Adverbs as a Word Class

Worksheet 1: Defining the Class — Tests and Boundaries

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: The Residual Class

Grammarians sometimes describe the adverb as a **residual class**: the category that catches words which cannot be neatly assigned to noun, verb, adjective or preposition. This creates a heterogeneous set that requires formal tests, not intuition.

Test	A genuine adverb will…	Caveat
1. Modification of a verb	modify a verb, adjective or another adverb	Other classes can do this too (e.g. noun phrases as adverbials)
2. Mobility	be movable to front or end position without becoming ungrammatical	Some adverbs are fixed (e.g. *enough* is always post-adjectival)
3. Degree modification	be modifiable by *very, too, so, quite* (if gradable)	Many adverbs are non-gradable (*often, always, immediately*)
4. Comparison	take comparative or superlative forms	Many adverbs lack these; the test is confirmatory, not exclusive
5. -ly derivation	derive from an adjective via -ly	Many adjectives also end in -ly (*friendly*); many adverbs do not (*fast, often, here*)

Part A — Applying the Tests

> **Apply as many tests as are relevant to each bold word. State which tests it passes and give a verdict: ADVERB, ADJECTIVE, PREPOSITION, or DISPUTED.**

#	Sentence	Tests passed	Verdict
1	She has **just** arrived.		
2	He is **straight** ahead.		
3	The meeting is **over**.		
4	They ran **past**.		
5	She is **enough** qualified for the role.		
6	She is qualified **enough**.		
7	He spoke to her **direct**.		

8	**Well**, that was unexpected.		

Part B — Borderline Cases

> **Each sentence involves a word that most grammars treat differently. Explain the analytical problem and give your verdict with justification.**

1. *He arrived home.* — Is *home* an adverb or a noun here?

2. *She is inside.* — Is *inside* an adverb or a preposition?

3. *There are very few problems.* — Is *very* an adverb or a degree determiner?

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Scope — What the Adverb Modifies

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Scope and Ambiguity

The **scope** of an adverb is the part of the sentence it modifies. Two adverbs in the same sentence may interact, and the scope of one can affect the reading of the other. Position is often the only signal.

Example	Scope analysis
*She **almost** certainly knows.*	*almost* narrows *certainly*, not *knows*
*She certainly **almost** knows.*	*almost* narrows *knows* (she is close to knowing)
***Only** he admitted the mistake **frankly**.*	*only* scopes over the subject; *frankly* scopes over the verb
*He **only** admitted the mistake frankly.*	*only* scopes over the verb phrase; he did nothing else

Part A — Scope Diagrams

> **For each sentence, draw an arrow from the adverb to the unit it modifies. Then state in words what the sentence asserts.**

1. She has *nearly always* been right.

_____

2. *Remarkably,* they *very nearly* won.

_____

3. He *only just* passed the examination.

_____

4. The plan was *quite simply* unworkable.

_____

5. She *absolutely* refuses to *simply* accept it.

_____

Part B — Ambiguity by Position

> **Each sentence is genuinely ambiguous. Write both readings, then rewrite the sentence twice — once for each reading — making it unambiguous.**

1. The report was not written *carefully*.

_____

_____

_____

2. He *only* spoke to the manager on Tuesday.

3. She does not work *slowly*.

Part C — Disjuncts and Scope

A **disjunct** (sentence adverb) takes scope over the entire proposition. The writer of the following paragraph has muddled manner adverbs with disjuncts. Correct and briefly explain each error.

Apparently, he spoke. Clearly, she answered him quietly. Honestly, the meeting ended early. Frankly, the decision was made rapidly. Unfortunately, the results were surprisingly poor.

1. Which of the five sentences is correctly formed? Why?

2. Which sentences create a conflict between the disjunct and the manner adverb? Rewrite them.

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Adjuncts, Disjuncts and Conjuncts

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Three Functional Subtypes

Type	Function	Examples
Adjunct	Integrated into the sentence; modifies the predicate; can be questioned with *how/when/where*	*slowly, here, yesterday, very*
Disjunct (sentence adverb)	Comments on the whole proposition — either the truth of it (epistemic) or the manner of speaking (style)	Epistemic: *probably, apparently, certainly* Style: *frankly, honestly, briefly, theoretically*
Conjunct	Links the sentence to a preceding one; signals logical relation; not omittable without loss of cohesion	*however, therefore, moreover, consequently, nevertheless, instead*

A useful test: if the adverb can be followed by *speaking* without absurdity (*Frankly speaking…*) it is a style disjunct. If you can paraphrase it as *It is X that…* (*Clearly, P = It is clear that P*), it is an epistemic disjunct.

Part A — Classify

Classify each bold adverb as ADJUNCT (ADJ), EPISTEMIC DISJUNCT (ED), STYLE DISJUNCT (SD) or CONJUNCT (CON). State the sub-type briefly.

