

3 Adjectives

Adjectives describe nouns and pronouns. They give you more information about people, places, and things.

Kinds of Adjectives

Some adjectives tell about the **size of people or things**.

a big house	a long bridge	tiny feet
a large army	a high mountain	big hands
a huge ship	a short man	a short skirt
a tall building	a thin boy	long trousers

Some adjectives tell about the **color of things**.

a red carpet	a gray suit	a brown bear
a white swan	an orange balloon	green peppers
a blue uniform	a yellow ribbon	black shoes

Some adjectives tell what people or things are like by describing their **quality**.

a beautiful woman	a young soldier	a flat surface
a handsome boy	an old uncle	a hot drink
a poor family	a kind lady	a cold winter
a rich couple	a familiar voice	a sunny day
a strange place	a deep pool	cool weather

Some adjectives tell **what things are made of**. They refer to substances.

a plastic folder	a stone wall	a clay pot
a paper bag	a metal box	a glass door
a cotton shirt	a silk dress	a concrete road
a jade ring	a wooden spoon	a porcelain vase

Some adjectives are made from proper nouns of **place**. These adjectives are called **adjectives of origin**.

a **Mexican** hat
the **French** flag
an **American** custom
a **Japanese** lady
an **Indian** temple

a **British** police officer
a **Filipino** dress
Washington apples
a **Spanish** dance
an **Italian** car

The Order of Adjectives

Sometimes several adjectives are used to describe a single noun or pronoun. When you use two or more adjectives, the usual order is: **size, quality, color, origin, substance**. For example:

a **small green plastic** box
size color substance

a **stylish red Italian** car
quality color origin

Here are more examples.

a **large Indian** temple
a **colorful cotton** shirt
delicious Spanish food
crunchy Australian apples

a **tall white stone** building
a **long Chinese silk** robe
an **old graceful Japanese** lady
a **short handsome English** man

Adjectives of quality sometimes **come before** adjectives of size. For example:

beautiful long hair

elegant short hair

But adjectives of size **always come before** adjectives of color. For example:

beautiful long black hair

elegant short red hair

If you use any adjective of substance, it **comes after** the color adjective. For example:

a **beautiful long black silk** dress

Adjective Endings

Adjectives have many different endings.

- Some adjectives end in **-ful**. These adjectives describe noun or pronouns that are **full of something** or **have a lot of something**.

a **beautiful** face

a **painful** injury

a **careful** student

a **cheerful** baby

a **joyful** smile

a **helpful** teacher

a **powerful** machine

a **wonderful** time

playful children

a **skillful** player

a **useful** book

colorful clothes

- Some adjectives end in **-ous**.

a **famous** writer

a **courageous** soldier

a **mountainous** area

an **adventurous** explorer

a **dangerous** job

a **poisonous** snake

a **humorous** film

a **generous** gift

mischievous children

marvelous results

- Some adjectives end in **-y**.

a **messy** room

a **noisy** car

dirty hands

a **sleepy** dog

a **cloudy** sky

thirsty children

a **muddy** path

a **sunny** day

stormy weather

an **easy** test

a **lazy** worker

juicy fruit

- Some adjectives end in **-less**. These adjectives describe a person or thing that **does not have something**.

a **cloudless** sky

a **meaningless** word

a **sleeveless** dress

a **fearless** fighter

a **careless** driver

homeless people

a **joyless** song

seedless grapes

Adjectives: Adjective Endings

Some adjectives end in **-al**.

a national flag	personal possessions
musical instruments	a traditional costume
electrical goods	magical powers
a coastal town	medical equipment

Here are some adjectives that end in **-ic**, **-ish**, **-ible**, **-able**, **-ive** and **-ly**.

a fantastic singer	a terrible mess	an imaginative story
an energetic dog	a sensible answer	expensive jewelery
basic grammar	horrible smells	talkative children
enthusiastic shouting	visible footprints	a creative artist
a selfish act	a likeable child	friendly teachers
foolish behavior	comfortable clothes	a lovely dress
stylish clothes	valuable advice	a lively cat
childish talk	suitable colors	an elderly man

Many adjectives end in **-ing**.

loving parents	an interesting book
a caring nurse	a disappointing result
a flashing light	an outstanding swimmer
a smiling face	an exciting ride
a boring story	chattering monkeys
a gleaming car	shocking news

Many of adjectives end in **ed**.

a closed door	satisfied customers
boiled eggs	worried passengers
wasted time	escaped prisoners
a painted wall	excited students
reduced prices	invited guests

Notes

Words like **closed**, **wasted** and **escaped** are **past participles** of verbs. Many past participles can also be used as adjectives.

Describing What Something Is Made Of

Some nouns can be used like adjectives. For example, if you have a chair that is made of plastic, you can use the noun **plastic** as an adjective and say that the chair is a **plastic chair**. If you have a watch that is made of **gold**, you can say it is a **gold watch**.

But the nouns **wood** and **wool** can't be used like this. To make adjectives of these nouns you have to add **en**.

noun	adjective	example
wood	wooden	a wooden door
wool	woolen	a woolen jumper

Describing What Something Is Like

There's another way to make adjectives from nouns. Suppose you want to say that something is **like** a certain material, although not made of it. To make these adjectives, add **-en** to some nouns and **-y** to other nouns.

noun	adjective	example
gold	golden	a golden sunrise (= <i>bright yellow like gold</i>)
silk	silky or silken	silky skin (= <i>as soft as silk</i>)
lead	leaden	a leaden sky (= <i>dark gray like the color of lead</i>)

Adjectives: The Comparison of Adjectives

If the adjective ends in **e**, add **r** to form the comparative and **st** to form the superlative.

adjective	comparative	superlative
nice	nicer	nicest
close	closer	closest
large	larger	largest
rude	ruder	rudest
safe	safer	safest
wide	wider	widest

Suppose the adjective is a short word that ends in a consonant and has a single vowel in the middle. Just **double the consonant** and add **er** to make the comparative and **est** to make the superlative.

adjective	comparative	superlative
sad	sadder	saddest
wet	wetter	wettest
slim	slimmer	slimmest
thin	thinner	thinnest
big	bigger	biggest

Suppose the adjective has two syllables and ends in **y**. Just **change the y to i** and add **er** to make the comparative and add **est** to make the superlative.

adjective	comparative	superlative	adjective	comparative	superlative
easy	easier	easiest	heavy	heavier	heaviest
funny	funnier	funniest	lovely	lovelier	loveliest
dirty	dirtier	dirtiest	pretty	prettier	prettiest
noisy	noisier	noisiest	tidy	tidier	tidiest
happy	happier	happiest	friendly	friendlier	friendliest
naughty	naughtier	naughtiest	tiny	tinier	tiniest

Use **more** and **most** to compare most other two-syllable adjectives. You will also use **more** and **most** with all adjectives that have *more* than two syllables.

adjective	comparative	superlative
famous	more famous	most famous
precious	more precious	most precious
handsome	more handsome	most handsome
exciting	more exciting	most exciting
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
expensive	more expensive	most expensive
comfortable	more comfortable	most comfortable
delicious	more delicious	most delicious
interesting	more interesting	most interesting
difficult	more difficult	most difficult

Irregular Comparative and Superlative Forms

A few adjectives don't form their comparative and superlative forms in any of the usual ways. The comparative and superlative forms of these adjectives are different words, called irregular forms.

adjective	comparative	superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
many	more	most
far	farther or further	farthest or furthest

For example:

My painting is **good**, Melanie's painting is **better**, but Andrew's painting is the **best**.

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