

Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives

Adjectives describe or modify nouns or pronouns. A noun is a person, place or thing, and a pronoun takes the place of a noun. For example, *she* is a pronoun for *Margie*. Typically, an adjective answers **how many**, **what kind**, and **which one**.

- For example: Two boys are left in the spelling bee.
 - **Two** tells how many boys; *boys* is the noun
- *Several, some, every, few, many*, and *a lot* are also adjectives that express **how many**.
- Furthermore, adjectives can describe nouns: Lydia's blue eyes sparkle like sapphires when she smiles.
 - **Blue** illustrates **what** color of *eyes* she has, thus describing the noun *eyes*.
 - The adjective **Blue** can also come after the noun it is modifying. For example, Lydia's eyes are blue.
- In addition, adjectives demonstrate **which one** by using the words *this, that, these and those*. For instance: This teacher is less demanding than that one. Or, I want to buy these books.
- *This, that, these and those* also can be used as pronouns, depending on how the word is used in a sentence. For example: *That* is my favorite show. And, *These* are mine.
- Moreover, adjectives modify pronouns: This is hot. Or, He is handsome.
- Adjectives also can be identified by their endings: *ous, ful, ish, and able*. For example, the words *beautiful, joyous, childish, and adorable* are all adjectives.

Adjectives: -ed or -ing? English contains numerous **-ed** or **-ing** adjective pairs derived from verbs. To avoid mixing these up, remember that adjectives ending in **-ed** are used to describe how you feel, and the **-ing** adjectives are used for what it is that makes you feel that way (modified from *English Grammar*

Explanations). Here are some examples:

- I feel tired. - Working on my essay gets very **tiring**.
- I am bored. - This grammar lesson is **boring**.
- I may be interested in Mythology. - Mythology seems **interesting**.

Adverbs

Adverbs describe or modify verbs, other adverbs, and adjectives. Verbs are the words in the sentence that show **action**→ *run, talk-* **occurrence**→ *shines, dims,* or **existence**→ *am, is or feel*. Most of the time, the adverb will answer

these questions: *How or in what manner, when, how often, to what degree, and where?* Often, adverbs can be identified by **-ly** endings but not always.

- For example: Yousef quietly works on his essay.
 - **Quietly** shows in what way Yousef *works*; the word *quietly* modifies the verb *works*.
- **Adverbs** also answer **When?** For instance: Yesterday, I helped the student with his thesis statement.
 - The adverb **Yesterday** tells when the student was helped.
 - *Soon, later, now, first, later, and after* also tell **when**.
- Words like *sometimes, always, usually, seldom, often, and never* are adverbs that illustrate **how often**. For example: Nathan never brings his homework to class. Or, He always brings his homework to class.
 - *Frequency* can also be shown as adverbs this way: *most of the time, in general, and on occasion*.
- Another way adverbs modify verbs is by telling **to what degree**. Review the following sentences: Jack deeply loves to play basketball. Or, My husband somewhat wants to watch the new episode of *American Idol*.
 - Other common **degree adverbs** are *not, very, too, slightly, thoroughly, more, less, almost, and quite*.
- In addition, adverbs tell **where** in a sentence as with the words *here, there, anywhere, ahead, and away*. For example: I will be there in ten minutes. Also, Jessica is going away for the summer.
 - In the second example, the adverb **away** is telling *where* Jessica is going for the summer.

Adverbs modify (or intensify) other Adjectives

- Sanjiv very *carefully* listened to the teacher's lesson.
 - The adverb **very** tells how *carefully* Sanjiv was listening.
- The horrors of my accident will never *completely* escape my mind.
 - Again, the adverb **never** tells how *completely*.
- The cat is too *lazy*.
 - Notice how the adverb **too** is modifying the adjective *lazy*, and **lazy** is modifying the noun *cat*.

Changing an Adjective to an Adverb

Adjectives can usually be turned into an *Adverb* by adding **-ly** to the ending.

