1. “Someone has stolen my wheels,” Tom said __________ .

3. “This rain is ruining my camping trip,” he said ___________ .

5. “I had to give up my job,” he said ___________ .

7. “Just call me T.S. I work for I.B.M.,” he said ___________ .

9. “Would you like to come over for dinner? he asked ___________ .

11. “How far away is the next star,” he asked ___________ .

13. “I can’t feel anything,” he said ___________ .

15. “I’m getting married next week,” he said ___________ .

17. “I’ll shuffle and pass out the cards,” he said ___________ .


(Answers to your Partner’s worksheet)

(2) patiently (a patient) (12) apparently (-become- a parent)
(4) earnestly (Earnest -Hemingway) (14) grimly (Grimm -brothers -)
(6) haltingly (halt -means stop-) (16) triumphantly (The Arc de Triumph)
(8) distastefully (-a bad- taste) (18) helplessly (-no house- helper)
(10) belatedly (-to- be late) (20) self-centeredly (-the- center -of the body-)

Q1: Is the answer ?
Q2: What’s the 1st (2nd, 3rd) letter?
A2: It’s an a, e, f, h, i, l, m, n, o, r, s, x
A2: It’s a b, c, d, g, j, k, p, q, t, u, v, w, y
2. “Doctor! This is an emergency,” Tom said ____________ .

4. “What was Hemingway’s first name?” he asked ____________ .


8. “I’m not a very good cook,” he said ____________ .

10. “Sorry I didn’t arrive on time,” he said ____________ .

12. “She is my first child,” he said ____________ .


16. “I’ve been to that big arch in Paris,” he said ____________ .

18. “I have to do all this work by myself,” he said ____________ .

20. “This is my bellybutton,” he said ____________ .

(Answers to your Partner’s worksheet)

(1) tirelessly  
(-no- tires)  

(3) intently  
(-must stay- in -the- tent)  

(5) resignedly  
(resign -one’s job-)  

(7) initially  
(-TS & IBM- initials)  

(9) invitingly  
(invitation)  

(11) distantly  
(distance)  

(13) unemotionally  
(no emotion)  

(15) ceremoniously  
(-wedding- ceremony)  

(17) ideally  
(I deal -the cards-)  

(19) considerately  
(consider eight)

Q1: Is the answer ____________ ?

Q2: What’s the 1st (2nd, 3rd) letter?

A2: It’s an a, e, f, h, i, l, m, n, o, r, s, x

A2: It’s a b, c, d, g, j, k, p, q, t, u, v, w, y
More Tom Swifties

1. Student ability: Low Intermediate - Advanced
2. Approximate length of lesson: 25+
3. Number of students necessary: 2+
4. Preferred age/maturity: HS, College, Adult
5. Type of lesson: Pair Work Activity

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Language Target: A fun way to work with adverbs and build vocabulary.

Setting Up: This lesson deals with adverbs, the words that modify or qualify verbs or adjectives. They answer the questions when / how / how often / where / to what extent, an action has occurred? They often end in “-ly.”

Adverbs add feeling to the action and/or mood of a sentence. Compare these two sentences:

Eric drank his soup.
Eric suspiciously drank his soup.

Before handing out the worksheets, explain the purpose of adverbs. Introduce the adjective form of each of the adverbs by writing them one at a time on the board (suspicious - suspiciously etc.). Show how the adjectives can easily be changed into adverbs by adding “-ly.” Give examples of how to use the adverbs.

When ready, explain that there is a humorous way to use adverbs in a style known as Tom Swifties. [*Tom Swift*]
Write one of the Swifties from the worksheet (or an original) on the board. For example:

“Someone has stolen my wheels,” Tom said ______________.

The answer is the adverb tirelessly which adds emphasis to the manner in which the person spoke. Tom Swifties, are humorous; the words stolen and wheels (slang for car) work off each other to create the humor. Get it? His car was stolen so he doesn’t have any tires (tire-less!) Other examples:

“I shouldn’t have picked up that bomb, he said offhandedly.

“This coffee tastes terrible,” he said bitterly.

Getting Started: Pair the students and give each a copy of Worksheet A or B. Student A looks at the upper section (the sentences) and Student B looks at the lower section (the adverbs). Student A reads the first sentence:

“Someone has stolen my wheels,” Tom said ______________.

Student B knows the answer (tirelessly) but can not say it. Instead, Student A tries to guess the answer. If Student A can not come up with the answer, then he/she needs to ask Student B for some help. Student A then asks: What’s the 1st (2nd, 3rd) letter?

Student B replies: It’s a “t.”

Continue until Student A can identify the answer: tirelessly. When finished, Student B reads the first line from the worksheet, etc.
Variation 1: (Whole Class Method A): Divide the class into two (or more groups). Hand out Worksheet A to everyone in half of the groups and Worksheet B to the other half (everyone within each group should have the same Worksheet (A or B). All students need to fold their papers along the dotted line thus hiding the answers.

Groups race against each other to be the first to complete as many of the Tom Swifties as they can.

(Whole Class Method B): Don’t hand out either of the worksheets. The teacher simply reads the Tom Swifties as printed on the paper and students compete to be the first to answer them quickly and accurately.

Students should explain their choices, for example:

“Doctor! This is an emergency,” Tom said _____________.

One student may say: I think **patiently** is the best answer because of the words **doctor** and **emergency**. **Hospitals have doctors, emergencies and patients! So **patiently** is the best choice.**

If students can not imagine the answer, encourage them to ask:

*What’s the 1st (2nd, 3rd) letter?*

Variation 2: Higher ability students could complete the worksheet individually at first, then in pairs or small groups, compare answers and discuss differences.

Writing Practice: Have teams or pairs of students write their own Tom Swifties and quiz other students. Giving students some adverb suggestions can make this assignment much easier – for example: **heatedly, sickly, slowly, deliciously, quickly, loftily, carelessly**, etc.

Similar Lessons:

- **Tom Swifties**
  (Lesson Collection Set #2 – Lesson 7a)
- **Tom Swifties Plus**
  (Lesson Collection Set #2 – Lesson 7c)
- **Tom Swifties with Non-Adverbs**
  (Lesson Collection Set #2 – Lesson 7d).

Contributed by Kurt Scheibner

More Tom Swifties: Additional Tom Swifties can be found at these web sites:

- http://homepage.midusa.net/-shorock/jokes/swifties.htm

*Tom Swift was a character created by Edward L. Stratemeyer (1862-1930) pseudonym: Victor Appleton. In the Tom Swift Adventure series, Tom was an ingenious boy who invented amazing things and discovered remarkable places – the pages are dotted with his characteristic use of adverbs which has become known as Tom Swifties. Stratemeyer was also the creator of the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew and Bobbsey Twins series.*