#	Sentence	Type
1	She **quickly** realised her mistake.	
2	**Obviously**, the decision required more thought.	
3	The proposal failed. **Consequently**, the project was shelved.	
4	**Frankly**, I am not convinced by the argument.	
5	He spoke **carefully** and measured every word.	
6	**Arguably**, the second approach is more coherent.	
7	The data are limited; **nevertheless**, the trend is clear.	
8	**Briefly**, we need to address funding before anything else.	
9	She plays **well**.	
10	**Technically**, the motion was carried.	

Part B — Disjunct or Adjunct?

> **Each adverb can function as either a disjunct or an adjunct, but the meaning changes. Write two sentences for each: one where it functions as a disjunct, one where it functions as an adjunct.**

1. *naturally*

2. *clearly*

3. *simply*

Part C — Conjuncts in Academic Writing

> **Rewrite the following with a more precise conjunct (in bold). The one provided is grammatical but imprecise or informal. Justify your choice.**

#	Original	Revision
1	"Also, the data suggest a different pattern."	
2	"But, costs have risen significantly."	
3	"So, further research is needed."	
4	"Still, there are valid counterarguments."	

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Style, Register and Extended Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A — Critical Text Analysis

The relationship between economic growth and individual wellbeing is considerably more complex than politicians typically acknowledge. Admittedly, GDP per capita does broadly correlate with life expectancy and educational attainment; nevertheless, it notoriously fails to capture inequality, unpaid labour, or environmental degradation. Arguably, the most honest position is not to reject GDP entirely but to treat it as necessarily partial — one instrument among several.

Interestingly, the countries that consistently score highest on broader wellbeing indices are not simply the wealthiest. They are, moreover, often the most equal. This suggests, however tentatively, that distribution matters at least as much as aggregate output.

Questions

1. Identify all adjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts. List each and state its subtype.

2. The writer uses *notoriously*. Is this an adjunct or a disjunct? What does it add that a neutral adverb like *consistently* would not?

3. Analyse the phrase *however tentatively*. What is unusual about the position of *however* here, and what effect does it create?

4. Identify two instances where an adverb's scope is potentially ambiguous and explain how context disambiguates each.

Part B — Register Editing

The following is an informal blog post. Rewrite it as a formal analytical paragraph (100–120 words), improving the adverb choices to suit the register. You may restructure the sentences.

Honestly, remote work is just way better for most people. Like, you seriously don't have to commute, which is obviously great. Also, you can kind of work however you want. But then again, some people say they work worse at home. Maybe that's because they find it hard to switch off. Basically, companies should probably just let people choose.

Part C — Extended Analytical Writing

Write a formal analytical paragraph of **150–180 words** on one of the following propositions. You must use and underline: (1) two epistemic disjuncts that hedge the claim; (2) two conjuncts that structure the argument; (3) one focusing adverb (*only, even, particularly*) controlling scope; (4) one adverb modifying a degree adverb (*very, fairly, considerably*); (5) one style disjunct.

A: *The best measure of a city's success is the happiness of its residents, not its economic output.*
B: *Transparency in institutions matters more than efficiency.*

Chosen: ___ A ___ B Word count: _____ Features used: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C1 Level, Adverbs as a Word Class

Worksheet 1 – Part A

#	Tests passed	Verdict
1	Mobility limited (cannot say 'Just she has arrived'); modifies verb; no degree modification	ADVERB (temporal/aspectual)
2	Modifies 'ahead'; not movable to front	ADVERB (directional intensifier)
3	Follows linking verb 'be'; can be preceded by 'almost'; can be modified ('all over')	DISPUTED — adjective or adverb; most grammars call it a predicative adjective here
4	No object; mobility yes ('Past, they ran' is marked but possible); no degree test	ADVERB (directional)
5	Pre-adjectival; but in this position is incorrect English	Error — 'enough' is post-adjectival
6	Post-adjectival; can modify adj/adv; not movable to front	ADVERB (degree, postpositive)
7	Flat adverb; 'directly' also available; mobility limited	ADVERB (manner)
8	Cannot modify any particular word; introduces a sentence; hedging function	ADVERB — or interjection; DISPUTED

Worksheet 1 – Part B

#	Analysis
1	***Home*** has no article here and answers 'where'. It passes the mobility test ('Home, he arrived'). Most grammars treat it as an adverb in this pattern, despite its primary identity as a noun.
2	***Inside*** has no following noun phrase, so it cannot be a preposition here. It passes mobility and answers 'where'. Verdict: adverb. Contrast 'She is inside the house' (preposition, with NP complement).
3	***Very*** here modifies 'few', which is an adjective/determiner. Some grammars prefer to call it a predeterminer or degree word. The ADVERB verdict is acceptable provided the student notes that it does not modify a verb or a typical adjective.

Worksheet 2 – Part A (Scope)

#	Analysis

1	'nearly' scopes over 'always'; she is close to always being right — not nearly-right on most occasions.
2	'Remarkably' is a sentence disjunct. 'Very' scopes over 'nearly'; 'very nearly' = almost completely.
3	'only just' is a frozen phrase meaning 'barely'; it scopes over 'passed'.
4	'quite' scopes over 'simply'; 'quite simply' = absolutely (intensifying). 'Unworkable' is modified by the entire phrase.
5	'absolutely' scopes over the verb phrase 'refuses to simply accept it'; 'simply' scopes over 'accept' (= merely accept).

