

15 MASTER RULES FOR ADVERBS

Strictly curated for NDA Error Spotting (S.P. Bakshi Ruleset)

The Basic Rule

An adverb modifies a **Verb**, an **Adjective**, or **Another Adverb**.

Part I: Golden Rules of Adverb Placement

Rule 1: The M-P-T Rule (Order of Adverbs)

If adverbs of Manner (how), Place (where), and Time (when) appear together, they must follow the **M-P-T** sequence.

 **Mistake** Neeraj performed last night brilliantly at the concert.

 **Correct** Neeraj performed **brilliantly** (Manner) **at the concert** (Place) **last night** (Time).

Rule 2: Position of 'Enough'

As an adverb, 'Enough' always comes **AFTER** the adjective or adverb it modifies. (As an adjective, it comes *before* a noun).

 **Mistake** He is enough smart to pass the NDA exam.

 **Correct** He is **smart enough** to pass the NDA exam.

Rule 3: Adverbs of Frequency

Words like *always*, *never*, *often*, *rarely*, *seldom* are placed **before the main verb** but **after the helping verb** (is/am/are/was/were).

✗ **Mistake** He comes always late to the class.

✓ **Correct** He **always comes** late to the class. (Before main verb).

✓ **Correct** He is **always** late. (After helping verb).

Part II: Confusing Adverb Pairs

Rule 4: Hard vs. Hardly

Hard means 'with great effort', while *Hardly* means 'almost not' or 'rarely'.

✗ **Mistake** Neeraj works hardly to clear his exams.

✓ **Correct** Neeraj works **hard** to clear his exams.

Rule 5: Late vs. Lately

Late refers to time (after the fixed time), whereas *Lately* means 'recently'.

✗ **Mistake** I have not seen Suryavanshi late.

✓ **Correct** I have not seen Suryavanshi **lately**.

Rule 6: Very vs. Much

Very is used with Positive Degree adjectives and Present Participles (-ing). *Much* is used with Comparative Degree adjectives and Past Participles (-ed/en).

✗ **Mistake** The situation is much interesting.

✓ **Correct** The situation is **very interesting**.

✓ **Correct** He is **much smarter** than you.

Rule 7: Fairly vs. Rather

Fairly is used with positive/desirable adjectives. *Rather* is used with negative/undesirable adjectives.

✗ **Mistake** The weather is rather pleasant today.

✓ **Correct** The weather is **fairly pleasant** today.

✓ **Correct** The math problem was **rather difficult**.

Rule 8: Ago vs. Before

Ago is used with the Simple Past tense (counting back from now). *Before* is used with the Past Perfect tense (counting back from a past point).

✗ **Mistake** Pundir had left an hour ago.

✓ **Correct** Pundir **left** an hour **ago**.

Rule 9: 'Too' vs. 'Very'

Too implies 'more than required' and usually carries a negative meaning. *Very* is a high degree of something good or bad.

✗ **Mistake** I am too glad to meet you.

✓ **Correct** I am **very glad** to meet you.

Rule 10: 'Too much' vs. 'Much too'

Too much is followed by a **Noun**. *Much too* is followed by an **Adjective/Adverb**.

✗ **Mistake** His words gave me much too pain.

✓ **Correct** His words gave me **too much pain** (Noun).

✓ **Correct** The task is **much too heavy** (Adjective).

Part III: Top NDA Error Spotting Rules

Rule 11: The Law of Inversion (Crucial for NDA)

When a sentence begins with a negative adverb (*Hardly, Scarcely, Rarely, No sooner*), it takes an inverted form: **Adverb + Helping Verb + Subject + Main Verb**.

✗ **Mistake** Hardly I had reached the station when the train left.

✓ **Correct** **Hardly had I** reached the station when the train left.

Rule 12: Double Negatives

Never use 'Not' or 'No' with words that are inherently negative (Hardly, Scarcely, Seldom, Forbid, Deny, Unless, Until, Lest).

✗ Mistake Walk carefully lest you should not fall.

✓ Correct Walk carefully **lest you should fall**.

Rule 13: "Seldom or Never"

The only correct pairings are **Seldom or never** AND **Seldom, if ever**.

✗ Mistake He seldom or ever goes to the movies.

✓ Correct He **seldom or never** goes to the movies.

Rule 14: 'Else' vs. 'Other'

Else is always followed by **but**. *Other / Otherwise* is followed by **than**.

✗ Mistake It is nothing else than pride.

✓ Correct It is nothing **else but** pride.

✓ Correct He has no **other** alternative **than** to work hard.

Examiners frequently swap these in spotting errors because the wrong versions sound conversational!

Rule 15: The Use of 'As' with Verbs

Do NOT use 'As' after verbs like: *Name, elect, think, consider, call, appoint, make, choose*.
(Note: You DO use 'As' after: *Regard, describe, define, treat, view, know*).

✗ Mistake Neeraj was appointed as the captain.

✓ Correct Neeraj was **appointed the captain**.