



Chapter 12.

Circumstantials

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The meaning of Circumstantials

Web activity 1

1. Here are some exercises that let pupils work actively on the meaning of Circumstantials. In each exercise discuss which type of Circumstantial is trained, the learning outcome, the appropriate age group and what else you think is relevant to discuss from a teacher's point of view.
2. Can you think of other communicative activities that will train learners to use Circumstantials?

1-1

In groups

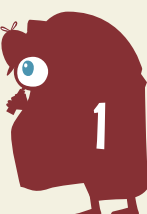
You are going to play a game of charades in groups of three students. You have to mime an action (a verb) in connection with a word that explains *how* you do something. Before you start, each group has to prepare some cards to give for other groups. See examples below:

You are driving slowly.
You are reading dramatically.
You are dancing wildly.

1-2

Interview a fellow student to find out what he or she does:

1. *Every week*
2. *Very well*
3. *Before getting up*
4. *Indoors*
5. *Better than anybody else*



6. *Frequently*
7. *Yearly*
8. *With difficulty*
9. *Every other month*
10. *Friday evenings*

1-3

Improve the following text by adding more Circumstantials so that we are given more information concerning time, place, manner, reason etc.

The girl was waiting. She noticed a boy. She asked him if he would like to dance. They danced and had a drink. They left together and got married.

Where do we place Circumstantials in a sentence?

Web activity 2

Comment on the position of the Circumstantials in the following sentences and decide if they could be placed in alternative positions:

- a. *Peter works out vigorously at the gym every Monday after work to strengthen his muscles.*
- b. *He has completely avoided sweets for more than a year.*
- c. *He recently lost 30 pounds.*
- d. *Actually, are you aware that he was previously my best friend?*
- e. *However, a week ago I decided that our friendship had ended.*

Web activity 3

Insert some Circumstantials of time, place and manner in the following sentences. Use a variety of Adverb Groups, Prepositional Groups and sub-clauses.

- a. *Michael baked a cake.*
- b. *The handsome boy gave the girl a ring.*
- c. *The old man was looking for his dog.*
- d. *Nigel says that his wife has understood him.*
- e. *Mary said her child was ill.*
- f. *Peter says that Mary and Max were seen together.*

Web activity 4

Write sentences with the following Circumstantials to show that their meanings change depending on their position in the sentence: *frankly, wisely, honestly, naturally* and *thoroughly*.

Web activity 5

1. Try the following activity for learners.
2. Discuss how important you think knowing the positions of Circumstantials is and when to teach this issue. Can you think of other activities?

In pairs or groups: cut out the following slips of paper.

- Identify the Circumstantials and the other sentence constituents and put them in the right order in order to write one long sentence.



- Discuss your solution and argue why you put the Circumstantials where you did.
- Afterwards discuss how you could simplify the task for use at school.

In order to catch a glimpse of her
For a few minutes
Left
Once again
Curiously enough
Last Monday
Well

Without locking the door
The room
Quietly
Jack
Without really meaning any harm
To tell the truth

After reading about Circumstantials

Web activity 6.

Guess my word

In groups of 3 students, automatize your metalanguage concerning Circumstantial by playing this card game.

1. Cut the cards below, shuffle them and put them in a pile on the table.
2. The first player picks up a card and describes this to the other students. He must do so by giving examples, using synonyms and using other strategies to explain the term for the others to guess.
3. The student who guesses the terms gets the card and picks up the next card.
4. The winner is the person to guess most cards.

Circumstantial	C of Manner	C of time	C of frequency	C of place
C of degree	C of reason	Sentence Circumstantial	C of condition	
Circumstantial sub-clause	Linking Circumstantial	Stylistic Circumstantial	Modal Circumstantial	adverb

Web activity 7.

Identify, correct and explain problems about Circumstantials in the sentences below:

- She complained that she always was tired.*
- When the doctor a few minutes later returned, the patient had left.*
- On her birthday he forgot seldom to bring her flowers.*
- I frankly don't care.*
- She writes often letters for her sister.*
- He thoughtfully walked down the road.*
- I hope that it soon will be summer.*
- Somebody had removed all his papers when he after lunch returned to his class.*
- He understood that she not was ready to go.*



- j. *I think under all circumstances that you will pass your exam.*
- k. *If you for some reason cannot come, please, phone me.*
- l. *She tried quietly to sneak away.*
- m. *His criticism has fully been met.*
- n. *The students were noisily shouting when Mrs Smith entered the room.*
- o. *I firstly think you are right and I think secondly that you should get the job.*
- p. *How can I as an English teacher motivate my learner to speak more English?*

Web activity 8.

