Worksheet 1: Category Edges — Grammar and Theory

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Reference: Why the Category Is Contested

The class 'adverb' is unstable precisely because English grammar assigns words to classes by *distributional* criteria — what positions a word can occupy, what it can modify, what can modify it — rather than by meaning alone. Three recurring problems arise:

Problem	Illustration	Consequence
1. Heterogeneity The class is too large and too varied	*here, probably, therefore, well, very, already* share few formal properties	Some grammarians split 'adverb' into several sub-classes; others merge adverb with preposition
2. Multifunctionality The same form fills multiple classes	*fast* (adj: a fast car / adv: she runs fast); *early* (adj: an early start / adv: leave early)	Class membership is contextual, not lexical, for many words
3. Inversion triggers Some adverbs trigger subject-auxiliary inversion	*Seldom have we seen such skill. / Only then did she understand.*	These items sit between adverb and conjunction in their behaviour

Part A — Theoretical Challenges

> **Each item presents a grammatical puzzle. Analyse it using distributional criteria, give a verdict, and explain any theoretical difficulty.**

1. *He ran fast. / He ran faster than she did.* — Does the comparative form *faster* prove that *fast* here is an adjective, an adverb, or is comparison irrelevant to class membership?

2. *He is an upstairs neighbour. / He lives upstairs.* — Analyse *upstairs* in each sentence without using the terms 'adjective' and 'adverb'. What formal tests support your analysis?

3. *Rarely do we encounter such clarity.* — The auxiliary has inverted. What does this tell us about the syntactic role of *rarely* here? Does it remain an adverb or take on another function?

4. *The sooner, the better.* — These forms lack a modified element. Are they adverbs? What is the most defensible analysis?

Part B — Descriptive vs Prescriptive

> **Each use is condemned by some prescriptivists. Evaluate whether the objection is supported by distributional grammar, by historical evidence, or only by stylistic preference. Classify each case.**

#	Usage	Basis of objection	Your verdict
1	"She felt *badly* about the decision."		
2	"*Hopefully,* the results will improve."		
3	"Drive *slow*." (road sign)		
4	"This is a *most unique* opportunity." (formal letter)		

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Discourse Adverbs and Cohesion

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Reference: Adverbs at the Discourse Level

Beyond the clause, adverbs perform cohesive work across sentences. **Conjuncts** signal logical relations; **connective adverbs** manage the flow of argument; **metalinguistic adverbs** comment on the act of writing or speaking itself.

Subtype	Function	Examples
Additive conjuncts	Add information without implying contrast	*furthermore, moreover, in addition, equally*
Concessive conjuncts	Introduce contrast or partial concession	*nevertheless, nonetheless, yet, even so, that said*
Resultive conjuncts	Signal consequence or conclusion	*therefore, consequently, hence, thus, accordingly*
Reformulative conjuncts	Paraphrase or clarify	*that is (to say), namely, in other words, rather*
Metalinguistic adverbs	Comment on how the writer is framing the information	*broadly, loosely, strictly, technically, in short*

Part A — Diagnostic Substitution

> **Replace the underlined conjunct with a more precise one from the table above. Justify each choice in a sentence.**

#	Original	Better choice & justification
1	"The data are inconclusive. <u>But</u>, the trend is suggestive."	
2	"Results improved in all cohorts. <u>Also</u>, the cost fell by a third."	
3	"The algorithm overfit the training data. <u>So</u>, it failed in production."	
4	"The model is, <u>you could say</u>, a simplification."	
5	"The company lost half its market share. <u>However</u>, it remains viable."	

Part B — Cohesion Repair

> **The following paragraph reads as a list. Rewrite it using discourse adverbs that signal the logical relations between the ideas. Do not change the factual content.**

Urban cycling infrastructure reduces car use. It improves air quality. It has health benefits for cyclists. It may displace pedestrians. Some residents oppose it for this reason. Cities in the Netherlands have found ways to integrate cycling without displacing pedestrians. Their model may not transfer to denser cities.

