ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

- **Both adjectives and adverbs describe other words more closely: adjectives describe nouns; adverbs describe verbs and other adjectives and adverbs.**
  Doreen has fluffy hair and a musky odor. [adjectives describing nouns]
  She smokes constantly and dances suggestively. [adverbs describing verbs]
  She is deliberately sarcastic about other people. [adverb describing adjective]
  But she is almost always nice to Esther. [adverb describing another adverb]

As you can see from the above example, we form **adverbs** by adding *–ly* to the adjective.
However, adjectives ending in *–ly* (*lovely, friendly, early, ghostly*) do not change when they are used as adverbs.
Some adverbs (*often, always, very, far, here, there*) do not end in *–ly*. When in doubt, check your dictionary!

- **Use adjectives as subject complements.**
  Esther is disturbed.
  She is intelligent, talented, and insane.

- **Because verbs like *look, appear, seem, feel*, *smell*, and *taste* describe states of being rather than actions, use adjectives.**
  Esther seems normal.
  She appears confident, but she feels inadequate.
  She looks ordinary but has intense feelings of self-doubt.

  However, if *taste* and *look* are used as action verbs, use adverbs.
  Esther tastes happiness awkwardly.
  She looks regretfully at her past.

- **Past participles (the *–ed* form of verbs) can be used as adjectives to describe nouns. Make sure you include the *–ed* ending!**
  In Esther's distorted thoughts, Buddy was her last chance at love.
  Her warped memory increased her agitation.

- **Make sure you distinguish between the following adjectives and adverbs. In spoken language, we often confuse them with each other.**

  good / well:
  > *Dr. Nolan is a good doctor; she analyzes patients well.*
  > Watch out: When used with "look," *good* and *well* mean different things:
  > *Dodo looks good despite having so many children.* [she looks attractive]
  > *Dodo looks well.* [she looks healthy]

  real / really:
  > *Joan is a real basketcase; she really needs psychiatric help.*

  sure / surely:
  > *Esther is not sure if she is ready to leave the asylum. She surely needs reinforcement from her doctors.*

  bad / badly:
  > *Esther has a bad experience with shock treatments; they affect her brain badly.*

►Did you like the sample sentences? Get the whole story in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*.