

Comparing similar adverbs

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

vs — “originally” two ways

Both can translate as “originally,” but they part ways. = “originally / in the first place,” usually setting up that things **later changed**. = “**so it turns out**” — a fresh realisation — or “(it was) ... all along.”

{zh: |wǒ|I / |běn lái|originally / |yào|was going / |qù|to go / |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / ,
|dàn shì|but / |qù bu liǎo|couldn't / |le / 。 }

I was originally going to Shanghai, but then I couldn't.

{zh: |yuán lái|so / |nǐ|you / |shì|are / |lǎo shī|a teacher / |a / ! }

Oh, so you're a teacher!

Remember: looks back at a plan that **CHANGED** (“originally... but”); reports a **DISCOVERY** (“oh, so that's it!”). Tagline forms seal it: = “of course, all along”; = “ah, so that's how it is!”.

Watch out

- If nothing changed and you mean “it turns out,” it's , never .

vs — “often” two ways

is plain “**often**” — a frequency, and it can describe future plans. is “**tend(s) to / as a rule**” — a pattern or tendency under certain conditions, and it **can't** describe a future intention.

{zh: |tā|he / |cháng cháng|often / |chí dào|arrives late / 。 }

He often arrives late.

{zh: |yǒu qián rén|rich people / |wǎng wǎng|tend to be / |bǐ jiào|relatively / |mí xìn|superstitious / 。 }

Rich people tend to be more superstitious.

Remember: = “often” (a count, future-friendly); = “tends to” (a law-like pattern, no future). Test it: ✓ (“I'll exercise often from now on”), but × there — a tendency can't be a plan.

Watch out

- can shorten to (); can't drop a .

vs — adverb vs time word

is an **adverb** (“just,” right before the verb); is a **time noun** (“a moment ago,” within the last few minutes) that can stand alone and even modify a noun.

{zh: |nǐ|you / |gāng cái|a moment ago / |qù|went / |nǎr|where / |le / ? }

Where did you go just now?

{zh: |wǒ|I / |gāng|just / |huí lái|got back / 。 }

I just got back.

Remember: = adverb, glued to the verb (, often no); = noun, a point in the recent past (stands alone, takes , modifies nouns:). Before an adjective, only / works (, “the sky just cleared”).

Watch out

- is a *time word* — (“the thing just now”) works, but doesn't.