

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	a British police officer
the French flag	a Filipino dress
an American custom	Washington apples
a Japanese lady	a Spanish dance
an Indian temple	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

Exercise 1

Read the following passage and underline the adjectives. Write **S** above adjectives of **size**, **C** above adjectives of **color**, **Q** above adjectives of **quality** and **O** above adjectives of **origin**.

Sydney is a large Australian city with busy streets and expensive shops. In summer, it's a very hot place. People wear cool clothes and drink cool drinks. There are beautiful sandy beaches where people can rest and look up at the wide blue sky. There are big parks for tourists to visit. Japanese tourists like to sit and watch other people. British tourists take photographs of the strange plants and colorful birds.

Exercise 2

The following passage contains a lot of adjectives. Some of the adjectives appear in the wrong order. First underline the wrongly ordered adjectives. Then write them in their correct order on the lines below the passage.

My friend Jeremy is a handsome tall boy. He always wears a white long T-shirt and a big red cap. He carries a blue huge canvas bag to school. His favorite food is red crunchy apples and he always has one in his bag. Our teacher is an English kind tall man called Mr. Clark. He wears a blue smart suit and glasses with black plastic thick frames.

The Comparison of Adjectives

The Comparative Form

To compare two people or things, use the comparative form of an adjective. The comparative form is usually made by adding er to the adjective.

adjective	comparative form	adjective	comparative form
dark	darker	hard	harder
light	lighter	warm	warmer
high	higher	cold	colder
low	lower	fast	faster
old	older	slow	slower
young	younger		
rich	richer		
poor	poorer		
tall	taller		
small	smaller		
soft	softer		

Notes

The word **than** is often used to compare two things or people. For example, you say:

Mr. Lee is taller than Philip.

A car is faster than a bike.

The Superlative Form

When you compare three or more people or things, use the superlative form of an adjective. The superlative form is usually made by adding est to the adjective.

adjective	superlative form	adjective	superlative form
dark	darkest	warm	warmest
light	lightest	cold	coldest
high	highest	fast	fastest
low	lowest	slow	slowest
old	oldest		
young	youngest		
rich	richest		
poor	poorest		
tall	tallest		
small	smallest		
soft	softest		
hard	hardest		

Notes

The word **the** is often used before the superlative form. For example:

A bee is a small insect. A ladybird is smaller, but an ant is the smallest.

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**.

Exercise 5

Read the following passage. Write the correct **comparative** and **superlative forms** of the adjectives in parentheses in the blank spaces. The first one has been done for you.

Paul likes playing football. He's a very good player, but his friend Sally is a better (good) player. She's the best (good) player in the whole school. She is fastest (fast) and strongest (strong) than all the boys, even the boys who are older (old) and bigger (big) than her. That's why Paul likes her. Paul thinks all games are exciting, but football is the most exciting (exciting) game and it's noisier (noisy) than all the other games he plays with his friends. When the grass is wet, everyone gets dirty when they play football. But Sally gets dirty (dirty) and wetter (wet) than everyone else.