologize.

## 4. Probability Adverbs in Negatives

Adverbs of certainty (like *probably* and *definitely*) move when the sentence is negative.

- **Affirmative:** He **will probably** come. (After *will*)
- **Negative:** He **probably won't** come. (Before *won't*)
- *Note:* This emphasizes that the action is unlikely to happen.

## 5. Compound Verbs (Three parts)

If the verb phrase has two auxiliaries (e.g., *has been working* or *will be leaving*), the adverb goes after the **first** one.

- *Example:* She **has definitely been** crying.
- *Example:* They **will all be** staying at the hotel.

## Practice Exercises

**Instruction:** Complete the sentences by putting the words in parentheses into the correct order and form. Pay attention to the position of the adverb or quantifier.

1. I promise I \_\_\_\_\_ late again. (not / be / will / definitely)
2. You \_\_\_\_\_ your homework before watching TV. (always / finish / should)
3. We \_\_\_\_\_ work on Saturdays. (often / to / have)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ ready by 8:00 PM? (be / will / both / you)
5. She \_\_\_\_\_ speak French very well. (hardly / can)
6. They \_\_\_\_\_ in the same office for ten years. (worked / have / all)
7. I \_\_\_\_\_ wake up early when I was a student. (use / never / to / did)
8. The train \_\_\_\_\_ left the station. (already / has / probably)
9. He \_\_\_\_\_ to call you back today. (not / will / probably / be able)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ wear a uniform at your new job? (have / you / usually / do / to)
11. We \_\_\_\_\_ waiting for a long time. (been / have / both)
12. My parents \_\_\_\_\_ agree on politics. (never / used / to)
13. The team \_\_\_\_\_ training by the time we arrive. (will / finished / have / definitely)
14. \_\_\_\_\_ swim? (the children / can / all)
15. It looks dark outside; it \_\_\_\_\_ rain later. (will / certainly)

## **Answer Key**

1. definitely won't be
2. should always finish
3. often have to
4. Will you both be
5. can hardly
6. have all worked
7. never used to
8. has probably already (*Note: "probably has already" is also acceptable in spoken English, but standard order prefers after auxiliary*) OR *has already probably*
9. probably won't be able
10. Do you usually have to
11. have both been
12. never used to
13. will definitely have finished
14. Can the children all / Can all the children
15. will certainly