

Very, Too, and Enough

Very is an adverb that intensifies adjectives. To intensify means to strengthen. Very precedes adjectives and strengthens the meaning of the adjective which immediately follows it. It precedes adjectives words referring to time, frequency, quantity, distance, manner, and condition.

Betty was very small for her age.
The bus stop was very far from her dorm room.

Too does not intensify. It has a more specific meaning than very. Too is usually followed by the infinitive form of the verb and is used when some action, either expressed by an infinitive or implied, is impossible as the result of the condition described by the word which follows too.

It was too cold to go to the beach. (It was impossible to go to the beach.)

Condition - too cold. | Result - cannot go to the beach

It was five miles to the bus stop. That was too far to walk. (It was impossible for Betty to walk to the bus stop.)

Condition - too far to walk | Result - cannot walk to the bus stop

Native speakers do not always express what is impossible but the use of too implies impossibility.

My coffee is too hot. (It is impossible for me to drink my coffee until it becomes cooler.)
Don't work too hard. (Don't work so hard that it is impossible for you to enjoy life.)

Enough means a sufficient amount. Enough is also followed by the infinitive and is used when the action expressed by the infinitive is made possible by the situation described by the word which precedes enough. A negative statement, of course, has the opposite meaning.

Betty was old enough to drink beer.
She wasn't strong enough to walk five miles every day.

Enough follows the word it modifies, whereas very and too precede the words they modify. Enough is also used with nouns, in which case it may precede or follow the word it modifies without any difference in meaning.

Betty's friend had enough money to buy both tickets.
Betty's friend had money enough to buy both tickets.

In everyday speech it is more common to place enough before the noun rather than after.