

Lesson No. 04

Adjectives

KEY POINTS

Adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns (people, places, things, or animals) or pronouns. They describe the noun by telling us its size, shape, age, colour, etc.

Examples:

- It is a **rotten** egg. (Observation)
- It is a **beautiful** painting of dinosaurs. (Opinion)
- It is a **big** cat from Africa. (Size)
- It is a **rectangular** field. (Shape)
- It is an **ancient** castle. (Age)
- It is a **black** bull. (Colour)
- It is an **Indian** elephant. (Origin)
- It is a **cotton** dress. (Material)
- It is a **school** bus. (Purpose)

There are different kinds of adjectives which include the following:

Demonstrative adjectives are **this, that, these, and those**. We use them to point out specific people or things: **this, that, these, those**.

Descriptive adjectives are the most common adjectives. We use them to describe nouns.

Interrogative adjectives are words such as **what, which, and whose** that modify nouns. We use an interrogative adjective with a noun to ask a question.

Indefinite adjectives are words like **all, any, each, few, many, much, most, several, and some** that describe nouns in a general or non-specific manner.

Possessive adjectives modify nouns or noun phrases and are words such as **my, your, his, her, its, our, and their** which we use before nouns to show possession.

Identifying adjectives in a sentence

As the adjective comes immediately before a noun, its position in a sentence is usually between the following:

an article (**a, an, the**) and a noun: a **sandy** beach, an **old** church, the **vast** ocean

a demonstrative (**this, that, these, those**) and a noun: this **new** book, that **wild** horse

an amount (**all, few, most, several, some, most**) and a noun: few **unpaid** volunteers, several **bad** mistakes

Adjectives as complements

Adjectives can act as complements although not all complements are adjectives. Complements tell us what the subject is, and they come after the subject. If the complement is only one word, it is very likely to be an adjective.

Examples:

- He is **tall, dark and handsome**.
- You are **beautiful**.
- The sky was **cloudless**.
- The elephants have been **trained**.

Types of Adjectives

Descriptive adjectives

Descriptive adjectives (**careless, black, small, long, fat, English, Mediterranean, three-cornered**) are the most numerous. Remember that adjectives modify or describe nouns only and not verbs. Adjectives describe nouns that refer to action (**kind act, hard work**); state that comes after linking verbs (**feel tired, was excited**), or quality (**strong wind, sad story**).

Examples:

- **dangerous** chemicals

- **green** vegetables
- a **square** box
- a **big** house
- a **tall** tree
- a **cold** morning
- a **powerful** motorbike
- **English** language
- **Mediterranean** country

Adjective of quantity

An adjective of quantity tells us the **number (how many)** or **amount (how much)** of a noun.

Examples:

- He has eaten **three** apples.
- I don't have **enough** pocket money.
- They brought along **a few** sandwiches.
- There is a **little** dust on the bookshelf.
- There are **some** birds in the tree.
- We have **much** wine for the guests.
- This long, thin centipede has **many** legs.

Demonstrative adjective

There are four words that are used as demonstrative adjectives: **this, that, these, those**. We use **this** and **that** with nouns to show the nouns are singular (**this/that** computer = one computer) and **these** and **those** with nouns to show they are plural (these/those ants = more than one ant).

Examples:

- **This** dog had no tail.
- **That** pig has a curly tail.
- **These** trousers are now too tight for me.
- **Those** monkeys are noisy.

Demonstrative adjectives should not be confused with demonstrative pronouns. Whether they are demonstrative adjectives or demonstrative pronouns depends on how they are used in a sentence. One way to distinguish between them is that demonstrative pronouns are not used before a noun. Instead, they are used by themselves in place of a noun.

Possessive adjective

A possessive adjective, also called a possessive determiner, expresses possession of a noun by someone or something by modifying the noun. Possessive adjectives are the same as possessive pronouns. All the possessive adjectives are listed in the following table:

Possessive adjectives	
Singular	Plural
My	Our
Your	Your
His	Their
Her	Their
Its	Their

Examples of possessive adjectives

Examples:

- I spent **my** afternoon painting the toilet.
- This must be **your** missing pencil.
- **His** arms have a few tattoos.
- **Its** skin is dry and rough.
- **Our** grandmothers were classmates.

