

Teaching Material for the Position of Adverbs in English Sentences

- The material includes
 - a 'cheat sheet' on grammatical terminology
 - three versions of explanations of the position of adverbs of time, place and manner in declarative sentences
 - using simple color coding
 - using colored illustrations (for younger learners)
 - using a metaphor

more information on this material can be found in:

Schümchen, Nathalie (2019): How do Learners Make Use of Foreign Language Learning Materials? A Micro-Analytical Study to Support the Evaluation and Development of Visual Learning Instructions. Dissertation, University of Southern Denmark.

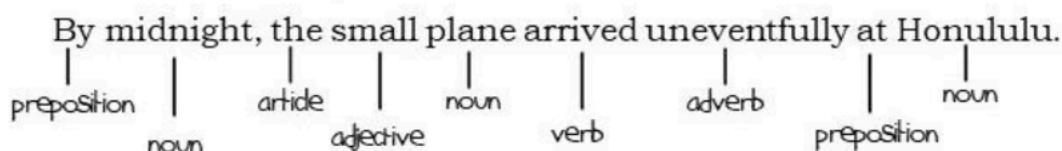
GRAMMAR TERMINOLOGY

A basic understanding of English grammar and the elements of a sentence helps to understand how sentences are built and thereby helps you to formulate your own sentences and texts.

There are two ways to analyze a sentence grammatically: you can do a *formal analysis* which identifies the parts of speech in a sentence, or you can do a *functional analysis* of the roles of the different units in the sentence.

1. Formal Analysis

A formal analysis looks at the individual words and what class they belong to. Words belong into different *word classes* or *parts of speech*. Let's look at one example:



This sentence consists of the following parts of speech:

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Determiners (e.g. articles)	Prepositions
- midnight - plane - Honolulu	- arrived	- small	- uneventfully	- the - the	- by - at

2. Functional Analysis

A functional analysis divides the words in the sentence into several, sometimes larger, units. These units have different *roles* in the sentence, for example subject, verb, and object.

Let's look at our example sentence again:

By midnight, the small plane arrived uneventfully at Honolulu.				
ADVERBIAL		SUBJECT	VERB	ADVERBIAL
ADVERBIAL		ADVERBIAL		
Subject		Verb	Adverbial	
- the small plane		- arrived	- by midnight (adverbial of time)	
			- uneventfully (adverbial of manner)	
			- at Honolulu (adverbial of place)	

The most important units in a sentence are the **Subject** and the **Verb**. The common sentence structure of English sentences is Subject-Verb(-Object):

The small plane arrived.

Of course, other elements can be added to a sentence. In our example, different kinds of adverbials have been added to the sentence in order to add details about the manner (*uneventfully*), place (*at Honolulu*), and the time (*by midnight*) in which the action took place.

ADVERBIAL POSITIONS

Adverbials occur in various positions in the sentence. The position depends on the type of adverbial. In the following, we will briefly describe the position of three types of adverbials: Adverbials of Manner, Place, and Time.

Adverbials of Manner

This category includes adverbs such as *kindly*, *badly*, *well*, etc., which describe how things are done. These adverbs usually occur after the verb, unless there are any objects. In that case, the adverb comes after these objects.

She sang *well*.

He loves his dog *dearly*.

Adverbials of Place

Adverbials of place include *here*, *there*, and *somewhere* (prepositional phrases, such as *on the floor* or *in the dark forest* can also function as adverbials). Like adverbs of manner, they usually occur after the verb, unless there is an object – then, the adverb occurs after the object. If the clause also has an adverb of manner, the adverb of place comes after that.

I looked *everywhere*.

He lay lazily *there*.

Adverbials of Time

Then, *yet*, *still*, *now*, and *soon* are examples of adverbs of time. They are usually placed at the very beginning or the end of a sentence. The most frequent position is at the very end of the sentence.

NOTE: The frequency adverbs *once*, *twice*, etc. also belong to this category.

NOTE: *still* should be placed after “to be” but before all other verbs.

I'll visit her *tomorrow*.

You don't have to tell me *twice*.

They *still* love each other.

I'm *still* tired.

time S V O manner place time

Adverbials of Manner

He loves his dog **dearly**.

She sang **well**.

Adverbials of Place

I looked **everywhere**.

He put the book **on the table**.

Adverbials of Time

Last week, she kissed her.

I'll visit her **later**.

NOTE: I am **still** tired.

Multiple Adverbials

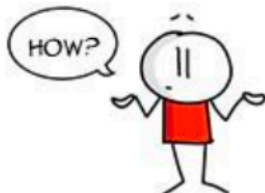
Then, they walked her **slowly** to her car.

He wrote letters **from work** **every day**.

The group held the meeting **secretly** **in the forest** **at night**.

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ADVERBIAL POSITION


The following table summarizes the positions in which adverbs of manner, place, and time usually occur. If you are in doubt about the positioning of an adverb in a sentence, try to identify the type of adverb (use for example the questions "How?", "Where?", and "When?" presented on the previous page).


ADVERBIAL TYPE	ADVERBIAL POSITION
manner	S V O 
place	S V O  
time	 S V O   

HOW?

Adverbials of Manner



He loves his dog  dearly.


She sang  well.

WHERE?

Adverbials of Place




I looked  everywhere.


He put the book  on the table.


Adverbials of Time

WHEN?





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Multiple Adverbials



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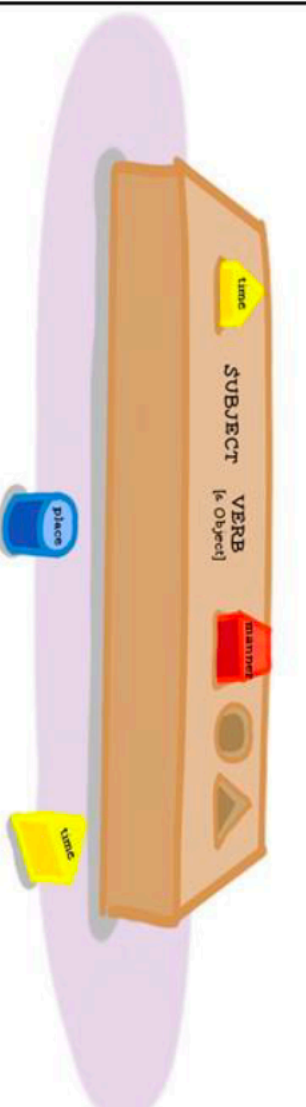
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THE FIXED POSITION OF ADVERBIALS IN A CLAUSE

The position of the different types of adverbials is quite fixed. You can imagine each type of adverbial as a specific form. Think of a *shape sorting cube*. Each opening of the cube only allows one specific shape.



Since English sentences go linearly from left to right, the "Adverbial shape sorting box" would not be a cube but rather an oblong box with openings only on top with the obligatory elements of the sentence curved into it. Nevertheless, the same rules regarding the sorting of the shapes apply. Each type of adverbial is represented by a specific form. Each form can only be inserted in specific positions in the box, and this order corresponds to the general rules for adverbial positions.



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