# 89 Adjectives

## A Extreme adjectives

There are many 'extreme' adjectives we use to say that something is very good, or very small, or very surprising, etc.

We were lucky – the weather was **marvellous** [very good; *syns* **terrific**, **wonderful**, **amazing**].
Don't go and see that film – it's **awful** [very bad; *syn* **dreadful**].
I was **delighted** she passed her exam. [very pleased]
It's a nice modern flat, but it's absolutely **tiny** [very small].

I wasn't very hungry, but they gave us a **huge** meal. [very big; *syn* **enormous**]
You should watch that programme; you'll find it absolutely **fascinating** [very interesting].
Everyone was really **exhausted** by the end of the day. [very tired]
Bungee jumping is the most **terrifying** thing I've ever done. [very frightening]
Computers are an **essential** part of modern life. [very important and necessary]
The food was **delicious** [very good; but usually only for food].

### Language help

The food was **absolutely marvellous**. (NOT The food was ~~very marvellous~~.) We can use **absolutely** or **really** before extreme adjectives, e.g. *absolutely awful, really terrific*, but we can't use **very**.
We use **very** or **really** with gradable adjectives which do not have an extreme meaning, e.g. *very big, very good, very nice, very tired, really good, really tired*, etc. (NOT ~~absolutely big~~)

## B Adjectives ending in *-ing* and *-ed*

A large group of adjectives can have an **-ing** or **-ed** ending. The **-ing** ending describes a person, thing or situation; the **-ed** ending describes the effect on someone of this person, thing or situation.

I don't know if other people were **bored**, but I thought it was a very **boring** lesson.
The weather is so **depressing** at the moment; it's making everyone feel **depressed**.

### Common mistakes

I was bored by that film. (NOT I was ~~boring~~ by that film.)
We're very interested in the new designs. (NOT We're very ~~interesting~~ in the new designs.)

These adjectives can all end in **-ing** or **-ed**, depending on the meaning.

It was really **tiring** going up that hill. [making you feel tired]
I was **amazed** she could climb that wall. [very surprised]
My exam results were very **disappointing** [not as good as I expected].
She was **annoyed** that I forgot to tell her. [angry]
I kept calling her Emma, so I was **embarrassed** when Ben told me her name was Angela. [feeling a bit stupid because of something you have said or done]
The map he gave us was very **confusing** [difficult tounderstand].
We were **shocked** by the violence in the film. [very surprised in an unpleasant way]



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# Exercises

**89.1** **Put the words into the correct column.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ~~bad~~ | ~~dreadful~~ | important | small | exhausted |
| terrified | tired | essential | frightened | tiny |

| gradable adjectives | extreme adjectives |
|---|---|
| *bad* | *dreadful* |

**89.2** **Change the adjectives where possible to give the email a more positive and/or more extreme effect. Include *absolutely* or *really* two or three times.**

Reply Forward

From Benita S. x 4:35 PM (1 hour ago)

Dear Sandy

Arrived on Sunday evening after ~~a very tiring~~ *an (absolutely) exhausting* journey. We're very pleased with the hotel: our room is very big, and the food is very nice. We've been lucky with the weather as well. The first day was wet but the last three days have been very nice.

Tomorrow we're going to walk the coastal path to Dartmouth Castle. It's quite a difficult route and people tell us it's very important to take a map, but it sounds very interesting, so I'm looking forward to it.

I'll write again in a couple of days and tell you all about it.

love

Benita

**89.3** **Complete the dialogues so that B agrees with A, using a suitable adjective from the opposite page.**

1 A: I was very interested in her talk.
B: Yes, it was *fascinating* .
2 A: Were you very frightened?
B: Yes, it was absolutely ..... .
3 A: It was surprising to see the children behave so badly.
B: I know. We were ..... .
4 A: Did you have a nice holiday?
B: Yes, absolutely ..... .
5 A: I expect you were very pleased with your score.
B: Yes, I was absolutely ..... .
6 A: I expect you were a bit angry when they arrived an hour late?
B: Yes, I was very ..... .

**89.4** **Write an adjective to describe how the people felt in these situations.**

1 They walked ten miles, then spent the afternoon cutting down trees. *exhausted*
2 From the description on the travel website, they expected a beautiful big villa by the sea. In actual fact it was quite small, not very nice, and miles from the beach. .....
3 I arrived in jeans, but everyone else was wearing very formal clothes. .....
4 One person told them the street was on the left, another told them to turn right, and a third person said they had to go back to the station. .....
5 My brother has a flat and it's usually in a terrible mess – he's very untidy. But yesterday when I visited him, the place was incredibly tidy. In fact, everything looked new. .....
6 I got my results yesterday and I passed every exam with a grade A. .....



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