

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

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
dark	darker
light	lighter
high	higher
low	lower
old	older
young	younger
rich	richer
poor	poorer
tall	taller
small	smaller
soft	softer

adjective	comparative form
hard	harder
warm	warmer
cold	colder
fast	faster
slow	slower

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
dark	darkest
light	lightest
high	highest
low	lowest
old	oldest
young	youngest
rich	richest
poor	poorest
tall	tallest
small	smallest
soft	softest
hard	hardest

adjective	superlative form
warm	warmest
cold	coldest
fast	fastest
slow	slowest

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
-----------	-------------	-------------

easy	easier	easiest
funny	funnier	funniest
dirty	dirtier	dirtiest
noisy	noisier	noisiest
happy	happier	happiest
naughty	naughtier	naughtiest

adjective	comparative	superlative
-----------	-------------	-------------

heavy	heavier	heaviest
lovely	lovelier	loveliest
pretty	prettier	prettiest
tidy	tidier	tidiest
friendly	friendlier	friendliest
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 <i>or</i> further	farthest <i>or</i> 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 _____ (good) player in the whole school. She is _____ (fast) and _____ (strong) than all the boys, even the boys who are _____ (old) and _____ (big) than her. That's why Paul likes her. Paul thinks all games are exciting, but football is the _____ (exciting) game and it's _____ (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) and _____ (wet) than everyone else.