



If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.

Orson Welles,
US actor and director

3B Incredibly short stories

1 GRAMMAR the position of adverbs and adverbial phrases

a Read the four fifty-word stories, using the glossary to help you. Match each one to its title.

The story of my life **Generation gap** **In the cards** **Good intentions**

fiftywordstories.com

Fiftywordstories.com is a website to which people from all over the world contribute fifty-word stories in English.



A _____
She recognized the writing on the envelope **immediately**. The fortune-teller had warned her that she had no future with him, yet here he was – five lonely years after their last meeting, begging her to join him in New York. She felt **unbelievably** happy as she stepped on board the *Titanic*.



C _____
He was worried. **Unfortunately**, since his wife's death his teenage daughter had become **extremely** difficult. They had agreed 2:00 a.m. as the latest return time from nightclubs. Now it was 3:30. He prepared himself for confrontation as the door opened. "Dad," she shouted angrily. "I've been **frantic**. You're late again."

Glossary

- A**
beg *verb* ask somebody very strongly or anxiously for something
- C**
frantic *adj* very worried
- D**
fabulous *adj* wonderful
intake *noun* the amount of food and drink that you take into your body
smoothie *noun* a drink made of fruit or fruit juice mixed with milk or ice cream



B _____
My house looks as if it's been hit by a bomb. Since I'm terrible at organizing, I bought a new book, *Key to Organizing Your Life*. I felt so proud. I started cleaning the bookcase. **Five minutes later**, I couldn't believe my eyes. I'd bought the same book **last year**.



D _____
Stage one: Feel fat. Go on diet. Lose weight. Feel fabulous. Buy new clothes.
Stage two: Eat **normally** but controlling intake. Look fabulous. New clothes **slightly** tight.
Stage three: Eat and drink normally (potatoes, bread, pasta, AND smoothies). New clothes don't fit. Old clothes thrown away.
Back to stage one.

- b Look at the **highlighted** adverbs or adverbial phrases in the stories. Think about what they mean and notice their position in the sentence. Write them in the correct place in the chart.

Types of adverbs

Time (when things happen, e.g., *shortly*)

Manner (how you do something, e.g., *slowly*)


Degree (describing / modifying an adjective, e.g., *very*)

Comment (giving an opinion, e.g., *luckily*)

- c With a partner, decide where the **bold** adverbs should go in these sentences.
- 1 He speaks Chinese and Spanish. **fluently**
 - 2 I use public transportation. **hardly ever**
 - 3 I thought I'd lost my phone, but it was in my bag. **fortunately**
 - 4 It's important that you arrive on time. **extremely**
 - 5 As soon as I know, I'll tell you. **right away**
- d ➤ **p.137 Grammar Bank 3B.** Learn more about adverbs and adverbial phrases, and practice them.
- e (2 14)) Listen to some sound effects and short dialogues. Then use the **bold** adverb to complete the sentence.
- 1 When she got to the bus stop, the bus... **just**
 - 2 They were having a party when... **suddenly**
 - 3 He thought he lost his boarding pass, but... **luckily**
 - 4 The woman thought Andrea and Tom were friends, but in fact... **hardly**
 - 5 The driver couldn't see where he was going because... **hard**
 - 6 Juan couldn't understand the man because... **incredibly**

2 VOCABULARY adverbs and adverbial phrases

- a Read another fifty-word story. Who is it about?



Exam nerves
It was **nearly** 4 a.m. and she could **hardly** keep her eyes open. She had been working **hard** since lunchtime, but the exam was **near**. Would she be able to finish on time? At nine the next morning she was in the classroom. "OK," she said. "You can start now."

- b Look at the **highlighted** adverbs. What's the difference between...?
a *hard* and *hardly* b *near* and *nearly*
- c ➤ **p.155 Vocabulary Bank** *Adverbs and adverbial phrases.*

3 PRONUNCIATION word stress and intonation

- a (2 17)) **Underline** the stressed syllables in these adverbs. Listen and check.

ac|tu|a|lly al|most a|ppar|ent|ly ba|si|ca|lly de|fi|ni|te|ly
e|ven e|ven|tu|al|ly for|tu|na|te|ly gra|dua|l|ly i|de|a|l|ly
in|cre|di|b|ly lu|ck|i|ly ob|vi|ous|ly un|for|tu|na|te|ly

- b (2 18)) Listen and repeat the sentences, copying the stress and intonation of the adverbs.
- 1 There was a lot of traffic, and unfortunately we arrived extremely late.
 - 2 We definitely want to go abroad this summer, ideally somewhere hot.
 - 3 It's incredibly easy – even a child could do it!
 - 4 Mark gradually began to realize that Lily didn't love him anymore.
 - 5 I thought Roberto was Portuguese, but actually he's Brazilian.
 - 6 Apparently Jack has been offered a promotion at work, but it will mean moving to New York.
 - 7 I absolutely love Italian food, especially pasta.

4 WRITING

- a You are going to write a fifty-word story. It must be 50 words exactly (not including the title) and you must include at least two adverbs. Contracted forms (e.g., *I'd*) count as one word. First, in pairs, choose two of the titles below.

A summer romance A day to forget
The lie Never again

- b Brainstorm ideas for the two plots and each write a first draft without worrying about the number of words.
- c Exchange your drafts. Then edit the stories, making sure they are exactly 50 words.
- d Read two other pairs' stories. Which do you like best?
- e ➤ **p.114 Writing** *A short story.* Write a 120–180 word short story.