

Position of adverbs: difference between British and American English

Mid-position adverbs usually go after auxiliary verbs, after *am / are / is / was / were* and before other verbs.

She has never written to me.

The discussion was mainly about politics.

When there are two or more auxiliary verbs, the adverb usually goes after the first.

You have definitely been working hard.

In American English, mid-position adverbs are often put before auxiliary verbs and *am / are / is / was / were*, even when the verb is not emphasized.

You certainly have made him angry. (US)

You have certainly made him angry. (GB)

You are always late. (GB)

You always are late. (US)

America has long been known as a land of opportunities. (GB)

America long has been known as a land of opportunities. (US)

In British English, mid-position adverbs can go before auxiliary verbs and *am / are / is / was / were* when we want to emphasize the auxiliary verbs.

I am really sorry. (No emphasis on *am*.)

I really *AM* sorry. (Emphasis on *AM*)

In negative sentences, mid-position adverbs generally come before *not* if they emphasize the negative.

Compare:

I really don't like her. (Strong dislike)

I don't really like her. (Mild dislike)