

Topic 4: Parts of Speech - ADJECTIVE

EN110



WHAT IS ADJECTIVE?

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun. Adjectives can be **attributive**, appearing before a noun (e.g., “a **red** hat”), or **predicative**, appearing after a noun with the use of a **linking verb** like “to be” (e.g., “the hat **is red**”).

Adjectives can also have a comparative function.

Comparative adjectives compare two or more things. **Superlative adjectives** describe something as having the most or least of a specific characteristic.

Examples: Adjectives in a sentence:

The dog is bigger than the cat.

He is the laziest person I know

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

Adjectives (and adverbs) come in three forms: positive, comparative, and superlative.

The **positive** is the basic form. The **comparative**, as the name implies, shows a greater or lesser degree. The *superlative* shows the greatest or least degree. Here are some examples:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
blue	bluer	bluest
funny	funnier	funniest
remarkable	more/less remarkable	most/least remarkable

+ Clearly not all adjectives follow the same pattern. That's why it's helpful to know the basic rules.

1. If an adjective consists of a **single syllable**, add *-er* for the comparative and *-est* for the superlative.

2. If an adjective has **three or more syllables**, add *most* or *least*.

3. If an adjective has **two syllables**, you'll have to choose between adding *-er/-est* and *most/least*. It depends on what sounds better:
Jealous, more jealous, most jealous.

Tiny, tinier, tiniest

If you're not sure which form to use, consult a dictionary.

Let's finish with a few exceptions and additional rules.

Irregular Adjectives

Some adjectives don't follow the normal rules for showing comparison. These are considered irregular adjectives:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
bad	worse	worst
good	better	best
little	less	least
much/many/some	more	most
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

Adjectives Without a Comparative Form

Other adjectives simply don't have a comparative form. These words describe an *absolute* condition, in which case comparison does not work:

final

impossible

perfect

unique

whole

Adjective order in English

In English, the proper order for adjectives is known as the Royal Order of Adjectives. The Royal Order of Adjectives is as follows:

1. Determiner (This isn't a type of adjective, however, determiners, including articles, possessives, and demonstratives, are considered in the Royal Order of Adjectives. They must always come before adjectives and the nouns they modify.)

The, your, our, these

2. Quantity

One, seven, many, few.



+ 3. **Opinion** - Delicious, heroic, misunderstood, valuable +

+ Sometimes, this category is divided into two categories: general and specific opinion, with general opinion coming before specific opinion.


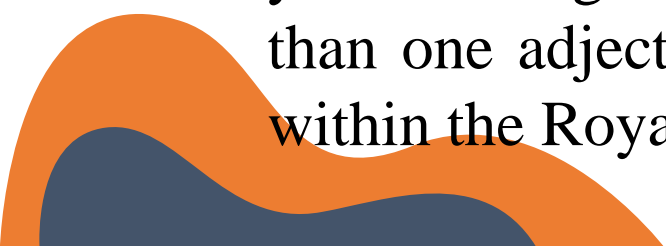
For example, you might describe a specific tablet as a popular, perfect choice for digital illustrators.

The general opinion here is that it's popular, an opinion held by many (and easily verified).

The more specific opinion is that it's perfect for digital illustrators—it's *your* personal opinion, but it might not be as widely held as the opinion that it's popular.

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- 4. **Size** - Huge, tiny, medium-sized, small.
 - 5. **Age** - New, old, decades-old, second-newest
 - 6. **Shape** - Square, round, triangular, geometric
 - 7. **Color** - Blue, gray, yellow, red
 - 8. **Origin/material** - American, wooden, velvet, African
 - 9. **Qualifier** - *Hound* dog, *denim* skirt, *pickup* truck, *vampire* bat

Although you might not have ever seen the proper adjective order listed like this, you may have picked up on it and used it without even realizing what you're doing. You could naturally follow this order any time you use more than one adjective to describe a noun, no matter where those adjectives fall within the Royal Order.



Take a look at this chart to see how different noun phrases illustrate the Royal Order:

Quantity	Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Color	Origin/ Material	Qualifier	Noun
one	beautiful		old			brick		house
		small			black			dog
			new			wool	button-down	sweater

- ✦ See how even when you don't use an adjective from every category, you still follow this order? However, even with a specific adjective order to follow, there are circumstances where you need to change the order to communicate your message clearly. One of these circumstances is when one of the adjectives in your sentence is part of a compound noun. Take a look at this example:

She moved into a brand-new tiny house.

According to The Royal Order of Adjectives, this sentence *should* read “She moved into a tiny brand-new house,” right? If you're describing a smaller-than-average new house, yes. But if you're specifically referring to a tiny house, the answer is no. There are a lot of ways English can be confusing and in *some* of those cases, there's a hidden logic as to *why*.

Why do adjectives need to be in this order? ✦

- ✦ It's an unsatisfying answer, but it's the only answer: We don't really know. However, there are a few theories. One is that the closer an adjective sits to its noun, the more vital it is to the noun's description.

For example, referring to a house as a “brick house” is more specific than referring to it as an “old house” or a “beautiful house.” But this theory doesn't always hold up.

To use another example, compare “small dog” to “black dog.” Is a black dog really a more specific description than a small dog?

Like other English language quirks, adjective order is one you just have to roll with.

Two fat white geese
My progressive, rigorous old university

Types of Adjectives

Adjectives are of various kinds like

- **Quantitative Adjectives:** Three, Four, Many, Much, etc.
- **Descriptive Adjectives:** Handsome, Silly, Stupid, Fast, Loud, etc.
- **Proper Adjectives:** Japanese, KFC, American, etc.
- **Possessive Adjectives:** My, His, Her, Our, Your, Their, etc.
- **Demonstrative Adjectives:** Those, This, That, Those, etc.
- **Distributive Adjectives:** Each, Every, Any, Neither, Either, etc.
- **Interrogative Adjectives:** Which, Why, What, Who, Whose, etc.
- **Indefinite Adjectives:** Some, Several, A Few,
- **Articles:** A, An, and The.
- **Compound Adjectives:** Broken-Down, Eight-Foot-Long, etc.
- **Ordinal OR Sequence Adjectives:** Third, Fifth, Ninth, etc