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uses

In French as in English, an adverb describes the action of a verb. It answers such questions as 'where', 'when,' 'how,' 'how long,' or 'how often.' Adverbs are invariable and may be used with almost all verbs. For example:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
|  Edouard cuisine bien . | Edouard cooks well. |
| Joe-Bob mange beaucoup . | Joe-Bob eats a lot. |



An adverb may also qualify an adjective or another adverb. Consider the sentence: 'Edouard cuisine **très bien**' (Edouard cooks very well). **Très** qualifies **bien** and both describe the action of the verb 'cuisiner'.

common adverbs

Following is a list of frequently used adverbs, categorized by type:

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|  manner | bien , well | mal , badly | vite , quickly |
| time | souvent , often | quelquefois , sometimes | toujours , always |
| | jamais , never | tôt , early | tard , late |
| | bientôt , soon | aujourd'hui , today | hier , yesterday |
| | maintenant , now | déjà , already | demain , tomorrow |
| place | dedans , inside | dehors , outside | ici , here |
| | là , there | partout , everywhere | quelque part , somewhere |
| quantity or degree | beaucoup , a lot | très , very | trop , too much |
| | assez , enough | peu , little, not much | peut-être , maybe |
| sequence | d'abord , at first | puis , then, next | alors , then, so |
| | donc , thus | enfin , finally | |

formation of regular adverbs

A large number of French adverbs are derived from adjectives.

They are usually formed by adding **-ment** to the **feminine singular form of the adjective**. Note the exception 'gentiment', which is derived from the adjective 'gentil' (nice).

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
|  lent(e), slow | lente ment , slowly |
| doux (douce), soft | douce ment , softly |

heureux (heureuse), happy
franc (franche), frank

heureuse**ment**, happily, fortunately
franche**ment**, frankly

However, **-ment** is added to the **masculine singular form of adjectives that end with a vowel**. Note the exception 'gaiement' which is derived from the adjective 'gai' (cheerful).

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
|  poli(e) polite | poli ment , politely |
| absolu(e), absolute | absolu ment , absolutely |
| vrai(e), true, real | vrai ment , truly, really |
| modéré(e), moderate | modéré ment , moderately |

Add **-emment** to the stem of adjectives that end in **-ent**; add **-amment** to the **stem of adjectives ending in -ant**. The stem is what remains of the adjective when **-ent** or **-ant** have been removed. Note that the one-syllable adjective 'lent' does not form its adverb, 'lentement', on this model.

| | |
|--|--|
|  récent, recent | ré cemment , recently |
| fréquent, frequent | fréqu emment , frequently |
| suffisant, sufficient | suffis amment , sufficiently |
| méchant, wicked, malicious | méch amment , wickedly, nastily |

Note the addition of an acute accent to form the following adverbs:


| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
|  précis(e), precise | précis ément , precisely |
| profond(e), deep | profond ément , deeply |
| énorme, huge, enormous | énorm ément , enormously |

placement

Use the following guidelines for placement of adverbs.

adverbs that modify an adjective or another adverb

Adverbs are placed directly before the adjective or adverb that they modify.

| | |
|--|--|
|  Edouard: J'habite le Texas depuis très longtemps, mais je trouve que le barbecue est vraiment dégueulasse! | Edouard: I've lived in Texas for a very long time, but I find that barbecue is truly disgusting! |
|--|--|

adverbs that modify a verb

Adverbs are usually placed immediately after the conjugated verb. If the verb is negative, the adverb is placed after the negation.



EDOUARD COMPREND MAL LES HABITUDES AMÉRICAINES



Edouard comprend **mal** les habitudes culinaires américaines.

Edouard understands poorly American culinary habits.

Edouard ne marche pas **vite**, parce qu'il sait **déjà** ce que les clients vont commander.

Edouard is not walking fast, because he already knows what the customers are going to order.

Edouard: Ils exigent **toujours** du ketchup, mais il n'y a pas de ketchup dans mon restaurant.

Edouard: They always demand ketchup, but there is no ketchup in my restaurant.

Note that most common adverbs are placed directly after the verb before the objects.



Joe-Bob: J'aime **beaucoup** le ketchup!

Joe-Bob: I like ketchup a lot!

Edouard: J'aime **davantage** le foie gras!

Edouard: I like foie gras even more!

adverbs that modify a whole sentence

If an adverb is a comment on the entire sentence (**malheureusement, en plus**), it may be placed at the beginning or end of the sentence. Adverbs of this type include **adverbs of time and place**. In the following dialogue, contrast the adverbs that modify the whole sentence to those that modify just the verb.



Joe-Bob: Edouard, viens dîner avec nous **ce soir**!

Joe-Bob: Edouard, come out to eat with us this evening!

Edouard: Je n'aime pas dîner dans des restaurants américains parce que je trouve du ketchup **partout**.

Edouard: I don't like to eat in American restaurants because I find ketchup everywhere.

Vous allez **sûrement** au Salt Lick, et tu sais que je déteste le barbecue.

You're surely going to go to the Salt Lick and you know that I detest barbecue.

Joe-Bob: **Malheureusement**, on n'a pas assez d'argent pour aller dans un restaurant snob!

Joe-Bob: Unfortunately, we don't have enough money to go to a snobby restaurant!

Edouard refuse **obstinément** l'invitation de Joe-Bob: Tu m'invites **souvent**, mais toujours à l'américaine!

Obstinately, Edouard refuses Joe-Bob's invitation: You invite me out to eat often, but always in the American style.

See [placement of adverbs with passé composé](#) and the periphrastic future for further examples.





fill in the blanks

Adverb placement: Complete the answers to Tammy's questions using the adverb in parentheses.

1. Tammy : Tu comprends la poésie de Tex? Trey : Non, je/j' _____. (mal)
2. Tammy : Tu aimes le chocolat? Tex : Oui, je/j' _____.(énormément)
3. Tammy : Comment va Rita? Tex : Elle _____. (très bien)
4. Tammy : Tu aimes le café? Tex : Oui, je/j' _____. (beaucoup)
5. Tammy : Tu penses à Bette? Trey : Oui, je/j' _____. (toujours)
6. Tammy : Bette est sexy? Trey : Ah oui, elle _____.(extraordinairement)
7. Tammy : Tu aimes les noix? Joe-Bob : Oui, je/j' _____.(beaucoup)
8. Tammy : Tu manges du chili? Joe-Bob : Oui, je/j' _____.(souvent)
9. Tammy : Tu aimes Sartre? Tex : Oh oui, je/j' _____. (vraiment)
10. Tammy : Tex connaît Trey? Tammy : Non, Tex _____. (bien)
11. Tammy : Tex est génial! Bette : Oui, Tex _____. (absolument)
12. Tammy : Tex porte un béret? Edouard : Oui, Tex _____.(fréquemment)