Comparative Adjectives

Adjectives have three forms which we can use when we compare two or more nouns: positive, comparative and superlative. The positive form is used when comparing two equal persons or things, and the comparative and superlative forms when comparing two or more unequal nouns.

The positive form

When we use the positive form of adjective to make comparison, we use such expressions: **as . . . as**; **not as . . . as**, etc. to compare two equal things or persons.

Examples:

- My uncle is **bald**.
- My uncle is **as bald as** a cue ball.
- His head is **big**.
- His head is **as big as** my head.
- His wife is very **charming**.
- His ex-wife is **not as charming as** his wife.

The comparative form

We can also use adjectives to compare two nouns in terms of size, length, quality and others. The comparative form is used to compare two unequal persons or things. In using the comparative form of adjective to describe how one person or thing is when compared to another person or thing, we add the letters **-er** to the end of the adjective words (**big – bigger**; **small – smaller**) and the word **than** after the comparative adjective (**longer than**, **taller than**).

Examples:

- A hen's egg is **bigger than** a pigeon's egg.
- Our fingers are **longer than** our toes.
- This basketball player is **taller than** that footballer.
- She says her pet hen walks **faster than** her pet duck.
- His head is **bigger than** my head.

Not all adjectives can end with **-er** for some adjectives, we use the word **more** in front of them (**careful – more careful**; **tired – more tired**). When using the word **more**, we also use the word **than** to follow the comparative adjective (**more careful than**; **more tired than**).

Examples:

- This morning, my grandmother appeared **more cheerful than** my grandfather.
- Those little monkeys **are more active than** the old ones.
- She is **more skillful** at drawing panda bears **than** her sister.

Some words cannot be used as comparative adjectives by adding "-er"

Examples:

- **No:** foolish – foolisher / useful – usefuler
- **Yes:** The right words to use are **more foolish / more useful**

Do not use "more" and "er" together for an adjective when making comparison

Examples:

- **No:** A yard is **more longer** than a foot.
Yes: A yard is **longer** than a foot.
- **No:** These oranges are **much sweeter** than those.
Yes: These oranges are **sweeter** than those.

More than one comparative adjective may be used to make a comparison

Examples:

- The paperback edition of the book is **cheaper and lighter** than the hardback copy.
- Today's weather is **sunnier and warmer** than yesterday's.

The superlative form

We use the superlative adjective when we compare three or more nouns. It is formed by adding **est** to the end of the adjective or adding the word **most** in front of it. The word **the** has to precede the superlative adjective.

Examples:

- My great grandfather is **the oldest** one in the family.

- She has **the prettiest** face in the whole school.
- He talks **the loudest** in his circle of friends.
- Bozo is **the funniest** clown in the circus.
- Your sister is **the most talkative** person in class.
- It is a small chair but **the most comfortable** chair in the house.
- He was **the most injured** among the victims.

One syllable

For adjectives of one syllable, we normally add **-er** to the end of the comparative adjective (high – higher, weak – weaker) and **-est** in their superlative forms (highest, weakest).

If an adjective of one syllable ends with an **e**, just add an **r** (pale – paler; safe – safer).

If an adjective ends in a consonant, the consonant must be doubled (big – bigger; mad – madder)

Two syllables

Example of an adjective that has two syllables: **funny** has two syllables: **fun-ny**

If an adjective has two syllables and ends in **y**, drop the **y** and add **-ier** (early – earlier; happy – happier; pretty – prettier).

If an adjective has two syllables and does not end in **y**, add the word **more** before the adjective (more handsome, more helpful; more purple).

Examples:

- She felt **happier** than she had been for a long time.
- The lifts are **more helpful** to the older patients.

Three syllables

Example of a three-syllable adjective: **beautiful** has three syllables: **beau-ti-ful**.