Reflect on what you learned.

A. Reflections in relation to didactics

1. Sum up what is most important for an English teacher to know about Circumstantials.
 - a. What meaning do the Circumstantials add to texts and which questions can we ask to find Circumstantials in a sentence?
 - b. What is the difference between adverbs and Circumstantials?
 - c. What are ordinary Circumstantials compared to sentence circumstantial?
 - d. Which types of sentence circumstantials do you know?
2. Sum up what is difficult for Danes in relation to the position of Circumstantials
 - a. Where do we place Circumstantials in English and what does it depend on and where do we place them in Danish?
3. Discuss how you would handle the progression of Circumstantials in your English teaching

When would you start teaching Circumstantials – why?

 - a. What is most important for the pupils to learn?
 - b. What is easiest?
 - c. What needs internalisation already for young learners?
 - d. Will you distinguish between adverbs and Circumstantials and if so, how will you explain the difference to pupils?
4. Think back at your own experience as a pupil. Has reading this chapter made you change your opinion about what was good/bad about it?

B. Reflect on what you have learnt

1. Which areas relating to Circumstantials do you master now?
2. In which areas do you need to improve?
3. Are you able to distinguish between adverbs and Circumstantials?

Web activity 9.

Analyse the learner's text below:

1. How many types of Circumstantials does this pupil use in terms of meaning? Remember to look for Ordinary Circumstantials as well as the three types of Sentence Circumstantials.
2. What do you think of his use of Circumstantials regarding the level of style and the genre of this text? What effect have they got in connection with the coherence and cohesion of the text?
3. Decide the form of at least 10 of them (PrepGs, sub-clauses, AdvG etc) and comment on their position in the sentence.
4. Sum up: How is this student doing regarding Circumstantials?



1 *From Hamburg to Skagen*
2 *First I want to tell why, I have chosen this subject for my essay. Well, actually, I couldn't figure out what to*
3 *write about so I phoned my sister who is in high school. I asked her what she wrote the last time she had an*
4 *English essay but she couldn't remember. We spoke for a while and certainly she said: "now I know!. "I once*
5 *had to write an essay about a vagabond who walked from Hamburg to Skagen with his two dogs". "I was*
6 *supposed to tell about his experiences and about life as a vagabond..." I couldn't stop laughing – what a*
7 *crazy subject. But, nonetheless, here is what I wrote:*
8 *"...And the train to Copenhagen leaves within five minutes!". Copenhagen...I cannot remember the last time*
9 *I was there. How long is it actually since...Oh, I will not think about it. Now the important thing is, how to*
10 *get something to eat!! I rise from the bench and leave the station behind. I know I'm not aloud to be there.*
11 *Especially not with my two dogs – but it's them who keeps me alive and otherwise, who was I suppose to speak*
12 *to?*
13 *I walk down the road looking at signs pointing in different directions. Berlin, Frankfurt, Schwerin and*
14 *Flensburg. Flensburg – near Denmark. Denmark...What is wrong with my mind today? I haven't thought*
15 *about it for so long time! Why now? I pass a small grocery and suddenly I stop. I look at the newspaper*
16 *outside the grocery. 6th August 1997. That's why my mind is so freakish today! It is exactly three years ago*
17 *since I left Denmark. And not only Denmark...I look around. I see a road, shops, cars, trees and people with*
18 *families and lives. And then me in my torn clothes with my two dogs.*
19 *"Hey, you bum – what are you doing there?" The shopkeeper is standing in the doorway and he points at*
20 *me. He seems suspicious but also a little worried. I look back at him but say nothing. Not because I don't*
21 *want to answer the man but I don't know what to tell him. The truth is that I don't know what I'm doing*
22 *here. Then I just start to walk. Behind I hear the shopkeeper yell at me but I don't turn around, I just keep on*
23 *walking with my dogs.*
24 *I walk for several hours and when i finally stop, I have reached the countryside. I don't know where I am but*
25 *it doesn't matter anyway. The important thing is that I have taken the first step towards home. I cannot*
26 *walk more for today and I'm also starving and so is the dogs. I have to find a place for the night where I can*
27 *have something to eat. Not far away, I see a farm. This is maybe an opportunity? I walk down the unpaved*
28 *road and knock on the door. A small, skinny old man opens the door. "yes?," he says. I introduce myself and*
29 *ask for a piece of bread and a place to sleep for me and my dogs. the man looks at me with green, needle*
30 *eyes. "You can stay here for tonight but you have to sleep in the barn, " he says and looks over his shoulder.*
31 *then he whispers: "My wife..She cannot stand dogs you know..." I assure him that it's all right with me as*
32 *long as I get something to eat. The man laughs and promises me that best meal I have ever got. "And by the*
33 *way," he says, "my name is Jack".*
34 *The next day, Jack asks me if I want to go with him to Flensburg. It is his weekly market day so he is going*
35 *anyway. Obviously, I say yes and then we take of. When we arrive at Flensburg, I say goodbye to Jack and*
36 *thank him fo the stay overnight.*
37 *Now, here I am in Flensburg. So much near Denmark – and I have never felt such a wish as right now, in this*
38 *very moment, to come home. I have to go but I know that I have a long way. My home in Denmark is Skagen*
39 *and my God, I miss it! A bed to sleep in, the kitchen with a view over the see, shower, the garden with all the*
40 *flowers and the swing belonging to Isabel...I have to keep on walking – and so I do. It's almost evening when*
41 *I reach the border. A lot of people are standing in a line and I place myself behind an elderly lady with blue*
42 *hair and a small travel bag. She turns to me and says: "hallo young man. Are you from Denmark or from*
43 *Germany?". "Denmark", I answer and think about how long time it is since I last spoke Danish. It's now the*
44 *elderly lady's turn to get trough the border and she turns around and passes. Now it's my turn and I pass*
45 *too with my dogs. I'm in Denmark!*
46 *That night I slept on a bench and the next day, I started to walking again. I walked for a week and passed a*
47 *lot of different towns. I slept at places here and there but my mind was only on Skagen, Isabel and my wife*
48 *so I didn't feel the cold at night and how much I was starving. I just couldn't wait to see them. Isabel must*
49 *be about four years now. She was only a baby when I left them.*
51 *In Århus I find a hostel to stay for the night. After having a shower I go to the sitting room to watch*



