

## RULES

Adjectives describe nouns. They have neither singular nor plural form; they generally precede a noun or follow a linking verb.

I heard a **fascinating** lecture.      She seems **disturbed** and **unhappy**.

### COMMON WAYS OF FORMING ADJECTIVES

**Suffixes** (-y, -ive, -al, -ful, -less, -able, etc.)

windy, co-operative, practical, colourful

#### Present and past participles

-*ing* adjectives have an active meaning and describe the effect something has

The news was **shocking**.  
We went to see a **frightening** film last night.

-*ed* / past participle adjectives have a passive meaning and describe feelings or reactions

We were **shocked** by his revelations.  
We were **frightened** when we watched the film.

#### Compound adjectives

adjective / number + noun + -ed

grey-haired, one-sided

number + **singular** count noun

five-page, ten-day-old

past participle + adverb

torn-down, cast-off

adjective / adverb / noun + present / past participle

good-looking, freshly baked, back-breaking

#### Nouns used as adjectives

to describe a typical or well-known type of something  
The first noun is usually singular.

the car door, football player, surprise announcement,  
the morning mist, corner shop, bedroom curtains, trouser pocket

#### Notes

1. Some verbs are commonly followed by adjectives (be, seem, appear, look, sound, taste, feel, become, get, etc.) Some of these verbs are used to talk about change or absence of change (become, get, grow, go, turn, stay, remain, keep, etc.)

She **looked calm**.      It was **turning dark** outside yet it **remained warm** and **sultry**.

Some of these verbs can be followed by an adverb if an action is being described. Compare:

She looked calm. (adjective "calm" describes the pronoun "she")

She looked **calmly** at the police officer. (adverb "calmly" describes how she looked at the officer)

Other verbs that can be followed by adjectives when describing the subject and not the action of the verb include: *lie, sit, stand, fall*.

2. Some adjectives can only be used after a verb (e.g., many adjectives beginning with a- (*afloat, afraid, alight, alike, alive, alone, ashamed, asleep, awake*) or adjectives describing health and feelings (*ill, [un]well, content, fine, glad, sorry, [un]sure, upset, ready*)).

The baby's **asleep**.      He was **afraid** of the spider.      The ship is still **afloat**.      He feels **ill / well**.

3. We use **the + adjective** to talk about groups of people.

They've just built a new access ramp for **the handicapped**.

There are some formal fixed phrases where **the + adjective** has a singular meaning: (*the accused, the deceased, the former, the latter*).

4. Some adjectives have different meanings depending on whether they come before the noun or immediately after it.

I've just moved again and my **present** address is 105 Chestnut Road. (= *my address now*)

All the people **present** agreed to sign the petition. (= *who were there*)

**Concerned** parents have been phoning the hot line to find out what they should do. (= *worried*)

The school outing was a huge success and we should thank the parents **concerned**. (= *involved*)

They are **responsible** children and will be back on time. (= *conscientious*)

The children **responsible** will be caught and punished. (= *who did the action*)

### ORDER OF ADJECTIVES

While the order of adjectives can vary occasionally according to the intention of the speaker, we usually place **general** adjectives before **specific** ones, and adjectives expressing **opinion** before those conveying **fact**.

number / quantity	opinion	size / length / height	colour	origin	material	purpose	noun
a	beautiful	large	red	Chinese	wooden	jewellery	box

John bought me a **gorgeous, large, dark-brown, antique, mahogany** writing desk for my birthday.

In a sentence, adjectives are separated by commas, unless it is the last adjective before the noun or when one adjective modifies another.

## ADVERBS

Adverbs are used to modify:

**verbs** She sang **well**.

**adjectives** It's **terribly** cold.

**past participles** The room was **badly** painted.

**whole sentences** **Unfortunately**, your application has been **rejected**.

**other adverbs** He is driving **extremely** fast.

There are several kinds of adverbs:

**manner:** *clumsily, gracefully, vividly, vigorously, distinctly, boldly, in a friendly fashion*

**frequency:** *seldom, constantly, often, never, always*

**place and direction:** *upstairs, downtown, overseas, outside, opposite, globally, downstream, homeward*

**time:** *soon, lately, since, so far, immediately, yet, already, yesterday*

**degree:** *very, extremely, quite, really, almost, too, completely, fairly, rather, totally*

## ADJECTIVES & ADVERBS WITH SIMILAR FORMS

- Some adjectives and adverbs have the same form. However, the meaning may differ. Examples include:

back	enough	hourly	left	low	upstairs
daily	far	ill	little	still	well
early	fast	kindly	long	straight	

I'm not very **well** today. I think I'll stay at home. (adj = healthy)

I really don't know Peter very **well**. (adv = to a great extent)

- Some adverbs have one form similar to the adjective and another form ending in **-ly**. The meaning may differ. Examples include:

deep – deeply	fine – finely	high – highly	near – nearly	short – shortly
direct – directly	flat – flatly	just – justly	pretty – prettily	sure – surely
easy – easily	free – freely	late – lately	right – rightly	wide – widely
fair – fairly	hard – hardly	most – mostly	sharp – sharply	

I gave her a **free** hand in the interior design. (adj = without limits or controls)

Pensioners travel **free** on buses. (adv = without payment)

She spoke **freely** about her past. (adv = without inhibitions)

## GRADABLE AND UNGRADABLE ADJECTIVES

Adjectives can be categorised as gradable or ungradable according to their meaning. Most adjectives are **gradable**, which means that their meaning can be made weaker or stronger (e.g., *cold, boring, difficult* can be made weaker or stronger with adverbs such as *very, slightly, fairly, rather, a bit*). *very cold*   *rather difficult*

**Ungradable** adjectives describe extreme or absolute qualities (e.g., *freezing, dead, impossible, enormous, free*).

These adjectives can only be modified with words which suggest extremes (*absolutely free / necessary / freezing, utterly exhausted / impossible / clear*).