- By adding **-ly** to the adjective *slow*, you get the adverb **slowly**.
 - The slow turtle crosses the road.
 - The turtle slowly crosses the road.
- If the adjective ends in the letter **-y**, then change the letter **-y** to **-i** and add **-ly** to form an adverb: *happy* → *happily*

- However, some words cannot be changed; for example, if by adding **-ly** to the end of an adjective, it changes the meaning of the word
 - hard→hardly does not have the same meaning
 - late→lately also does not mean the same thing

Comparative Degree and Superlative Degree

The *comparative degree* of an adjective or adverb compares the value of two things or people. For instance: Reading is more rewarding than watching T.V.

The *superlative degree* of an adjective or adverb compares the value of three or more things or people. For example: Of all the girls, Zoe sings the loudest.

To form the comparative and superlative, add **-er** and **-est** to adjectives and adverbs with *one* syllable. For example:

| Comparative -er | Superlative -est |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adjectives | |
| • nice→nic er than her | • nice→the nic est girl |
| • old→old er brother | • old→old est sibling |
| • big→big ger dog | • big→big gest dog in the yard |
| Adverbs | |
| • soon→soon er | • soon→arrived the soon est |
| • long→long er | • long→jumps the long est |
| • fast→fast er | • fast→runs the fast est |

Words with two or more syllables use *more* and *most* to compare adjectives and adverbs. For example:

| Comparative -more | Superlative - (the) most |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Adjectives | |
| • <i>more</i> beautiful of the two | • <i>the most</i> beautiful poem |
| • <i>more</i> creative than her | • <i>the most</i> creative artist |
| • <i>more</i> lavish ring than mine | • <i>the most</i> lavish gift |
| Adverbs | |
| • <i>more</i> beautifully | • <i>most</i> beautifully written |
| • <i>more</i> creatively | • paints <i>most</i> creatively |
| • <i>more</i> lavishly | • spends <i>most</i> lavishly |

Note: Never use *most* or *more* with the comparative and superlative ending **-er** or **-est** together. For instance, one would not say: “That girl is the *most hippest* dancer in the world.” Or, Baseball is *more harder* to play than football.

Correction: That girl is *the hippest* dancer in the world. And, Football is *harder* to play than baseball.

Adjectives that end in **-y** need to be re-formed: drop the **-y** and add **-i** before adding **-er** and **-est**. Note the following:

silly→sillier→silliest happy→happier→happiest shy→shier→shiest

Same Word Adverbs and Adjectives

Some **Adjectives** and **Adverbs** are the *same* word while others change in form all together. For example, these adverbs and adjectives are the same word: *first, second, fast, clean, clear, early, late, low, and straight.*

- Go straight home after school. –Adverb
- Draw a straight line on your paper. –Adjective

Also,

- The runner placed first in the race. –Adverb
- The first runner gets a gold medal. –Adjective
- The only way to tell them apart is to identify what is being modified, the *noun* or *verb*.

Irregular Adjectives and Adverbs that *change* in form:

| | | |
|---------|----------|----------|
| Much→ | More→ | Most |
| Good→ | Better→ | Best |
| Bad→ | Worse→ | Worst |
| Far→ | Farther→ | Farthest |
| Far→ | Further→ | Furthest |
| Well→ | Better→ | Best |
| Badly→ | Worse→ | Worst |
| Little→ | Less→ | Least |

More difficult adverbs and adjectives: Good/Well, Bad/Badly, and Real/Really. *First, determine exactly what is being described: a noun, pronoun, verb, or an adjective.*

Example 1: I feel **bad**/badly. In this sentence, the speaker is not talking about the physical action of feeling but is describing **I**, that person’s state of mind or health; therefore, one would use the adjective *bad*. Remember, adjectives describe nouns and pronouns. To use the word **badly** as a modifier correctly, one would say this: I was hurt **badly** by the hail storm.

Example 2: Raymond didn’t do good/**well** on the test. Is this sentence referring to Raymond’s performance or Raymond himself? It is talking about his performance which is an action, so one would use the adverb **well** because as mentioned earlier adverbs describe verbs. Using **good** as a modifier looks like this: The perfume smells good.

Example 3: Jarid is real/**really** sure of his decision to be a doctor. Since *sure* is an adjective, one would use the adverb *really* because as previously discussed adverbs modify adjectives. An example of using **real** would be this: This grammar handout is a *real* example of hard work.