51 television. I finally allow myself to relax but then I hear a voice saying: "I know you". I look around but
52 cannot see anyone I know. "You're from Skagen. It was you who left your wife and baby!" I saw it in the
53 newspaper. you couldn't take it any longer – could you?" I look around once more and now, I see a man
54 sitting in the corner of the room. He is wearing torn clothes and he sound drunk. But I know him. He once
55 lived in the same neighbourhood as I did in Skagen. But he was a drunk and one day he just disappeared.
56 And here he is. "Everyone knew your wife was insane", he says to me. I look at him and feel how I begin to
57 hate this man. How can he allow himself..He knows that we are in the same situation! I scream at him:
58 "Leave me alone and don't tell me what's right and wrong – do you hear me!". He looks a little surprised
59 but then just laugh at me. This is too much. I will not waist my time any longer with this man so I leave
60 to get some sleep.

61 The next day I wake up early. Today I will reach my home –even if I have to steal a car! I leave the hostel and go
62 to the road to hichhike. After a while I see a man come towards me. At first I cannot see who it is, but t
63 hen I see – it is the drunken man from yesterday! When he reaches me he stops and says: "You are going
64 home, aren't you?" I don't answer. The man continues: "I know where to get a lift". I look at him
65 suspiciously. But then I say: "Yeah – and where should that be?". "I have a friend who is going to Skagen in
66 an hour", he says, "we can go with him". I stand for a while not thinking of anything. Then I turn to the man
67 and says: "Are you going home too?". He nods and we start to walk to find the man who's going to Skagen.
68 After having found him, we drive for while and then we reach Skagen. The man drops us in the middle of the
69 town and I say goodbye to both of them and start to walk home. I reach home after ten minutes and I stop a
70 fair distance from the house. There it is. My home, my family – everything. A little girl is playing in the front
71 garden. It must be Isabel!! I will go towards her but I abruptly stop. There she is, my wife, prettier than ever
72 – but next to her there is a man, picking up Isabel. One happy family. I turn around and walk away..

Links for activities and resources

- http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/magnets/adv_magnets.htm
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/topic/adverbs/resources/l1>
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/english-grammar/adverbials>