Part C — Metalinguistic Precision

Choose the most appropriate metalinguistic adverb and explain what effect a different choice would have.

#	Sentence	Best choice	Effect of alternative
1	"_____, the term covers three different phenomena." (loosely / strictly / literally)		
2	"_____, the argument fails at the third premise." (technically / broadly / roughly)		
3	"_____, we are discussing resource allocation." (essentially / merely / apparently)		

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Register, Collocation and Connotation

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Reference: Adverb Collocation Is Not Free

At C2 level, adverbs must be handled with collocational precision. Two adverbs may be near-synonyms in isolation but are not freely interchangeable. Corpus studies consistently show that:

- Intensifiers develop strong collocational preferences: *deeply sorry* (not *profoundly sorry* in casual speech); *bitterly cold* (not *acutely cold*).
- Disjuncts vary by discipline: academic prose prefers *arguably, notably, crucially*; journalism prefers *reportedly, alarmingly, shockingly*.
- Frequency adverbs (*often, frequently, regularly*) are near-synonyms but carry different register weight and grammatical restrictions.

Part A — Collocation Accuracy

> **In each sentence, one adverb is natural and one is forced. Circle the natural one. Explain the collocational preference.**

#	Sentence	Explanation
1	She was (deeply / strongly) moved by the speech.	
2	He was (bitterly / deeply) disappointed.	
3	The decision was (widely / broadly) criticised in the press.	
4	She (strongly / deeply) disagreed with the proposal.	
5	The findings were (highly / greatly) significant.	
6	The idea is (deeply / fundamentally) flawed.	

Part B — Register and Connotation

> **The adverb choices below are all grammatically correct, but one in each group carries an unwanted connotation or register clash. Identify it and explain the problem.**

1. A formal letter of condolence: "We are (deeply / very / utterly) saddened to hear of your loss."
   Which is problematic, and why?

   _____

2. An academic paper on climate change: "Temperatures have (dramatically / considerably / markedly) increased over the past century."
   Which is problematic, and why?

   _____

3. A financial report: "Profits declined (sharply / catastrophically / substantially) in Q3."
   Which is problematic, and why?

   _____

4. A medical case note: "The patient (apparently / reportedly / seemingly) lost consciousness for approximately two minutes."
   Which is problematic, and why?

Part C — Stylistic Inversion

Certain negative and restrictive adverbs at sentence-initial position trigger subject-auxiliary inversion. This is a literary or formal rhetorical device — natural in elevated written prose, unnatural in everyday speech.

Rewrite in the normal (non-inverted) order, then comment on the stylistic effect that is lost or gained.

1. "Seldom has a generation faced such complex choices."

2. "Only after years of litigation did the truth emerge."

3. "Not until the final chapter does the author reveal her intention."

4. "Barely had the ink dried on the agreement when negotiations broke down."

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis and Extended Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Part A — Corpus-Informed Analysis

The assumption that adverbs are primarily manner words derived from adjectives is, arguably, the most persistent and damaging oversimplification in pedagogical grammar. It leads directly to the myth of the -ly suffix as the defining formal property of the class — a myth that cannot survive five minutes with a corpus. *Just, yet, still, already, soon, even, only, quite, rather, fairly*: these are among the most frequent adverbs in English, and not one takes -ly. They are, broadly speaking, ungroupable by any single formal criterion.

Consequently, the very coherence of 'adverb' as a category is questionable. Some linguists have proposed dissolving it entirely, distributing its members among particles, degree words, connectives, and modal adjuncts. Others retain the class precisely because of its pedagogical convenience, noting — perhaps somewhat wearily — that any alternative requires learners to master a far larger terminological apparatus.

Questions

1. The writer makes heavy use of hedging adverbs. List them all and classify each as epistemic disjunct, style disjunct, or degree adverb. Comment on the cumulative effect.

2. Analyse the phrase *broadly speaking*. What is unusual about its internal structure, and what type of adverb is it in context?

