

Unit 66: POSITION OF ADVERBS

Some adverbs can go at the beginning of the sentence:

(**Sometimes** we go swimming) and in the middle (We **sometimes** go swimming) and at the end (We go swimming **sometimes**).

But many adverbs cannot go in all of these positions.

1

If an adverb describes an adjective or another adverb, it goes before it:

nearly correct **always** late **very** carefully

BUT the adverb **enough** (Unit 67) goes after it:

correct **enough** early **enough** carefully **enough**

2

The adverbs **early**, **late**, **a little**, **a lot**, **well** and **yet** go at the end of the basic sentence (Unit 7):

We arrived **early**. I like cheese **a lot**. NOT *like a lot cheese*

3

If the basic sentence is subject and verb only (Unit 62), adverbs showing how (Unit 80) go at the end:

He works **hard**. She ate **slowly**. NOT *slowly ate*

4

The adverbs **almost**, **also**, **hardly**, **just**, **nearly**, **never** and **still** go in the middle of the sentence:

before the lexical verb (Unit 3) We **nearly missed** the train.

but after the first auxiliary I **have never** missed it.

I **am still** learning.

and after the verb **be** I **am also** a teacher.

NOTICE: Except for the verb **be**, adverbs cannot go between the verb and another part of the basic sentence (NOT *we go sometimes swimming*).

5

The rules for the position of adverbs are difficult. If you are not sure where to put an adverb, put it at the end of the basic sentence (most adverbs can go here).

NOTICE: Different adverb positions sometimes give different meanings to sentences (Unit 67).