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.)