Adjectives ending in -ly

A large number of adverbs have **–ly** endings. Common examples are: **kindly, cleverly, eagerly, pleasantly, unexpectedly, remarkably e**tc.

Most of these adverbs are formed from adjectives.

    kind -> kindly

    pleasant -> pleasantly

    eager -> eagerly

    nice -> nicely

    perfect -> perfectly

However, there are some exceptions. A few words ending in **–ly** are adjectives. At least a handful of words ending in –ly are nouns. Family is a well-known example. It is a collective noun.

- My family live in different parts of India.

Note that we use a plural verb here because we are talking about the different members of the family. We would use a singular verb if we were referring to family as a single unit.

Note that in American English, collective nouns are almost always treated as singular nouns.

- My family lives in different parts of India. (US)

Family can also be used as an adjective. Example: a family vacation

The word elderly can be an adjective or a collective noun.

- An elderly woman took me to the manager's cabin.

The phrase 'the elderly' refers to all elderly people. In this case it acts as a collective noun.

- We need to take care of the elderly.

The word bodily is an adjective. It is formed from the noun body.

- We are not aware of many of our bodily functions.

'Bodily' can also be used as an adverb. As an adverb it means 'forcibly' or 'forcefully'.

- He pulled her out bodily. (= He pulled her out forcibly.)

The word 'early' which is formed from the noun 'ear', has nothing to do with the faculty of hearing. It can be an adjective or adverb.

- An early bird catches the worm. (Here the bird early acts as an adjective modifying the noun bird.)
- I want to leave early today. (Here the word early acts as an adverb modifying the verb leave.)

First, firstly, second, secondly etc.

Many writers use the expressions **firstly, secondly, lastly** etc. However, they are unnecessary because you can express the same meanings with **first, second, last** etc.

The words **first / firstly, second / secondly** etc., are used to show the structure of what we are saying.

First, I want to discuss something with you. (More natural than 'Firstly, I want to discuss something with you.)

Another example is given below.

There are many reasons why I don't want to go out with you. **First**, I am a little busy at the moment. **Second,** you can't drive well. And **third**, my fiancé won't like it.

Note that instead of **'first',** you can use the phrase 'to start with'.