The words **backward, backwards, forward, forwards, outward, outwards** etc can be used as adjectives and adverbs.

**As adjectives**

When these words are used as adjectives, they don’t have the –*s* ending. That means we can’t use forwards, backwards, outwards etc as adjectives. Instead we use forward, backward, outward etc.

There are many **backward** countries in Africa. (NOT There are many backwards countries in Africa. Here backward is used as an adjective modifying the noun countries.)

**He is backward** in his studies. (NOT He is backwards in his studies.)

**Forward** passes are not allowed in rugby. (NOT Forwards passes are not allowed in rugby.)

She was seen riding in a **northward** direction.

**As adverbs**

When these words are used as adverbs, they can be used **with or without the –*s* ending.**

While the forms with –*s* are more common in British English, the forms without –*s* are usually used in American English.

**Go upwards. OR Go upward.**

Why are you moving **backwards** and **forwards**? OR Why are you moving **backward** and **forward**?

In expressions like **look forward to, put forward** and **bring forward**, the form without –*s* is always used.

**We are looking forward to** your next visit. (NOT We are looking forwards to your next visit.)