3. The passage uses *perhaps somewhat wearily* parenthetically. Analyse the scope of each element: what modifies what?

4. The word *directly* appears in "leads directly to the myth". Is this an adjunct or something else? Can it be removed without loss of meaning?

5. The passage contains two adverbs used in stylistic inversion structures. Identify them and comment on the rhetorical effect.

Part B — Error Portfolio

> **Each sentence contains a subtle error that a near-native speaker might make. Identify the error, explain the problem at the level of grammar, collocation or register, and rewrite correctly.**

#	Sentence	Error + rewrite
1	"The report was received *warmfully* by the committee."	
2	"She is *hardly* the *most unique* candidate we have seen."	
3	"*Seemingly,* he refused the offer, which surprised everyone."	
4	"Rarely I have witnessed such determination."	
5	"The policy failed *completely and utter*."	
6	"She *deeply believes* that the decision was correct."	

Part C — Extended Writing: Critical Essay Opening

Write the opening **two paragraphs** (**200–240 words**) of a critical essay on **one** of the following:

A: "*The traditional division of English words into eight parts of speech is more hindrance than help to the advanced learner.*"
B: "*Precision in language use is ultimately a matter of adverb choice.*"

> **You must demonstrate — and be able to account for — all five of the following in your response: (1) at least one stylistic inversion with a negative or restrictive adverb; (2) a metalinguistic adverb used precisely; (3) a pair of conjuncts managing the structure of the argument; (4) a hedging epistemic disjunct that avoids overstating the claim; (5) an adverb chosen for its collocational precision, not merely its meaning.**

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

Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C2 Level, Adverbs as a Word Class

Worksheet 1 – Part A

#	Analysis
1	**Comparative forms are available to adverbs as well as adjectives. 'Faster' in "ran faster than she did" is an adverb — it modifies the verb 'ran'. That adverbs can be compared does not make them adjectives; adjectives and adverbs share the comparison inflection. Comparison is not a diagnostic for class membership.**
2	**In 'an upstairs neighbour', the word premodifies a noun and is not movable without changing structure — it behaves like an adjective. In 'he lives upstairs', it is movable ('Upstairs he lives' — marked but grammatical), has no following NP, and answers 'where'. Formal tests: premodification of noun (first use), post-verbal placement with no complement (second use).**
3	**Fronted negative adverbs trigger subject-auxiliary inversion in formal/literary English. 'Rarely' here still functions as a frequency adverb modifying 'encounter', but the inversion makes it syntactically closer to a conditional element. Most grammars retain the 'adverb' label while noting the inversion as a formal property of this sub-class.**
4	**These comparative forms lack a head they modify. The most defensible analysis is that they are ellipted comparative clauses ('The sooner [we do it], the better [it will be]') in which the adverbs function within elided structures. They are still adverbs but are embedded in a correlative construction with unusual surface syntax.**

Worksheet 1 – Part B

#	Basis of objection	Verdict
1	**Stylistic — a hypercorrection**	**'Felt badly' is widely attested; 'feel' here is a linking verb and the adjective is standard. However, 'feel badly' (with action-verb reading = 'my sense of touch is poor') is available, making the adverb defensible in that narrow reading. Most prescriptivists are simply wrong that it is an error.**
2	**Semantic — 'hopefully' cannot mean 'it is hoped that'**	**The objection is historically weak: 'hopefully' as a sentence adverb follows the pattern of 'frankly', 'admittedly' etc. and is now fully established. No formal grammatical rule is violated. Avoid only in the most conservative formal registers.**
3	**Register (not grammar) — flat adverb seen as non-standard**	**Flat adverbs ('drive slow', 'go easy') have a long history in English. In institutional/formal contexts 'slowly' is preferred. On a road sign, brevity and convention both favour 'slow'. No error.**

4	Logical — 'unique' is absolute and cannot be graded	In very formal prose the objection has force. In ordinary formal English, 'most unique' is widely used as an intensifier and is unlikely to confuse a reader. In a formal letter, avoid — not because it is wrong but because a prescriptively aware reader will notice it.