Worksheet 2 – Part B

#	Readings and rewrites
1	Reading 1: It was not written with care. Reading 2: It was not the careful version that was written (but some other version was). Rewrite 1: The report was written carelessly. Rewrite 2: It was not the carefully written version that was submitted.
2	Reading 1: He spoke to no one else (only the manager). Reading 2: He only spoke (he did not email or write). Reading 3: Tuesday was the only day. Rewrites should isolate each scope.
3	Reading 1: She works quickly (negating the adverb). Reading 2: Her pace isn't slow — but the sentence is odd, implying slow was expected.

Worksheet 2 – Part C

5 (the last sentence) is the only clearly well-formed one: two independent adverbs ('unfortunately' and 'surprisingly') each taking clear scope — 'unfortunately' over the proposition, 'surprisingly' over the degree of 'poor'.
Problematic pairs: 'Clearly, she answered him quietly' — if the speaking was quiet, what exactly is 'clear'? 'Honestly, the meeting ended early' — 'honestly' as a style disjunct implies something candid is being admitted, but 'the meeting ended early' is not the kind of claim that needs candour. 'Frankly, the decision was made rapidly' — 'frankly' and 'rapidly' conflict in register.

Worksheet 3 – Part A

#	Type	Notes
1	ADJUNCT — manner	
2	ED — epistemic	= 'It is obvious that…'
3	CONJUNCT — result	
4	SD — style	'frankly speaking…'
5	ADJUNCT — manner	
6	ED — epistemic (hedged)	= 'It can be argued that…'

7	**CONJUNCT — concessive**	
8	**SD — style**	**'to be brief…'**
9	**ADJUNCT — manner**	
10	**SD or ED (disputed)**	**Depending on reading: 'speaking technically' (style) or 'in technical terms it is true that' (epistemic)**

Worksheet 3 – Part B

naturally: disjunct — *Naturally, he was disappointed.* (= of course) / adjunct — *She speaks naturally on stage.* (= without affectation)
clearly: disjunct — *Clearly, we need a new plan.* / adjunct — *Please speak more clearly.*
simply: disjunct — *Simply, it doesn't work.* (= to put it simply) / adjunct — *She dressed simply for the occasion.*

Worksheet 3 – Part C (Model answers)

#	Revised conjunct	Reason
1	**Furthermore / Moreover**	Additive; 'also' is too informal at sentence-initial position in academic prose
2	**Nevertheless / However**	'But' is a coordinating conjunction, not an adverb; avoid it at sentence-initial in formal prose
3	**Consequently / Therefore**	'So' is informal; the conjunct should signal a logical conclusion
4	**Nevertheless / It should be noted, however, that**	'Still' is colloquial; 'nevertheless' is the formal concessive conjunct

Worksheet 4 – Part A

Q	Answer
1	**Adjuncts: broadly, typically, notoriously, consistently, tentatively, necessarily (partial). Epistemic disjuncts: admittedly, arguably. Conjuncts: nevertheless, moreover, however. Accept well-argued alternatives (e.g. 'honestly' if the student argues it is a style disjunct).**
2	**'Notoriously' is an epistemic disjunct — it encodes that this is widely known and generally held to be a bad thing. 'Consistently' would be a neutral adjunct meaning 'on every occasion'. The writer is not just stating a fact; the adverb signals their evaluative stance.**
3	**'However tentatively' is a parenthetical adverb phrase embedded mid-sentence within commas. Normally 'however' is a conjunct appearing at sentence-start or after a semicolon. Used here as a modifier inside an adverb phrase ('however tentatively' = 'however tentatively it does so'), it qualifies the manner of the suggestion without breaking the sentence. The effect is a sophisticated hedge.**

4	**Examples: 'broadly correlate' — does 'broadly' mean 'in a broad sense' (manner) or 'for the most part' (frequency-like)? Context (GDP as a blunt tool) suggests the latter. 'Most honest position' — 'most' scopes over 'honest' but could alternatively scope over 'position'; context clarifies it means 'most honest' not 'most of the positions'.**

Worksheet 4 – Parts B and C: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Adverb type selection	Correct identification and use of all five required types	0–5
Scope control	Focusing adverb and degree modifiers precisely positioned	0–4
Register	Epistemic hedging appropriate; conjuncts formal; no colloquial disjuncts	0–4
Argumentation	Adverbs serve the argument; hedges and concessions are principled	0–4
Accuracy and fluency	No errors in adverb form or position; prose reads naturally	0–3
Task length	150–180 words; coherent analytical structure	0–2

> *At C1 the primary goal is conscious control: the student should be able to choose a disjunct over an adjunct and explain why. Mark down where a student has underlined a word without clear evidence of that choice.*