For an adjective with three or more syllables, use the word **more** in front of the adjective to form the comparative form and the word **most** in front of the superlative form.

Examples:

- She wears heavy make-up to make herself **more beautiful**.
- The Town Clock Tower is **the most beautiful** building in the city.
- The weather was **more terrible** when it got dark.
- It must have been **the most terrible** experience for the survivors.
- Man is still **more intelligent** than the cleverest robot.
- The eldest one is **the most intelligent** of the five sisters.

Irregular adjectives

Some adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms.

The following table shows **adjectives that are not regular**

as good as	better than	the best
as bad as	worse than	the worst
as little as	less than	the least
as much as	more than	the most
as many as	more than	the most
as far as	farther than	the farthest
as far as	further than	the furthest

Participial Adjectives

There is a class of adjectives that is formed from participles, both present participle (verb ending in **-ing**) and past participle (verb ending in **-ed**). Such adjectives are called **participial adjectives**.

Present participle: He is **damaging** his health by smoking excessively.

Past participle: He has **damaged** his health through excessive smoking.

Present participle used as adjective: Excessive smoking has a **damaging** effect on his health.

Past participle used as adjective: His **damaged** health is caused by excessive smoking.

The present participle adjective tells us about something or someone that causes a feeling: **amazing**.

The past participle adjective tells us how someone feels about something or someone else: **amazed**.

Present participle adjective: The **amazing** acrobatic display captivated the audience.
Past participle adjective: They stared at the magic performance in **amazed** disbelief.

How the two different endings of participial adjectives are used

Examples:

- Their **annoyed** housemate told them to lower their voices. (Verb: annoy)
- He has the **annoying habit** of picking his nose.
- The **decayed** body of a cat attracted many flies. (Verb: decay)
- The smell of **decaying** meat was nauseating.
- She made **frustrated** attempts to look for the size she wanted. (Verb: frustrate)
- It was a **frustrating** experience when none of them listened to what I said.
- We could see the **interested** look on her face. (Verb: interest)
- I must say it was a very **interesting** book.
- The **painted** picture of a dodo's egg won the first prize. (Verb: paint)
- The **painting** work has been done to a professional standard.
- The second paper is a **written** test. (Verb: write)
- She was chosen for her **writing** skill.
- The police are investigating the **burnt** car.
- A huge cloud of smoke rose from a **burning** oil tank.
- The **excited** crowd waited for the actress to arrive.
- It was an **exciting** match.
- My **frightened** grandmother related about being chased by dogs.
- Climbing that mountain was a **frightening** experience.

Modifying participial adjectives

Participial adjectives can be modified to show their intensity. To modify these adjectives, use adverbs such as **completely, extremely, fiercely, less, more, most, rather, really, so, very, etc.**

Examples:

- The police are investigating the **completely burnt** cars.
- A huge cloud of smoke rose from a **fiercely burning** oil tank.
- The **very excited** crowd waited for the actress to arrive.
- It was a **really exciting** match.
- My **rather frightened** grandmother related about her being chased by dogs.
- Climbing that mountain was an **extremely frightening** experience.

Most participial adjectives can be both attributive and predicative

Examples:

- It is a **computerized** system.
- The **system** is computerized.
- She is an **intelligent** little girl.
- The **little girl** is intelligent.
- This is an **exciting** new magazine.
- This **new magazine** is exciting.
- I could hear **irritating** snores coming from his bedroom.
- I could hear snores **that are irritating** coming from his bedroom.

Adjectives Function as Nouns

Some adjectives are used as nouns to describe groups of people. For example, when we refer to sick people, we can simply say **the sick**. The adjective takes the place of the noun and the noun that the adjective modifies is removed. Each of these adjectives must follow the definite **the**. There are **the blind, the deaf, the elderly, the famous, the homeless, the innocent, the intelligent, the jobless, the meek, the old, the poor, the politically correct, the privileged, the rich, the sick, the strong, the underprivileged, the unemployed, the weak, the wealthy, the young, etc.**

Examples:

- The seaside resort is frequented by **the rich and famous**.
- Every year, millions join the ranks of **the unemployed** worldwide.
- There were complaints of inadequate facilities in the new toilets for **the disabled**.
- There seems to have no plans to provide cheap housing for **the homeless**.