Worksheet 2 – Part A

#	Better choice & justification
1	Nevertheless / That said — 'but' is a coordinating conjunction, not an adverb; it is also informal at sentence-initial position in academic prose. The relation is concessive.
2	Moreover / Furthermore — this is an additive relation, not mere co-listing. 'Also' is too colloquial for analytical prose at this level.
3	Consequently / As a result — 'so' is informal and ambiguous; 'consequently' specifies a causal consequence.
4	Broadly speaking / Loosely — this is a metalinguistic frame, signalling that the characterisation is approximate.
5	'Nevertheless' is actually appropriate here. If students flag it as correct, credit them. If they replace it: 'nonetheless' is an exact synonym; 'even so' is slightly more informal.

Worksheet 2 – Part B (Model rewrite)

Urban cycling infrastructure reduces car use and consequently improves air quality; moreover, it yields significant health benefits for cyclists. Nevertheless, it may displace pedestrians, which is why some residents oppose it. That said, cities in the Netherlands have successfully integrated cycling without displacing pedestrians. Their model may not, however, transfer straightforwardly to denser urban environments.

> *Key teaching point: every conjunct here creates a logical expectation — 'consequently' signals result; 'moreover' signals addition of a stronger point; 'nevertheless' signals the turn; 'that said' partially concedes the objection. Accept any response that makes the logical structure explicit through conjuncts.*

Worksheet 2 – Part C

#	Best choice	Effect of alternative
1	loosely	'Strictly' would imply rigorous definition; 'literally' would be a distraction (it covers three phenomena, but literally?).
2	technically	'Broadly' would suggest the argument partly works; 'roughly' is too informal here.
3	essentially	'Merely' would minimise or dismiss; 'apparently' would imply doubt about whether this is really the topic.

Worksheet 3 – Part A

#	Natural adverb	Collocational note

1	deeply	'strongly moved' is odd; 'deeply' collocates with emotional verbs (deeply moved, deeply affected).
2	bitterly	'Bitterly disappointed' is a near-fixed collocation; 'deeply disappointed' is also possible but less sharp.
3	widely	'Widely criticised' is standard; 'broadly criticised' is unusual — 'broadly' collocates with positive or neutral scope words ('broadly correct', 'broadly welcomed').
4	strongly	'Strongly disagree' is established; 'deeply disagree' is unusual and slightly literary.
5	highly	'Highly significant' is a standard academic phrase; 'greatly significant' is unusual — 'greatly' collocates with change verbs and comparatives.
6	fundamentally	Both work: 'deeply flawed' (emotional register) / 'fundamentally flawed' (logical/analytical register). In critical prose, 'fundamentally' is the more precise choice.

Worksheet 3 – Part B

#	Problematic choice	Reason
1	utterly	'Utterly saddened' is very intense and can read as hyperbolic in formal condolence; 'deeply' is the conventional choice. 'Very' is too informal for a formal letter.
2	dramatically	'Dramatically' implies suddenness or performance; it carries journalistic connotations that can undermine the measured tone of academic prose. 'Considerably' or 'markedly' are preferred.
3	catastrophically	This is evaluative and alarmist; financial reports use measured language. 'Sharply' or 'substantially' are standard choices in financial reporting.
4	seemingly	'Seemingly' implies the writer doubts whether it really happened, which is inappropriate in a factual case note. 'Reportedly' or 'apparently' (based on patient or witness report) are better, though 'reportedly' is more neutral.

Worksheet 3 – Part C

#	Normal order	Stylistic effect
1	A generation has seldom faced such complex choices.	Inversion gives the sentence gravitas and foregrounds 'seldom'; the non-inverted version is flat. The inversion implies the speaker feels the weight of the observation.
2	The truth emerged only after years of litigation.	Inversion makes 'only after years' prominent; it builds narrative delay, matching the content.

