

PLACEMENT OF MODIFIERS

ADJECTIVES

Try to keep the modifiers (especially adjectives) in a more "natural" order.

Examples:

The blonde, tall woman walked to the deli across the street. (Worse)

The tall, blonde woman walked to the deli across the street. (Better)

Notice how the second example shows the adjectives in a more "natural" order.

A few grammarians have proposed the following formula for incorporating modifiers in a linear pattern:

Size/Depth/Width/Length + Age + Color + Material Characteristics/National Origin +
Noun

Thus,

Examples:

Tall, blonde woman

Fat, yellow dog

Small, black cat

Huge, brown table

Deep blue sea

Skinny, old grayhaired poodle

As many note, you may encounter exceptions; however, this pattern represents the tendencies most writers follow.

ADVERBS

Adverbs are versatile words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. The general placement of adverbs depends on what they are modifying.

When an adverb modifies a verb, the adverb typically appears directly before or after the verb.

For example, in the sentence "She quickly ran to the store," the adverb "quickly" modifies the verb "ran" and is placed before it.

However, adverbs can also come after the verb if they are used for emphasis or style, such as in "He speaks well." In this case, "well" modifies the verb "speaks," but it is placed after it.

When adverbs modify adjectives or other adverbs, their placement changes.

An adverb modifying an adjective usually comes directly before the adjective, as in "She is extremely talented," where "extremely" modifies "talented."

Similarly, when an adverb modifies another adverb, it is placed before it.

For example, "She runs very quickly," where "very" modifies "quickly," which in turn modifies the verb "runs."

While there are general rules, the position of adverbs can sometimes vary for emphasis or stylistic reasons, especially in more complex sentences.

Here are a few examples of the same adverb used in different places within sentences:

1. Adverb modifying the verb:

She always arrives early.

She arrives always early.

2. Adverb modifying an adjective:

He is extremely talented.

He is talented extremely.

3. Adverb modifying another adverb:

He runs very quickly.

He runs quickly very well.

In these examples, the adverb "always," "extremely," and "very" modify different parts of the sentence, but their meaning remains the same.

The placement of the adverb can affect the tone or rhythm of the sentence, though the meaning is often still clear. However, some adverb placements (such as "talented extremely") may sound unnatural or awkward in regular speech, demonstrating that placement also follows certain stylistic preferences.