The nouns are used in the plural and the verbs that follow them must therefore be plural

Examples:

- **The injured** were in the thousands.
- **The disabled** have found it very difficult to get jobs.

Sometimes, the noun is a singular

Examples:

- **The accused** is found guilty.
- **The deceased** was believed to have killed himself.

Adjectives used as nouns without 'the'

The word "the" need not always have to follow the adjectival noun. It depends on how the adjectival noun is used in a sentence.

Examples:

- We do take care of our **elders**.
- The government should do something for our **homeless**.
- There must be a law to ensure the rights of **minors** are protected.
- How do you treat your **blind** in your province?

Possession of adjectival nouns

The possession of adjectival nouns is not normally indicated by the use of an apostrophe s ('s). The correct way is to use of as shown here.

Examples:

- **No:** More luxurious apartments are being built to meet the wealthy's demand.
Yes: More luxurious apartments are being built to meet the demand **of** the wealthy.
- **No:** The new policies will promote the poor's and the unemployed's welfare.
Yes: The new policies will promote the welfare **of** the poor and the unemployed.

Order of Adjectives

The correct order for a row of adjectives modifying a noun

It happens often that two adjectives or even several adjectives are used to describe a noun. With more than one adjective in a row, there is a specific order for this group of adjectives to follow.

The following shows categories of adjectives in the correct order in which they are used to describe a noun.

Determiner – We normally begin a sentence of this nature with a determiner. The determiner can be an article (a, an, the), a demonstrative adjective (this, that, these, those), a possessive adjective (my, your, his, her, its, our, their) or an amount.

Observation/Opinion – beautiful, best, dirty, funny, sweet, ugly, worthless

Size – big, large, small, huge, short, thick, 2-foot-long

Age* -- aged, elderly, new, 6-year-old, senior, young, youthful

Shape – circular, flat, oblong, oval, round, square, triangular

Colour – blue, emerald, green, orange, red, violet, yellow

Origin/Location – African, British, Chinese, Hawaiian, Japanese, Roman, Surinamese (It tells us where the noun comes from)

Material – bronze, gold, plastic, silk, silver, steel, wooden

Qualifier/purpose – It can be a noun (**garden tool**) or verb (**used car**) acting as an adjective.

(*Sometimes, age comes after shape.)

Examples

- I carried a very small black suitcase.
- They have some old French paintings.
- She was wearing a new red silk dress.
- That is a really ugly wooden chair.
- We bought a new round kitchen table.

ETEA PAST PAPERS (Lesson No. 4 Adjectives)

ETEA MEDICAL PAPER YEAR 2017

- Q 8) While the city has earned record revenue this Year will behind in exports:
- (a) It still lag (b) It still lags
(c) It lag still (d) It lags still

ANSWER: (b)

- Q 9) Which of the following is not a adjective?
- (a) Bravery (b) Intelligent
(c) Beautiful (d) Honest

ANSWER: (a)

- Q 10) Which of the following is not a adjective?
- (a) Bravery (b) Intelligent
(c) Beautiful (d) Honest

ANSWER: (a)

- Q 11) The people who are hardworking always succeed
The underlined part of the sentences is.
- (a) Non defining clause (b) Phrase
(c) Defining clauses (c) Adjective clause

ANSWER: (d)

ETEA MEDICAL PAPER YEAR 2014

- Q 12) Choose the correct sentence:
- (a) The lecture was long, a bore and uninspired.
(b) The lecture was long, a bore and uninspiring.
(c) The lecture was long, boring and uninspiring.
(d) The lecture was a long, a bore and an uninspiring.

ANSWER: (c)

ETEA MEDICAL PAPER YEAR 2011

- Q 13) We need _____ guidelines to start with.
- (a) a few (b) any (c) little (d) some

HINT: The word guidelines is countable noun which takes "a few" as an appropriate adjective.

ANSWER: (a)