



Presentation

Intensifying and modifying gradable adjectives

Adjectives can be gradable or non-gradable. Gradable adjectives describe a feature that can be strong or weak. Adverbs of degree such as *very*, *extremely*, *really* make the adjective stronger. Adverbs such as *not very* and *quite* make it weaker: *a very nice day*, *not a very nice day*, *quite a nice day*.

Most adverbs of degree come immediately before the adjective: *It was a very hot day*; *the sun was extremely hot*.

quite, not very, rather

Quite and *not* in *not very* come before *a/an*: *It was quite a nice day*. *It wasn't a very nice day*. (don't say *It was a quite nice day*. *It was a not very nice day*.)

Rather can come either before or after *a/an*: *rather a nice day* / *a rather nice day*.

Use *rather* to suggest that you are surprised: *It was rather a nice day* (= I didn't expect a nice day), or to express a negative opinion: *It's rather cold* (= I don't like the cold).

too and enough

Use *too* to criticise and say there is more than is necessary of a quality: *It was too big*. *He moved too slowly*.

Use *enough* to say that the thing or action has the correct amount of a quality: *It was big enough*. *He moved quickly enough*.

Enough comes **after** the adjective, but **before** a noun: *(not) big enough*; *(not) enough money*.

Intensifying and modifying non-gradable adjectives

Non-gradable adjectives describe a quality that is extreme or absolute. They cannot be made stronger or

weaker. Examples include: *amazed*, *convinced*, *delicious*, *delighted*, *exhausted*, *freezing*, *starving*, *unbearable*.

Do not use adverbs such as *very*, *fairly*, *too* or *enough* with non-gradable adjectives. (don't say: *very delicious*, *too freezing*)

But you can use adverbs such as *absolutely*, *really*, *totally* or *utterly* to emphasise the quality of the adjective: *We're absolutely delighted you came*. *I'm completely exhausted*. *It was really delicious*.

You can use *quite* and *really* with both gradable and non-gradable adjectives. *Quite* used with a non-gradable adjective means *totally*. The meaning of *really* does not change.

It was quite tasty. (= a little bit, not very)

It was quite delicious. (= totally. This use is more common in British English.)

Intensifying and modifying adverbs

You can also use adverbs to intensify or modify other adverbs: *He rode his bike really quickly*. *The customer spoke to me extremely rudely*.

gradable only:	non-gradable only:	both gradable and non-gradable:
extremely, fairly, rather, very, too, enough, pretty	absolutely, completely, totally, utterly	quite*, really (* the meaning changes)

TIP Certain non-gradable adjectives collocate more frequently with certain adverbs. For example, *absolutely freezing* is far more common than *utterly freezing*. You can check the collocations in a good dictionary.

1 Add the adverbs in brackets to the sentences.

- 1 I've been working ^{too} hard recently so I'm going to take a rest! (too)
- 2 His boss said he hadn't been working hard and gave him the sack! (enough)
- 3 Their relationship has always been strained. (very)
- 4 She was a domineering woman. (quite)
- 5 He was a quiet man, who never had much to say. (rather)
- 6 When he heard the news, he got angry. (pretty)

2 Complete the sentences A and B with the adverbs. Use each adverb once only. Then listen and check.

- 1 **totally / very**
 - A This is tasty. How did you make it?
 - B Wow! This is delicious. You didn't make it yourself, did you?
- 2 **n't very / utterly**
 - A I was unconvinced by his explanation.
 - B I was sure I was making the right decision.
- 3 **absolutely / rather**
 - A It's hot today, don't you think?
 - B Hot? It's boiling!
- 4 **completely / extremely**
 - A They had been walking for ten hours and were exhausted.
 - B They were tired and went straight to bed.
- 5 **pretty / absolutely**
 - A I hadn't eaten all day and I was starving when I got home.
 - B I'd only had a couple of biscuits for breakfast and I was hungry by the time I got to work.

3 Rewrite the sentences with a similar meaning, using the words in brackets.

- 1 He was walking too slowly. (enough)
He wasn't walking quickly enough.
- 2 It was a fairly mild day. (quite)
It
- 3 It had taken them quite a long time to find the house. (pretty)
It
- 4 It wasn't warm enough to go swimming. (cold)
.....
- 5 Rather a long time had passed since we last saw them. (fairly)
.....
- 6 She wasn't speaking loudly enough. (too)
.....

4 Add adverbs of degree to the sentences below to make them true for you.

- 1 I study hard. I study quite hard. / I don't study very hard. / I study extremely hard.
- 2 My hometown is small and quiet.
- 3 My neighbours are friendly.
- 4 I speak English well.