

Rather

Rather is an adverb of degree. Its meaning is similar to quite or fairly.

It is rather cold here.

You are rather late.

With adjectives and adverbs

When rather is used with adjectives and adverbs it often suggests ideas such as 'more than is usual' or 'more than was expected'.

'How was the program?' 'Rather good.' (I was surprised.)

She speaks English rather well – people often think that she is a native speaker.

Rather can modify nouns or noun phrases, with or without adjectives. When there is no adjective, rather comes before articles.

He is rather an idiot. (NOT He is a rather idiot.)

When there is an adjective, rather can come either before or after the articles.

It was rather a pleasant experience. OR It was a rather pleasant experience.

Rather can modify verbs.

I rather think she is committing a mistake.

He rather enjoys doing nothing.

Rather with comparatives and too

Rather can modify comparatives and too.

You eat rather too much.

It is rather later than I thought.

Rather than

This expression shows preference. It is normally used in parallel structures. For example, with two adjectives, two adverbs, two nouns etc.

I would prefer to have tea rather than coffee.

We ought to invest in education rather than buildings.