

LEARNING ABOUT ADJECTIVES

1

What are adjectives?

Adjectives are descriptive words. They tell us something about a noun.

Picture of Mary-Jane

(The words 'pretty', 'happy', 'talkative', 'kind-hearted', 'gentle' and 'talented' appear one by one around her)

2

Adjectives don't just refer to people, of course. You can describe anything at all.

The **horrible** monster.

The **cute** mouse.

The **scary old** house.

HINT: In English, the adjective always goes **directly before the noun** it describes (except when you use the verb 'is' eg She is very pretty).

3

Adjectives are very common words. You can use as many as you like to refer to the same person or thing.

I hate **horrible, nasty, hairy, dirty, disgusting** spiders!

HINT: When there are two or more adjectives, make sure you separate them with commas.

4

Adjectives are always spelled the same. It doesn't matter how many things you refer to, or whether they are male or female – there is only one spelling of the adjective.

He is a **happy** baby.

They are **happy** babies. *(Pic of one baby – then two or three)*

It is **very scary**.

They are all **very scary**. *(Pic of one monster – then two or three)*

HINT: In many other languages (French, Spanish, German, Italian, etc) the adjective must 'agree' with the noun in number and gender. Not so in English. Each adjective is one word only.

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Lots of adjectives are formed out of nouns. For example

Intelligence	Intelligent
Friend	Friendly
Happiness	Happy
Beauty	Beautiful

HINT: There is no rule about converting a noun to an adjective. Most adjectives are very old (eg beautiful is from the original French word), so there are no clear patterns. The only reliable guide is to put the adjective in front of a noun and ask 'Does it sound right?' (eg A beauty woman. NO! A beautiful woman. YES!) The one that works **in front of a noun** is the **adjective**.

6

Most adjectives describe the qualities (or characteristics) of a person or thing. But there are other types.

ADJECTIVES THAT DESCRIBE QUANTITY

A **whole** apple.
Half an apple.
Some people. A **few** people.
Any student. **No** student.

RULE: They must always be followed by a noun.

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ADJECTIVES THAT DISTINGUISH ONE FROM ANOTHER

This man. **That** man.
These people. **Those** people.
A peach. **An** apple.
The church over there.

RULE: The word 'an' is only used in front of a noun beginning with a vowel.

HINT: 'This' and 'these' refer to someone or something very close. 'That' and 'those' refer to something far away.

8

ADJECTIVES THAT ASK A QUESTION

Which man?

What church?

RULE: These adjectives must always come before the noun to which they refer.

9

Finally, we need to look at how you compare adjectives.

ADJECTIVES OF COMPARISON

Often you want to compare things. Here are two examples:

A **big** dinosaur.
A **bigger** dinosaur.
The **biggest** dinosaur.

A **beautiful** girl.
A **more beautiful** girl.
The **most beautiful** girl.

Pics to illustrate

HINT: When an adjective is long, instead of the more common ending 'er' and 'est' a separate word (more, most) is used to make the comparison.

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Most adjectives follow the pattern of

Adjective Adjective + er Adjective + est

Or

Adjective more + adjective most + adjective

Pics to illustrate these

If the adjective ends in the consonants D or G, the consonant is doubled before the ending:

sad sadder saddest
big bigger biggest

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If the adjective ends in Y, it is converted to 'ier' and 'iest' for the comparison.

pretty prettier prettiest

Pic to illustrate

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A few very old (up to 2000 years) adjectives have irregular comparisons:

good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
far	further	furthest