

Degree adverbs and focus adverbs

A

Degree adverbs can be used before adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs to give information about the extent or level of something:

- They're **extremely** happy. I **really** hate coffee. He **almost** always arrived late.

Some degree adverbs, such as **almost**, **largely**, **really** and **virtually**, are usually used before the main verb, and others, such as **altogether**, **enormously**, **somewhat**, and **tremendously**, are usually used after the main verb. Degree adverbs are rarely used in front position (see Unit 75B).

Focus adverbs draw attention to the most important part of what we are talking about. Some (e.g. **especially**, **even**, **mainly**, **mostly**, **particularly**, **specifically**) make what we say more specific:

- There is likely to be snow today, **particularly** in the north.

and others (e.g. **alone**, **just**, **only**, **simply**, **solely**) limit what we say to one thing or person:

- Many people offered to help me invest the money, but I **only** trusted Rick.

B

Much and very much

In affirmative sentences in formal contexts, **much** can be used as a degree adverb before the verbs **admire**, **appreciate**, **enjoy**, **prefer** and **regret** to emphasise how we feel about things:

- I **much** enjoyed having you stay with us. Their music *is* **much** admired.

Much is used in this way particularly after **I** and **we**. Note that we don't usually use this pattern in questions (e.g. *not* Did you much enjoy ...?).

We can use **very much** in a similar way before the verbs above and also before **agree**, **doubt**, **fear**, **hope**, **like** and **want**. Note, however, that we don't use **much** before this last group of verbs. Compare:

- I **much** prefer seeing films at the cinema than on DVD. (*or* I **very much** prefer ...) *and*
 We **very much** agree with the decision. (*or* We agree very much ...; *but not* ... much agree ...)

We can also use **much** or **very much** before a past participle which is part of a passive:

- The new by-pass *was* (**very**) **much** needed.

We don't use **much** but can use **very much** before past participle adjectives (see Unit 69A):

- I was **very much** surprised by her news. (*or* I was surprised ...; *but not* I was much surprised ...)

and we don't use either **much** or **very much** before present participle adjectives:

- The hotel was (**very**) **welcoming**. (*but not* The hotel was (very) much welcoming.)

In negative sentences in informal contexts we can use (**very**) **much** before verbs such as **appreciate**, **enjoy**, **like**, and **look forward to** to emphasise a negative feeling about something:

- I didn't (**very**) **much** enjoy the film.

C

Very and too

Before an adjective or another adverb we use **very** when we mean 'to a high degree', and **too** when we mean 'more than enough' or 'more than is wanted or needed'. Compare:

- The weather was **very** hot in Majorca – perfect for swimming. (*not* ... too hot ...) *and*
 It's **too** hot to stay in this room – let's find somewhere cooler. (*not* ... very hot ...)

In negative sentences in informal spoken English we can use **not too** to mean 'not very':

- I'm **not too** bothered about who wins. (*or* I'm **not very** bothered ...)

D

Even and only

Even and **only** usually go in mid position (see Unit 75), but if they refer to the subject they usually come before it. Compare:

- My mother has **only** brought some food. (= She hasn't brought anything else) *and*
 Only my mother has brought some food. (= My mother and nobody else)
 Aya can **even** speak French. (= in addition to everything else she can do) *and*
 Even Aya can speak French. (= you might not expect her to) (*rather than* Aya even ...)

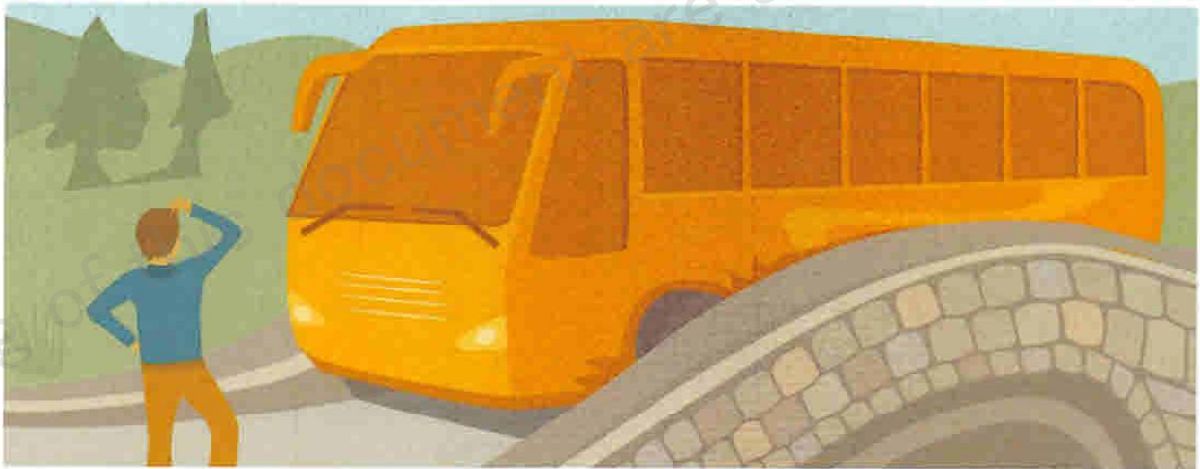
Exercises

77.1 Cross out any incorrect answers. B

- 1 We *very / much / very much* hope that the striking workers will now resume negotiations.
- 2 Thanks for organising the quiz night. Your help was *very / much / very much* appreciated.
- 3 I felt *very / much / very much* intimidated by some of the questions in the interview.
- 4 I had always *very / much / very much* admired her work, and it was great to meet her.
- 5 As a child, I *very / much / very much* wanted to be an artist.
- 6 I would *very / much / very much* prefer to be remembered as kind rather than wealthy.
- 7 It was *very / much / very much* thrilling to get Marie's news.
- 8 When I was travelling in India I became *very / much / very much* interested in regional foods.
- 9 Kristof says that he wants to go into politics, but I *very / much / very much* doubt that he's serious.
- 10 I *very / much / very much* regret not being able to hear Dr Greco when she gave her lecture.

77.2 Write **very**, **too**, or **very / too** if either is possible. C

- 1 Leo was in a wheelchair as he was still weak to walk far.
- 2 Ellie has agreed to start work earlier, but she's not enthusiastic about it.
- 3 The instructions are easy. You'll have no trouble understanding them.
- 4 It was alarming to learn that one of the plane's engines had stopped.
- 5 We'll be at the cinema well before the film starts. It won't take long to get there.
- 6 It was snowing heavily for us to climb further up the mountain.
- 7 He revised hard and did well in his exams.
- 8 The old bridge in town was narrow for the coach to drive across, so we had to go an extra 50 miles to the new one.

77.3 Put **even** or **only** in the most appropriate place in each sentence. D

- 1 Ben offered to let me stay with him while I was in Glasgow, and he offered to pick me up from the station.
- 2 I will be in my office on Monday next week as I'm going to Poland for a business meeting on Tuesday.
- 3 Every penny the charity raises helps the homeless, and the smallest donation can make a vital difference.
- 4 Jan seems to have invited everyone to the party. he has asked Ann, and they haven't spoken to each other for years.
- 5 Louis knew where the keys were kept, and nobody else.
- 6 I don't get home from work until late, so I cook at the weekend.