

Adverbs with and without *ly* ending

In English there are some adverbs that have the same form as the corresponding adjectives, but also the form ending in *ly*, for example *late & lately*, *near & nearly*, etc. This may be confusing for learners of English for at least two reasons. First, when students learn about adverbs in English, they are taught that the basic rule for forming adverbs is to add *ly* to the corresponding adjectives, for example: *slow – slowly*, *occasional – occasionally*, *final – finally*. Therefore, when they see forms such as *late & lately*, they cannot distinguish between the adjective and adverb and therefore they put the adjective or adverb in the wrong place in the sentence. Second, since the meaning of the forms ending in *ly* and of those that are identical to the forms of the adjectives are not the same, students wrongly use the form with or without *ly*.

Below are the most frequently used pairs of such adverbs together with their meaning.

- hard – with effort
hardly – scarcely
- high – opposite of low
highly – very; very well
- late – opposite of early
lately – recently
- near – opposite of far
nearly – almost; not completely
- wide – opposite of narrow
widely – commonly
- short – opposite of long
shortly – soon

A Underline the correct word to complete each sentence.

1. She is *high / highly* successful in what she does.
2. All team members work *hard / hardly* to ensure that the desired outcomes can be achieved.
3. They couldn't get their heavy machinery *near / nearly* because of the terrain.
4. *Near / Nearly* 100 businesses from London responded to the survey.
5. He's very *high / highly* thought of within the company.
6. We had to cut *short / shortly* our holiday.
7. Brett Favre is *wide / widely* considered one of the greatest quarter-backs of all time.
8. There's been a lot of talk *late / lately* about the risks and rewards that drinking wine has on your health.
9. I will prepare this report for you and send it to you *short / shortly* after our meeting.
10. The sensor should be placed as *high / highly* above the roof structure as it safely and economically can be.

Key: 1. *highly*, 2. *hard*, 3. *near*, 4. *nearly*, 5. *highly*, 6. *short*, 7. *widely*, 8. *lately*, 9. *shortly*, 10. *high*

B Complete the following sentences with one of the adverbs given above.

1. The easiest way to remove the vent is to open it _____ and remove the screws from both bars.
2. This is _____ enough time to tackle such a complex and misunderstood subject.
3. John and George stopped them _____, explaining that their power did not extend to policy making.
4. Although his business career began quite _____, today he's one of the most successful business people in Manchester.
5. I have _____ finished reading the report. Just give me five more minutes!
6. _____ some interesting research and discoveries have been made.
7. Some exciting products will be launched _____ on the market in answer to clients' requirements.
8. It is _____ believed that the likelihood of becoming exceptionally competent in certain fields depends on the presence or absence of inborn attitudes.
9. The British Retail Consortium welcomed any initiatives that put retail _____ on the agenda.
10. As the date drew _____, we were approached by members of the team looking at options for the campaign.

Key: 1. wide, 2. hardly, 3. short, 4. late, 5. nearly, 6. lately, 7. shortly, 8. widely, 9. high, 10. near