

Grammer Slammer

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Adjectives

Adjectives are one of the four major word classes, along with nouns, verbs and adverbs. They are words that give us more information about nouns and pronouns.

Uses of adjectives

Give more information.

They modify or describe features and qualities of people, animals, things and ideas.

Antonyms

Many common adjectives are used as opposites. These are called ‘antonyms’

- » big/small, beautiful/ugly, fast/slow etc.

Comparative/superlative

Many adjectives are gradable, i.e. they have different degrees of the same feature:

- » big, bigger, biggest
- » beautiful, **more** beautiful, **most** beautiful
- » useful, **less** useful, **least** useful

Functions of Adjectives

predicative

following a linking verb as the predicate of the sentence

- » The dog **is** chasing the car down the street, (describing what the dog, as the subject of the sentence, is doing, but not describing the dog.)

attributive

coming before a noun where it describes the attributes of the noun

- » I want that **3 month old, Alsatian** dog.” (Here the attributes describe the dog and we could recognise it).
- » You are applying for a job - write down **your attributes** (describe yourself).

Nouns

- » Adjectives can function as nouns. (the rich, the famous, the sick etc).
- » Adjectives can be converted into nouns by adding the suffixes - ity, ness, cy, ance, ence (able/ability, shy/shyness, efficient/efficiency, important/importance, independent/independence).

Identifying adjectives

Some adjectives are easier to recognise than others. Try looking for the following:

- » Our **sense of** what they are doing in a sentence.
- » **Placement**
 - **before** the noun
 - **after** linking verbs.
- » **Suffixes** - some word endings are typical of adjectives.
 - -able/-ible manage**able**, cap**able**, leg**ible**, incred**ible**.
 - -al grammatic**al**, function**al**, influent**ial**, ban**al**.
 - -ful beauti**ful**, care**ful**, aw**ful**, fright**ful**.
 - -ic artist**ic**, iron**ic**, lacon**ic**, fantast**ic**.
 - -ive corros**ive**, intuit**ive**, aggress**ive**, alive.
- » **Antonyms**
 - good/bad
- » **Comparative and superlatives.**
 - diligent
 - **more** diligent(comparative)
 - **most** diligent(superlative)
- » **-ing and -ed.**
 - I am amus**ed**
 - this is amus**ing**

Adjective phrases

An adjective phrase is a word or a group of words that act as an adjective. The adjective phrase can contain words or phrases before or after the noun. If they come before the noun they are called 'modifiers' or if after, they are called 'complements'.

Functions

- » change or add meaning to nouns (attributive)
- » act as a complement to a linking verb. (predicative)

The complement **follows** the linking verb to describe the subject - what it is, does or experiences. Linking verbs include - **be, seem, become, feel, smell, taste**. When adjective phrases complement verbs, this is called their predicative function.

- Brenda **is happy at work**. (Don't forget, the verb is included in the predicate).

Object complements

We also use nouns, pronouns and **adjective phrases** to give more information about an object so as to complete its meaning (object complement). Object complements often follow 'naming' and 'making' verbs:

- » We all found him easy to listen to.
- » The committee found him too expensive for requirement.

Position

The usual order in English is to place the adjective before the noun(attributive), or after linking verbs such as be, become, seem (predicative).

Words and phrases that go before or after them adjectives

- » Intensifiers
so, totally, extremely, really, terribly, very, bloody
- » mitigators
fairly, rather, quite, quite good/bad, a bit, a little bit, just a bit

Different meanings of adjectives before the noun and after the verb

- » Adjectives before the noun describe the noun.
 - A red **sunset**.
 - A difficult **lesson**.
- » Adjectives after the noun describe the noun.
 - Go **somewhere** quiet
 - Do **something** interesting
- » Adjectives after the linking verb add information to the subject.
 - This lesson **seems** difficult.
 - Tom **is** on his way to London.
- » A noun is sometimes used before another noun to give more information about it. This is an adjective function and is called a **noun modifier**(in blue below).
Adjectives (adj) come before noun modifiers:
 - The brilliant **Hong Kong** student.
brilliant(adj) / Hong Kong(noun modifier) / student(main noun)
 - The most expensive **football** player.

Order of adjectives

When adjectives are used before the noun (attributive function), there is a generally accepted order of precedence in the word order

Item		Description
1	Determiner	always comes first
2	Observation	general description
3	Physical description	size, shape, age, colour Always use in this order.
4	Origin	where from
5	Material	type
6	Qualifier	what kind of
7	...NOUN	