

## Adjectives

### APSU Writing Center Handout

#### 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

## 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

## 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

### **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.

### **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

## References

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