

Fine

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“Fine» is often used incorrectly, especially by the Americans and sometimes, sadly (lamentablemente), by apparently educated (aparentemente educada) British speakers who should know better (deberían saber que eso no se hace).

I am not going to beat about the bush (no voy a andarme por las ramas).

“Fine” is an adjective, period (punto). It is not an adverb.

A sentence such as “The Spanish government is doing fine” is incorrect, because “fine” here is being used - incorrectly - as an adverb. The correct form would be to use an adverb as in “the Spanish government is doing well”.

The confusion may arise because the word fine can be used with the verb “to be”. We **are not saying how something is done or describing an action**, but saying something about the subject - in this case, the Spanish government. Examine these:

- Merkel is fine (or well). We can use the adjective “fine” here just as we can use other adjectives with the verb to be. For example, Mrs. Merkel is clever.
- Cameron is hungry. “Hungry” describes the subject, Mr. Cameron.
- Greece is bankrupt. “Bankrupt” describes the subject, Greece.

Here “fine” works in the same way as “hungry”, “bankrupt” (en quiebra) and “clever” (lista). . So we can say the following:

- The weather in Santa Úrsula is fine.

- Noor's carrot cake (pastel de zanahoria) smells fine.
- Ester's home-made (hecho en casa) whisky tastes fine.
- Vanesa's Galician fish soup looks fine.

So verbs such as "seem", "taste", "looks" (appearance/*aspecto*), and "smell" can "take" an adjective. Verbs such as "go", "work" and "run» should never take an adjective. It would be wrong to say that Mr. Sanchez, the Spanish socialist leader, "spoke bad". The correct form is "spoke badly" (badly being the adverb).

If you said the following you would have committed a clanger (metedura). The correction is in brackets (paréntesis).

- I hope your Cambridge First certificate exam goes fine (well).
- The Cambridge Proficiency in English exam went fine (well).

Other uses

If you use "fine" incorrectly, you could be "fined" (podría ser multada)! A "fine" is a "multa". "Fine" also means *fino, delgado y excelente*. Here are some examples:

- Fine hair (pelo fino).
- Ana is a fine/excellent musician (una música excelente).