

# 24 Adverbs and word order



Foxes **rarely** appear in the daytime.  
They **usually** look for food at night.

## 1 Adverbs before the verb

We use adverbs of frequency to say how often we do something:

100% ← HOW OFTEN → 0%  
always normally usually frequently often sometimes occasionally rarely seldom hardly ever never

We usually put these adverbs BEFORE the main verb:

Foxes **rarely** appear in the daytime. They **usually** look for food at night.

Do you **always** get up late on Sundays?

But we put them AFTER *be*, auxiliary verbs and modal verbs:

My boss **is never** late for work. We **are hardly ever** in this part of town.

I **have never** watched a rugby match. You **should always** be polite to strangers.

We can also put the adverbs *usually, normally, often, frequently, sometimes* and *occasionally* at the beginning or end of the sentence:

I admit we go to fast food places **sometimes**. **Occasionally** I like to eat really spicy food.

- ⚠ We don't put *always, never, hardly ever, rarely* and *seldom* immediately before the subject at the beginning of a sentence (► Unit 102.2):

✗ ~~Always we go to the beach in August.~~ ✓ We **always** go to the beach in August.

## 2 Adverbs after the verb

We usually put adverbs of manner (e.g. *well, badly, slowly, fast, easily, happily, carefully, fluently, perfectly*) after the main verb:

Lions **move slowly** and silently. Foxes **run fast**. Did the interview go **well**?

- ⚠ When there is an object after the verb, we usually put the adverb after the object:

✗ ~~She speaks fluently Russian.~~ ✓ She speaks **Russian fluently**.

✗ ~~Did she drive fast the car?~~ ✓ Did she drive **the car fast**?

When there is an object, adverbs of manner ending in *-ly* can sometimes go between an auxiliary or modal verb and a main verb:

They **have badly damaged** your car. You **can easily finish** that project in a day.

## 3 Adverbs at the beginning or end of the sentence

We usually put adverbs and adverbials of place and time (e.g. *here, there, in London, yesterday, on Saturday, immediately, every day, at night*) at the end of the sentence:

Foxes **usually hunt at night**. Did you go to university **here**? I didn't have lunch **yesterday**.

If we want to give the adverb special emphasis, we can put it at the beginning:

**It's quite a large house. Upstairs** there are three bedrooms.

'Do you drive to work on your own every day?' 'No. **On Mondays** a friend comes with me.'

- ⚠ We don't put adverbs of place and time in front of the main verb:

✗ ~~I don't here live.~~ ✗ ~~Foxes at night look for food.~~ ✗ ~~We to Greece went for our holiday.~~

Word order when there is more than one adverb ► Unit 59.6