



- A: Today's lesson was really difficult!
- B: Yes. Even Melissa didn't understand it.
- A: And I can't believe how much homework he's just given us.
- B: It's only two exercises.
- A: But remember that we've also got the work from yesterday.
- B: True. I'd forgotten we have that. But even that is less than last week.

Presentation

Focus adverbs *only*, *just* and *even* draw attention to particular information in a clause. The focus adverb comes directly before the word or phrase it is emphasizing.

| Use <i>only</i> | Use <i>just</i> | Use <i>even</i> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to emphasize that a number, size, age, etc. is small or smaller than we expected: <i>It's only two exercises.</i> to emphasize that something is true for a single person/thing or a limited number of people/things: <i>Only students can use the library.</i> to say something is unimportant, or show you didn't want to upset someone: <i>Don't worry – I've only been waiting for a couple of minutes.</i> with <i>not</i> to say that more than one thing is true: <i>I'm not only interested in grades.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to emphasize that a number, size, age, etc. is small or smaller than we expected: <i>She passed the exam after just one term.</i> to emphasize that something happened recently or will be finished soon: <i>He's just given us loads of homework.</i> to emphasize that something is easy or obvious: <i>There's a good bus service in my town but I normally just walk wherever I want to go.</i> with <i>not</i> to say that more than one thing is true: <i>They didn't just pass, they got A grades.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to introduce something surprising: <i>Even I passed the exam!</i> to say that although something is good, bad, big, etc., another thing is better, worse, bigger, etc: <i>Even that amount of homework is less than last week.</i> with <i>not</i> to emphasize that something isn't true or doesn't happen: <i>The exam was so long we couldn't even finish half of it.</i> |

Note: Sometimes you can use *only* or *just* with no change of meaning: *There are thirty students in the class but only / just five of us passed the exam.*

Position of focus adverbs

Put the adverb before the words or phrase you want to emphasize:

- at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize the subject: *Only three people passed the exam.*
- in the middle to emphasize the main verb: *Three new people have just joined our class.*

Exercises

1 Match the sentences 1–8 with A–H.

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| 1 It's only five pounds. | A No one else is allowed. |
| 2 He's just been offered a new job. | B I was only joking. |
| 3 Even I enjoyed it. | C It's great news! |
| 4 Only members of staff can park here. | D And normally I hate rock music. |
| 5 The first one was good. | E You won't get it for less. |
| 6 Don't be so upset. | F But episode 2 is even better. |
| 7 I'm not only interested in art. | G And she didn't even turn up on the last day. |
| 8 She left the job after just a week. | H I like music as well. |

2 Put the adverb in the correct position. In some sentences there is more than one possibility.

- 1 ^{Even} Jeremy doesn't know the answer and he's the cleverest kid in the class. (even)
- 2 I think it's Richard coming tonight. Everyone else is too busy. (just)
- 3 I'm asking you to do the dishes. Nothing else. (only)
- 4 Sue finished the race in time. All the others took too long. (only)
- 5 I have to finish this last exercise and then I can come out. (just)
- 6 He's a terrible cook but I ate his cooking because I was so hungry. (even)

3 Underline the correct word. Both words are possible in two sentences.

- 1 The film was awful. *Even* / *Only* the children were bored and it was made for kids.
- 2 I can't lend you any money. I *even* / *only* have a dollar and that's for the bus.
- 3 The city was so busy we couldn't *just* / *even* find a place to park.
- 4 They're not *only* / *even* brother and sister, they're twins.
- 5 We have this old car, but it's *just* / *only* temporary while we wait for a new one.
- 6 I'm *just* / *even* getting dressed. Wait a minute.
- 7 He isn't *just* / *only* good at science, he's very artistic too.
- 8 His new book is *only* / *even* better.

4 Complete the sentences about the exercises on this page so they are true for you.

- 1 I've just finished
- 2 Even I understood
- 3 The only one I'm not sure about is