# Quickly, Slowly, Carefully: How Suffix '-ly' Builds Adverbs in Year 2 Writing

A simple guide to help your child in Year 2 understand how to use '-ly' to turn describing words into adverbs, making their writing more vivid and detailed.

## What are adverbs?

In Year 2, children learn about different types of words. You might already know about adjectives, which describe a person or thing (like a 'loud' bell). Adverbs are slightly different: they describe an action, or a verb. For example, if a child 'runs quickly', the word 'quickly' is the adverb because it tells us how they are running. Adverbs help children add more detail to their stories, explaining how, when, or where something is happening. This is part of the National Curriculum for England, which is the official set of goals for what children should learn at each stage of school.

## How the '-ly' rule works

Most of the time, children can create an adverb by simply adding '-ly' to the end of an adjective. For instance, 'slow' becomes 'slowly' and 'careful' becomes 'carefully'. There is one small spelling change your child will learn: if the word ends in 'y', like 'happy', the 'y' changes to an 'i' before adding the ending, making it 'happily'. Teachers often help children spot the difference between an adjective and an adverb by asking, 'Is this word describing the person, or is it describing how they are doing the action?'

## What this means for your child

Your child will be encouraged to use these words in their independent writing to make their sentences more interesting. They may also see these concepts in SPaG tasks. SPaG stands for Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar, and it is the part of the English curriculum that focuses on the 'building blocks' of language. Because every school teaches slightly differently, your child's teacher might use specific games or worksheets to practice this. If you are unsure how your child is being taught, your child's class teacher is the best person to ask.

## Simple ways to help at home

You do not need to do any formal drilling or lessons at home. Instead, try turning it into a game during your daily routine. While you are walking to school or tidying up, you could ask your child to do something 'slowly', 'quietly', or 'happily'. You can also play a guessing game: 'I am brushing my teeth... how am I doing it?' and let them guess 'carefully!' or 'quickly!'. These short, playful moments help children see how these words fit into real life without any pressure.

## Common questions

Parents often wonder if their child must get every spelling right immediately. At this stage, the focus is on understanding how the language works and gaining confidence. If your child writes 'happyly' instead of 'happily', it shows they have understood the rule of adding '-ly', which is a great start. You might also wonder if all adverbs end in '-ly'. While many do, some do not (like 'fast' or 'well'), but Year 2 pupils usually start with the '-ly' pattern first as it is the clearest way to learn the concept.

## Sources


- Department for Education: National curriculum in England: English programmes of study
- GOV.UK: National curriculum in England