**Grammar Rule 6: Using Adverbs and Adjectives**

**The Following Rules are taken from**

**http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/537/2/**

**Rule #1: Adjectives modify nouns; adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.**

You can recognize adverbs easily because many of them are formed by adding -ly to an adjective.

Here are some sentences that demonstrate some of the differences between an adjective and an adverb.

Richard is *careless.*

Here careless is an adjective that modifies the proper noun Richard.

Richard talks *carelessly*.

Here carelessly is an adverb that modifies the verb talks.

Priya was extremely *happy.*

Priya smiled *happily.*

Here happy is an adjective that modifies the proper noun Priya and extremely is an adverb that modifies the adjective happy.

**Rule #2: An adjective always follows a form of the verb to be when it modifies the noun before the verb. Here are some examples that show this rule.**

I was *nervous*.

She has been *sick* all week.

They tried to be *helpful*.

**Rule #3: Likewise an adjective always follows a sense verb or a verb of appearance — feel, taste, smell, sound, look, appear, and seem — when it modifies the noun before the verb.**

Sharon's cough sounds *bad*.

Here bad is an adjective that modifies the noun cough. Using the adverb badly here would not make sense, because it would mean her cough isn't very good at sounding.

**Following otes and examples taken from Virginia Tufte *Artful Sentences Chapter 4***

**Adjectives and Adverbs in short sentences**

The relationship is *disgraceful*, *disgusting*. Janet Frame, *Scented Gardens of the Blind*, 194.

My career at Fontlands was *short and inglorious*. Havelock Ellis, *My Life*, 125.

He felt *porous and pregnable*. Vladimir Nabokov, *Pnin*, 20.

**Adjectives to make contrasts. Adjectives may be used individually or in groups to provide contrasts between nouns.**

Value judgments may be *informed or uninformed*, *responsible or irresponsible*. Walter Kaufmann, *The Faith of a Heretic*, 335.

**Mobility of adverbs. Adverbs generally come before or after a verb but they may placed anywhere in a sentence.**

*Gently* he stopped the machine. Romain Gary*, Death of the Hind Legs*, 73.

*Slowly*, the sky blew up. Philip Wylie, *The Answer*, 15.

All that life soon faded. John Hersey, *Here to Stay*, 167.

**Adjectives and adverbs in inverted positions.**

Profound was Gary’s relief the next morning as he bumped and glided, like a storm-battered yacht, into the safe harbor of his work week. Jonathan Franzen, The Corrections, 201.

**Catalogs of modifiers. Using lists of adjectives or adverbs can provide emphasis or contrast**.

Diligent, well-meaning, oppressed, loyal, affectionate, and patriotic, this princess is not yet corrupted by her questionable powers. Michael Dobson and Nicola J. Watson, England’s Elizabeth, 172.

Everything he writes is written as an angry, passionate, generous, fumbling, rebellious, bewildered and bewildering man. Sean O’Faolain, The Vanishing Hero, 108.

**Adjectival color and clarity: The following sentences demonstrate successful paragraphs that are heavily adjectival, highly colored. They are attractive and colorful but selective, because their adjectives have all been chosen, assigned, and fastened together with attention to rhythm, clarity, impact, and focus. (Tufte, 102)**

Father Urban, *fifty-four, tall and handsome* but a *trifle loose* in the jowls and *red* of eye, smiled and put out his hand. J.F. Powers, *Morte d’Urban*, 17.

He had a *momentary, scared* glimpse of their faces, *thin and unnaturally long*, with *long*, *drooping* noses and *drooping* mouths of *half-spherical, half-idiotic* solemnity. C.S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet*, 44.

**Adverbial energy and rhythm: Adverbs are often used to modify the adjectives, and they become an important part of the rhythm of adjectival styles. There are also what might be called adverbial styles, sentences in which much of the content, much of the interest, or perhaps the real punch, end up with the adverbs (Tufte, 107).**

If he said he had written a *fairy*-story with a *political* purpose, we cannot *lightly* suppose he spoke *lightly*. C.M. Woodhouse, “Introduction”, ix

So one day he *silently* and *suddenly* killed her. D.H. Lawrence, *Etruscan Places*, 198.

It was *alway*s going to be like this, *always*, *always*. John Wain, *A Travelling Woman*, 47.

**Adverbs as cohesive devices: The mobility of the adverb can help hold sentences together. An adverb at the beginning of a sentence can tie it to the preceding sentence:**

*There* fear stiffened into hatred. *Here* hatred curdled from despair. Phillip Toynbee, Prothalamium, 67.

He recognized the feeling. *After that*, he recognized the man. Wright Morris, The Field of Vision 16.

**Putting it together.**

1. **Read the following passages and underline examples of adjectives or adverbs. How are they used to create a mood in the passages?**

They were standing in a large, circular room. Everything in here was black including the door and ceiling—identical, unmarked, handle-less black doors were set at intervals all around the black walls, interspersed with branches of candles whose flames turned blue, their cool shimmering light reflected in the shining marble floor so that it looked as though there was dark water underfoot. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, 770.

He lifted his heavy eyes and saw leaning over him a huge willow-tree, old and hoary. Enormous it looked, its sprawling branches going up like reaching arms with many long-fingered hands, its knotted and twisted trunk gaping in wide fissures that creaked faintly as the boughs moved. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 127.

Gentlemen, the gods have graciously/steadied our ship of state, which storms have terribly tossed./And now I have called you here privately/because of course I know your loyalty to the House of Laius. Sophocles, *Antigone*, Episode 1, lines 1-6.

Portia was warming her supper in the stove. Ralph banged his spoon on his high-chair tray. George’s dirty little hand pushed up his grits with a piece of bread and his eyes were squinted in a faraway look. She helped herself to white meat and gravy and grits and a few raisins and mixed them up together on her plate. She at three bites of them. She ate until all the grits were gone but still wasn’t full. Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p. 250. **What literary device is used in the third sentence?**

1. **Write three sentences describing a room in your house. Use adjectives and adverbs to create the mood of the place.**