3	The author reveals her intention only in the final chapter.	Inversion creates suspense mirroring the literary device being described.
4	The ink had barely dried on the agreement when negotiations broke down.	Inversion with 'barely had' produces a journalistic immediacy and rhythm; the non-inverted past perfect is more neutral.

Worksheet 4 – Part A

Q	Answer
1	Hedging adverbs: ***arguably*** (epistemic disjunct); ***directly*** (adjunct — not hedging); ***broadly speaking*** (metalinguistic / style disjunct); ***entirely*** (degree adjunct); ***perhaps somewhat wearily*** — ***perhaps*** (epistemic disjunct), ***somewhat*** (degree adverb modifying 'wearily'), ***wearily*** (manner adjunct but in a style-disjunct-like parenthetical). Cumulative effect: heavy hedging creates an impression of cautious, self-aware scholarship that never overstates.
2	'Broadly speaking' is a participial construction (adverb + present participle). Internally, 'broadly' modifies 'speaking'. As a unit it functions as a style disjunct: it signals that what follows is a generalisation and the writer is aware of its limitations. It is grammatically a non-finite adverbial clause, but functionally a metalinguistic adverb.
3	'Perhaps' is an epistemic disjunct taking scope over the parenthetical — it hedges the entire parenthetical claim. 'Somewhat' is a degree adverb modifying 'wearily'. 'Wearily' is a manner adverb but here serves as a style disjunct within the parenthesis, commenting on the mood of the linguists. The bracketing is: perhaps [somewhat [wearily]].
4	'Directly' here is a manner adjunct meaning 'in a straight line / without mediation'. It adds meaning (the causation is unmediated, not incidental); removing it makes the claim slightly weaker but the sentence remains grammatical and broadly accurate. In precise academic writing, retain it.
5	The passage does not contain overt inverted structures. The closest is "not one takes -ly" — 'not one' is a negative subject, not an adverb trigger. If students argue this qualifies, reward the observation. This is an intentional absence — at C2, students should be able to notice what the writer did ***not*** do.

Worksheet 4 – Part B

#	Error	Rewrite
1	'Warmfully' is not a word in English.	The report was received warmly by the committee.
2	'Most unique' is prescriptively objected to (absolute adjective) and 'hardly' already creates a negative polarity reversal — "she is hardly unique" is the underlying claim, and 'most' conflicts with the negative frame.	She is hardly the most distinctive candidate we have seen. / She is scarcely unique among candidates we have seen.

3	**'Seemingly' implies doubt about the surface event; if he visibly refused, use 'apparently' (based on evidence) or delete the disjunct. 'Seemingly' here is misused as a surprise marker.**	**Apparently / He refused the offer, which surprised everyone.**
4	**Inversion is required after fronted negative adverbs: 'Rarely I have…' should be 'Rarely have I…'**	**Rarely have I witnessed such determination.**
5	**'Utter' must be an adverb in this parallel structure; the form needed is 'utterly'.**	**The policy failed completely and utterly.**
6	**'Deeply believe' is an unusual collocation; 'deeply' best combines with emotive or evaluative adjectives and stative verbs. 'Firmly believes' or 'sincerely believes' are the conventional collocations.**	**She firmly / sincerely believes that the decision was correct.**

Worksheet 4 – Part C: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Stylistic inversion	Grammatically correct; feels rhetorically motivated, not merely mechanical	0–5
Metalinguistic precision	Adverb frames the claim without over- or under-committing	0–5
Conjunct structuring	Conjuncts map accurately to the logical relation they signal; no vague 'also/but'	0–5
Epistemic hedging	The hedge is necessary and calibrated; does not become excessive	0–5
Collocational accuracy	Adverb choice is non-generic; a native speaker would not notice it as chosen	0–5
Argument and length	200–240 words; essay opens with a clear, contestable position developed across two paragraphs	0–5

> *The most meaningful C2 distinction: the student who writes a correct sentence and the student who writes the only correct sentence for that context. Collocational naturalness is the final frontier, and it is worth discussing model answers with the whole class.*