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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative –er</th>
<th>Superlative –est</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• nice—nicer than her</td>
<td>• nice—nicest girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• old—older brother</td>
<td>• old—oldest sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• big—bigger dog</td>
<td>• big—biggest dog in the yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adverbs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• soon—sooner</td>
<td>• soon—arrived the soonest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• long—longer</td>
<td>• long—jumps the longest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fast—faster</td>
<td>• fast—runs the fastest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative –more</th>
<th>Superlative – (the) most</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more beautiful of the two</td>
<td>• the most beautiful poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more creative than her</td>
<td>• the most creative artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more lavish ring than mine</td>
<td>• the most lavish gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adverbs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more beautifully</td>
<td>• most beautifully written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more creatively</td>
<td>• paints most creatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more lavishly</td>
<td>• spends most lavishly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much →</th>
<th>More →</th>
<th>Most</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good →</td>
<td>Better →</td>
<td>Best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad →</td>
<td>Worse →</td>
<td>Worst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far →</td>
<td>Farther →</td>
<td>Farthest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far →</td>
<td>Further →</td>
<td>Furthest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well →</td>
<td>Better →</td>
<td>Best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badly →</td>
<td>Worse →</td>
<td>Worst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little →</td>
<td>Less →</td>
<td>Least</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.