

Categories of adverbial

We may begin by looking again at a sentence with two adverbials:

The girl is now a student at a large university

This might have had fewer elements:

The girl is a student at a large university.

The girl is a student.

The girl is now a student.

The girl is at a large university.

On this evidence we may say that the adverbials *now* and *at a large university* belong to different classes and it seems natural to label them 'time' and 'place' respectively.

Consider now the fact that the adverbial *carefully* could be replaced by many others, making acceptable sentences in each case:

John searched the room, (carefully, slowly, noisily, sternly, without delay.

But if these same adverbials were inserted in sentences which had stative verbs, the sentences would become unacceptable:

The girl is now a student ♦carefully.

Because the verbs with which they can occur allow the progressive, the aspect of on-going activity, it is appropriate to refer to these adverbials as 'process'.