### Note

The modifier **quite** has a different meaning depending on the kind of adjective it modifies.

The play was **quite** interesting. (with gradable adjectives = *fairly, rather*)

The play was **quite** fascinating. (with ungradable adjectives = *absolutely*)

## COMPARISON

(See Grammar Appendix for basic rules, page 218.)

**Comparatives** can be modified with words like *much, far, a lot, any, no, rather, a little, a bit, even, etc.*

**far** more dangerous, **any** greater, **even** better,  
**much** more effectively

**Superlatives** can be modified with words like *much, by far, quite, almost, easily, etc.*

**by far** the most complicated, **almost** the cheapest,  
**easily** the most talented

**as + adjective + as** (comparing similar qualities)

Listening to her is about **as interesting as** watching an egg boil!

She looked **as white as** a sheet!

**as ... as** can be modified with *just, every bit, nearly, almost, half, twice, three times, etc.*

In the end, going by ferry cost **almost as much as** it would to fly.

**not as / so + adjective / adverb + as** (to show a negative comparison)

This computer is **not as efficient as** the other one.  
He didn't work **as carefully as** he should have.

**not so much ... as**

I'm **not so much angry as** disappointed.  
(I'm more disappointed than angry.)

**not half / quite / nearly / anything + as + adjective + as**  
**nothing like as + adjective + as**

He's **not half as energetic as** you are.  
She's **nothing like as tall as** her brother.

**negative verb + half / quite + as + / adjective / adverb + as**  
**negative verb + anything like + as + adverb + as**

You don't seem **quite as tired as** you were yesterday.  
I didn't do **anything like as badly as** I expected.

**like + noun / verb phrase**

He runs **like the wind**.  
He lay there on the sand **like a beached whale**.  
It's hard to describe that feeling; it's a bit **like going to the dentist**.

**the + comparative, the + comparative**

(to show that a change in one thing causes a change in the other)

**The more complicated** the puzzle, **the longer** it takes to solve.  
How many shall I invite? **The more, the merrier!**

**comparative + and + comparative** (to show gradual changes)

The days are getting **hotter and hotter**.  
We work **harder and harder** as time goes by.

**E. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.**

1. The new building will be ..... than our present premises.
  - a. by far the most spacious
  - b. far more spacious
  - c. much more spaciously
  - d. not so much spacious
2. A ..... business will rarely flourish.
  - a. poor managed
  - b. managed poor
  - c. poorly managed
  - d. managed poorly
3. "Did you enjoy the roller coaster ride?"  
"No! It was ..... experience of my life."
  - a. the most terrifying
  - b. far more terrifying
  - c. a more terrifying
  - d. as terrifying as
4. Pauline was a ..... .
  - a. cinema critic, well-respecting
  - b. respecting cinema critic
  - c. good-respected cinema critic
  - d. well-respected cinema critic
6. "What did Carla wear to the reception?"  
"The most ..... dress."
  - a. red, gorgeous, silk
  - b. silk, red, gorgeous
  - c. red, silk, gorgeous
  - d. gorgeous, red, silk
7. A sandwich can be ..... as a cooked meal.
  - a. as just nutritious
  - b. a bit nutritious
  - c. every bit as nutritious
  - d. even more nutritious
8. Please write your ..... on the form.
  - a. presently address
  - b. address where you are present
  - c. address presently
  - d. present address
9. "When do you need the report?"  
" ..... ."
  - a. The better the sooner
  - b. The sooner the better
  - c. The soonest the best
  - d. Sooner, better
10. I didn't think the sequel was ..... the first movie.
  - a. nothing as good as
  - b. much good as
  - c. half as good as
  - d. far better as

**G. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.**

(10 x 1 = 10)

1. "You're so lucky to be going abroad for a whole semester!"  
"..... , I'll miss my friends and family."
  - a. That is
  - b. On account of that
  - c. All the same
  - d. But despite
2. ..... having a full-time job in a bank, David works as a freelance web-designer.
  - a. Moreover
  - b. Also
  - c. Not only
  - d. As well as
3. Anna is ..... her sister.
  - a. every bit as intelligent as
  - b. just intelligent as
  - c. as intelligent like
  - d. rather as intelligent as
4. Shop assistants are often very ..... .
  - a. paid poorly
  - b. poor-pay
  - c. poorly paid
  - d. poor paying
5. ..... , modeling is actually hard work.
  - a. Even it may seem glamorous
  - b. Yet it may seem glamorous
  - c. All the same glamorous it may seem
  - d. However glamorous it may seem
6. It is the secretary's job to inform all ..... .
  - a. the concerned in the project people
  - b. the people concerned in the project
  - c. the concerned people in the project
  - d. the people in the project concerned
7. I studied both history and literature at college but I ..... .
  - a. preferred latter more
  - b. more the latter preferred
  - c. much preferred the latter
  - d. the latter preferred very much
8. Grandma put her favorite crystal glasses away ..... the children would break them.
  - a. for fear that
  - b. hence
  - c. in order to
  - d. so as not
9. This year it was ..... that many of our flowering plants died.
  - a. so a dry summer
  - b. so dry a summer
  - c. a so dry a summer
  - d. such dry a summer
10. The sky grew ..... and the temperature fell.
  - a. black
  - b. blackly
  - c. blackest
  - d. blackening