

APSU Writing Center

Adjectives

Adjectives

An adjective is a word or phrase that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun. Adjectives answer the questions: What kind? How many? Which ones?

- **Examples:** tall, old, larger, smaller, beautiful, etc.

Comparative Adjectives

- Compares two people, places, or things.
 - **Example:** We moved from a big city to a **smaller** town.
 - **Examples:** angrier, busier, happier, kinder, nicer, wiser, etc.

Forming Comparatives

- One-syllable adjectives: add -er.
 - **Example:** clear → clearer
- One-syllable adjectives ending in -y: replace -y with -i, then add -er.
 - **Example:** dry → drier
- Two-syllable adjectives ending in -er, -le, or -ow: add -er.
 - **Example:** simple → simpler
- Two-syllable adjectives ending in -y: replace -y with -i, then add -er.
 - **Example:** ugly → uglier
- Adjectives ending in consonant-vowel-consonant: double the final consonant, then add -er
 - **Example:** big → bigger
- Two-syllable or longer adjectives: use more or less before the adjective.
 - **Example:** acceptable → more acceptable

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Superlative Adjectives

Superlative Adjectives

- Describes the highest degree or extreme.
 - **Example:** Out of every movie I have seen, that one was the **scariest**.
 - **Examples:** angriest, coolest, nicest, hungriest, iciest, jolliest, etc.

Forming Superlatives

- One-syllable adjectives: add -est
 - **Example:** warm → warmest
- One-syllable adjectives ending in -e: add -st
 - **Example:** vile → vilest
- One-syllable adjectives ending in -y: replace -y with -i, then add -est
 - **Example:** dry → driest
- Consonant-vowel-consonant endings: double the final consonant, then add -est
 - **Example:** hot → hottest
- Two-syllable adjectives ending in -er, -le, or -ow: add -est
 - **Example:** narrow → narrowest
- Two-syllable adjectives ending in -y: replace -y with -i, then add -est
 - **Example:** silly → silliest
- Other adjectives (two-syllables or longer): use most or least before the adjective.
 - **Example:** energetic → most energetic / least energetic

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Predicate Adjectives

- Appears in the predicate and describes the subject using a linking verb.
 - **Example:** The dog smells **bad**.
 - **Example:** The soup tastes **delicious**.

Common Linking Verbs

- **Be verbs:** be, is, are, am, was, were, been, being
- **Sense verbs:** feel, taste, look, sound, smell
- **Status verbs:** appear, become, seem, grow, turn, make, stay, keep, remain

Compound Adjectives

- Combines two or more words to act as a single adjective.
 - **Example:** We live in one of the most densely populated, highest-taxed, and most ethnically diverse states in the country.

Compound Adjective Forms

- Adjective + Noun → short-term, long-distance
- Adjective + Present Participle → fast-talking, backward-facing
- Noun + Past Participle → sun-dried, homegrown
- Number + Noun → second-place, four-wheel, seventeenth-century
- Noun + Adjective → ice-cold, cruelty-free
- Noun + Present Participle → German-speaking, self-effacing
- Adjective + Past Participle → double-baked, deep-fried
- Noun + Noun → meat eater, bulletproof

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Possessive Adjectives

- Shows ownership or possession of a noun.
 - **Example:** The mother bird was building her nest.
 - **Examples:** my, your, her, his, its, our, their, whose

Demonstrative Adjectives

- Describes the position of something or someone in space or time.
 - **Example:** This chair is comfortable.
 - **Examples:** this, that, these, those

Proper Adjectives

- Forms from a proper noun and appears before a noun or pronoun or after a linking verb.
 - **Example:** The new professor specializes in Mexican literature.
 - **Examples:** Victorian, Napoleonic, American, Japanese, etc.

Participial Adjectives

- Forms from a participle (usually ending in -ed or -ing) and modifies a noun or pronoun.
 - **Example:** I put on my running shoes.
 - **Past Participles (-ed):** bored, tired, excited, confused, amazed
 - **Present Participles (-ing):** running, fascinating, annoying, smiling, glowing

Descriptive Adjectives

- Describes or qualifies a noun or pronoun.
 - **Example:** The chickens were very loud.
 - **Examples:** beautiful, tall, small, quiet, colorful, delicious, bright, etc.

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Limiting Adjectives

- Restricts or limits a noun or pronoun, rather than describing qualities.
 - **Example:** Dakota owns some dogs.
- Types:
 - **Demonstrative:** this, that, these, those
 - **Interrogative:** whose, what, which
 - **Quantifying:** many, some, few, couple, any, all, several
 - **Cardinal numbers:** one, ten, thirty, one million
 - **Ordinal numbers:** first, fifth, sixteenth
 - **Possessive:** my, your, her, his, its, our, their, whose
 - **Articles:** a, an, the

Interrogative Adjectives

- Modifies a noun or pronoun to ask a question.
 - **Example:** **Which** color is your favorite?
 - **Examples:** which, what, whose

Attributive Adjectives

- Directly placed next to the noun or pronoun it modifies.
 - **Before noun (subject):** Purple flowers are my favorite.
 - **Before noun (object):** Peter picked purple flowers.
 - **Examples:** beautiful, purple, special, large, tiny, delicious

Distributive Adjectives

- Refers to members of a group individually rather than collectively.
 - **Example:** Any person can make a donation.
 - **Examples:** each, every, either, neither, any, both

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Adjective Type	Definition	Examples
Comparative	compares two people, places, or things	happier, kinder
Superlative	Describes the highest degree or extreme of something.	coolest, nicest
Predicate	Appears in the predicate and describes the subject using a linking verb.	delicious, funny
Compound	Combines two or more words to act as a single adjective.	never-ending, meat eater
Possessive	Expresses possession or ownership.	their, its
Demonstrative	Expresses relative position in space or time	that, these
Proper	From proper nouns; relates to specific people or places.	Napoleonic, Victorian
Participial	Based on participles derived from verbs.	amazing, impressed,
Limiting	Restricts or defines a noun or pronoun rather than describing it.	these, your, some
Descriptive	Describes characteristics, traits, or qualities of a noun or pronoun.	what, which, whose
Interrogative	Used to ask questions	what, which, whose
Attributive	Placed directly next to the noun or pronoun it modifies.	beautiful, special
Distributive	Refers to members of a group individually.	every, either, neither



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