

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns and pronouns. They tell what kind, how many, or which one.

LOCATION

Adjectives are usually found preceding the noun or following a linking verb.

EXAMPLES: She has **dark** hair. (*Dark* precedes the noun, *hair*.)
He is a **nice** person. (*Nice* precedes the noun, *person*.)
She looks **happy**. (*Happy* describes the pronoun, *she*.)

ADJECTIVES IN COMPARISONS

Adjectives can be used to make comparisons by adding *-er*, *-est*, *more*, or *most*.

EXAMPLES: She is **smart**. (regular form)
She is **smarter** than Melissa. (comparative form)
She is the **smartest** person in the group. (superlative form)
He is **good**. (regular form)
He is **better** than Craig. (comparative form)
He is the **best** in the group. (superlative form)

ARTICLES AS ADJECTIVES

Articles are a subcategory of adjectives. There are two types of articles: **definite** (*the*) and **indefinite** (*a, an*).

ORDER OF ADJECTIVES IN A SENTENCE

When two or more adjectives modify a noun, they usually occur in the following order:

1. Determiner: *a, an, the, this, that, these, those*, possessives (*its, our*), quantity words (*several, some*), numerals (*two, twelve*)
2. Adjective of evaluation: *boring, disgusting, comfortable, cheap, heavy*
3. Adjective describing size: *little, big, huge*
4. Adjective describing shape: *round, square, long*
5. Adjective describing age: *new, young, old*
6. Adjective describing color: *green, red, blue*
7. Adjective describing nationality: *Asian, Italian*
8. Adjective describing faith: *Catholic, Muslim*
9. Adjective describing material: *metal, wooden, plastic*
10. Noun used as an adjective: *kitchen cabinet, writing desk*

EXAMPLES: **The huge, majestic, snow-covered** mountains.
A delicious, inexpensive, Italian meal.
He was a **consistent, hardworking, invaluable** player.

NOTE: Long lists of adjectives usually detract from the flow of the text, so lists of more than two or three adjectives should generally be avoided. It is far more effective to find one or two adjectives that precisely capture the intended meaning than to clutter descriptive writing with multiple, imprecise modifiers.

ADVERBS

Adverbs describe verbs, other adverbs, and adjectives, as well as whole clauses. They can be one word or a series of words. They tell where, when, how, why, under what circumstances, or to what extent.

USE OF ADVERBS

Adverbs are often used to describe direction, location, manner, time, and frequency.

- EXAMPLES: He wrote **in the kitchen**. (Where did he write? *In the kitchen*.)
He wrote **last week**. (When did he write? *Last week*.)
He wrote **carefully**. (How did he write? *Carefully*.)
He wrote **because he wanted to**. (Why did he write? *Because he wanted to*.)
He wrote **while eating**. (Under what conditions? *While eating*.)
He wrote **with all his heart**. (To what extent? *With all his heart*.)

FORMATION OF ADVERBS

Adverbs are often formed by adding the suffix *-ly* to an adjective.

- EXAMPLES: Unfortunately, she felt differently than he did.
She picked up the book quickly and joyfully began reading it.

Some adverbs are not derived from adjectives.

- EXAMPLES: Ryan liked England **a lot**.
The dog was **very** fat because it loved food **so much**.
The author writes **well**.

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS: APPROPRIATE USAGE

A common mistake is to use an adjective where an adverb is needed, or vice versa. To avoid confusion remember that adjectives modify nouns and pronouns, and adverbs modify verbs, adverbs, or other adjectives.

- INCORRECT: Brandon and Melissa took the joke too **serious**. (*Serious* is intended to modify *took*, so an adverb is needed in its place.)
CORRECT: Brandon and Melissa took the joke too **seriously**.
INCORRECT: I am doing **good** today. (*Good* is intended to modify *doing*, so an adverb is needed in its place.)
CORRECT: I am doing **well** today.

In some instances, either an adjective or an adverb would be appropriate in the sentence, depending on the desired meaning of the sentence.

- EXAMPLES: The dog smells **bad**. (This sentence is saying that the dog stinks.)
The dog smells **badly**. (This sentence is saying that the dog has a hard time with its sense of smell.)